Posthuman Noir: Creating Positive Posthumans

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Abstract

Posthuman noir is a new subgenre I have identified at the intersection of posthuman science fiction and traditional film noir. In this thesis, I establish the defining features of this new subgenre; explore its antecedents in the body of films labelled as film noir and in the philosophical concepts of transhumanism and posthumanism; and examine the way the subgenre privileges two human traits—emotional awakening and storytelling ability—arguing that these intangible traits act as essential definers of what it is to be human in the posthuman future. In this thesis, I argue that this subgenre explores what it is to be human through adapting or subverting the tropes found in traditional film noir.

My creative practice methodology seeks to explore a non-hierarchical approach to knowledge production, through chapters which interlink academic scholarship with my creative practice of screenwriting. Through figuring the screenplay as a posthuman text evolving towards *becoming-film*, and through channelling myself as a cyborg-screenwriter, my creative practice—an expression of the human storytelling ability which aims to generate an emotional awakening in the reader—aims to mirror the themes around these essential human traits within the subgenre. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to engage both their emotional and rational thinking processes when reading the thesis; it is this balanced combination, which reflects human thought processes, that is validated within the subgenre.

It is particularly pertinent to discuss this subgenre at this present moment as human beings are on a rapid path to becoming posthuman, if we aren't already there, as critics like N. Katherine Hayles argue. However, I posit that this subgenre has a conservative impulse which seeks to maintain an anthropocentric view of the future and validates humanistic notions of the human rather than pushing a posthumanist vision.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references and in the bibliography.

Introduction

I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me.
Mary Shelley[1]

The mediator between the Head and the Hands must be the Heart.
Thea von Harbou[2]

'Humanity is our virtue,'[3] states the Major (Scarlett Johansson) at the end of the 2017 remake of *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Rupert Sanders). The Major is a cyborg, a posthuman hybrid; a Japanese human brain and consciousness in a seemingly Western gynoid body.[4] Both the remake and the original *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Mamoru Oshii,[5] 1995) privilege aspects of our 'humanity' as desirable virtues in posthuman futures. It is the posthuman characters like the Major who (re)gain a sense of their 'humanity' who survive both films' narratives and emerge triumphant.

Ghost in the Shell isn't the only Anglo-American film or Japanese anime that privileges the human elements in their posthuman characters. From Anglo-American films such as Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) through to Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* (1997) to Alex Garland's *Ex_Machina* (2015), or Japanese anime such as Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* (1988) to Tensai Okamura's *Darker than Black* (2007) to Naoyoshi Shiotani's *Psycho Pass* (2012), I saw a pattern emerge. Each of these Anglo-American films or Japanese anime had posthuman characters and contained elements that were influenced by traditional film noir, including their aesthetics, characters and narrative structures. I noticed that these screen texts, despite their disparate origins, all seemed to be manipulating tropes from traditional film noir to explore notions of what it means to be human, and what essential human qualities—the 'humanity' that

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[1] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818: London: Penguin, 1992), 141.
[2] *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang (1927: London: Eureka, 2005).
[3] *Ghost in the Shell*, directed by Rupert Sanders (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2017).
[4] A conceit that has courted controversy over the appropriation of East Asian culture by the West and whitewashing, this is a fascinating issue for debate but beyond the confines of the focus of this PhD thesis. For an overview of this see Steve Rose, "Ghost in the Shell's whitewashing: Does Hollywood have an Asian problem?" *The Guardian*, accessed July 10, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/mar/31/ghost-in-the-shells-whitewashing-does-hollywood-have-an-asian-problem.
[5] For this thesis, I use the Western order for naming Japanese people and characters, first name followed by surname.

I believe The Major refers to in my opening quote—might continue to define a character as human when they have evolved beyond what is currently regarded as human. As gene editing becomes a potential reality;[6] as we incorporate more technology, from hearing aids to prosthetics to smart phones, into our daily lives; as we lose ourselves in digital landscapes,[7] is there an impulse here to try and validate aspects of the human that we can cling onto as the definition of what is human continues to shift?

In each of these screen texts, I noticed a subversion of traditional film noir structure: when the posthuman character experiences an awakening of their 'humanity' through an encounter with a femme, or homme, fatale they survive, where in traditional film noir that same character would be condemned to destruction.[8]

But what exactly could The Major mean by 'our humanity' in that opening quote? This needs to be broken down further. The human is a complex and contradictory creation that is not merely the physical embodiment of *homo sapiens* but a cultural construct which has come under the critical microscope across history.[9] However, I interpret this humanity in the context of both *Ghost in the Shell* films and the subgenre more generally to be rooted in two elements: a human being's ability to experience the world emotionally as well as rationally; and an ability to construct narratives, to tell stories, to develop our sense of self and our place in relation to the world and those who surround us. These two qualities, which I refer to as 'emotional awakening' and 'storytelling ability' throughout the thesis, are traits which I argue posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* employ to achieve positive endings to their narratives.

These concerns are present at the heart of a series of Anglo-American films and Japanese anime that use film noir tropes and have posthuman characters. These Anglo-American films and Japanese anime, I argue, can be categorised as a new subgenre which I call *posthuman noir*.

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[6] Michael Le Page, "CRISPR Gene Editing Technique is Probably Safe Sudy Confirms," *New Scientist*, accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.newscientist.com/article/2139939-crispr-gene-editing-technique-is-probably-safe-study-confirms/.

[7] For more on the shift in reassessing what is human and posthuman see N Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[8] As I will explore in Chapter 2 of this thesis, traditional film noir protagonists experience an excess of emotion leading them to transgress the accepted boundaries of their societies; this ultimately leads them to 'generate their own doom.' See William Luhr, *Film Noir* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 2.

[9] For an introduction to ways the human is viewed, see Steve Fuller, "Humanity Poised Between Biology and Ideology," in *Humanity 2.0: What it Means to be Human Past, Present and Future* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7-68. For a focus on the humanist debate around ideas of the human see Tony Davis, *Humanism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

This thesis is concerned with identifying this new subgenre, exploring its antecedents and unpacking what this subgenre says about what it is to be human, and which qualities of the human might continue to positively define us as human in posthuman futures. I use the word positively here because when posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* display these human qualities, their trajectory in the narrative becomes more successful; these characters survive where those who do not display these human qualities fail. The human qualities these characters display are cast in an affirming light; they are represented as something to be preserved.

This thesis, therefore, aims to make an original contribution to the field by, firstly, identifying a new subgenre I am titling *posthuman noir*; secondly, exploring the subgenre critically in relation to its antecedents; and thirdly, in assessing how this subgenre contributes to the way in which aspects of the human are figured in speculative posthuman futures. I therefore focused my research around the following questions:

What are the defining features of *posthuman noir* and what are its antecedents?

How are two essential human traits, namely emotional awakening and storytelling ability, employed within the subgenre as definers of what it is to be human in posthuman futures?

And finally, how can my creative practice of screenwriting further enhance my understanding of this new subgenre?

Although there is pre-existing academic scholarship on some of the material I have collated in this subgenre—for example on *Blade Runner*, *Gattaca* or Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* (1995)—no one has grouped these screen texts together in this way before to explore their similar approaches in manipulating traditional film noir tropes as a means to question what aspects of the human should be preserved in an era of rapid technological advancement.

Before moving forward, I want to explore the differences between *posthuman noir* and two pre-existing subgenres, neo noir and tech noir. The texts I classify as *posthuman noir* flow between both these broader categories, although the specific patterns I explore in this thesis require these texts to be gathered together into a subgenre of their own.

Neo noir acts an overarching term which seems to encompass all screen texts made outside the period of traditional film noir,[10] incorporating tales that take place in contemporary

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[10] Alain Sliver, "Introduction" in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 11.

settings and the past as well as the far future. Mark Bould, Katherina Giltre and Greg Tuck raise a significant issue which links neo noir texts together and separates them from traditional film noir: 'Neo noir knows its past. It knows the rules of the game.'[11] These screen texts, developed after the period traditional film noir are conscious of their predecessors and make explicit reference to them. In this way the texts I discuss in this thesis could be placed within this larger subgenre, however, their specific use of posthuman characters and the themes that emerge require more specific categorisation.

The subgenre of neo noir, titled tech noir[12] starts to narrow the focus further. Paul Meehan charts the flow between film noir conventions and science fiction throughout the twentieth and into the early twenty first centuries in *Tech Noir: The Fusion of Science fiction and Film Noir*, engaging with discussion of the production processes involved in a variety of screen texts. Covering mainly examples from the west, Meehan analyses trends in broad range of science fiction films that employ varying levels of reference to film noir conventions, including those that cross over with horror. Emily Auger's extensive *Tech-Noir Film: A Theory of the Development of Popular Genres*[13] also covers this broader range of screen texts, with discussion of horror and the literary gothic influences. Her focus is on literary and mythic antecedents to tech noir, such as the myth of Prometheus, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Auger's approach concentrates on the ways increased engagement with technology is portrayed as dangerous in these texts, employs a Freudian reading of the prevalence of dreams in these narratives and charts the development of tech-noir as a popular genre. As with Meehan's book, Auger also concentrates on screen texts from the west, predominantly America.

In this thesis I use the term *posthuman noir* to differentiate the screen texts I look at from this broader subgenre of tech noir. My focus is narrower, *posthuman noir* texts not only include aesthetic tropes of traditional film noir, but also use and subvert the narrative structures, characters and thematic conventions of this genre; unlike examples in tech-noir that may use only one element from traditional film noir for example *The Terminator* (dir. James Cameron,

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[11] Bould, Mark, Giltre, Kathrina and Tuck, Greg. "Parallax Views: An Introduction." In *Neo Noir*, edited by Mark Bould, Kathrina Giltre and Greg Tuck, 1-10. London: Wallflower Press, 2009.
[12] Paul Meehan, comments that this label could come from the bar in *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1985) in *Tech-Noir: The Fusion of Science fiction and Film Noir* (London: McFarland &Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2008), E-book, 8.
[13] Emily E. Auger, *Tech-Noir Film: A Theory of the Development of Popular Genres* (Bristol: Intellect, 2011).

1995) which includes aesthetic features of traditional film noir without the previous genre's other tropes. *Posthuman noir* screen texts, as I discuss in Chapter 2, must also include posthuman characters, while there are films categorised as tech noir that do not include posthuman characters, for example: *Timecop* (dir. Peter Hyams, 1994) [14] or *Twelve Monkeys* (dir. Terry Gilliam, 1995)[15] which explore time travel technology with film noir conventions, or *Goldeneye* (dir. Martin Campbell, 1995)[16] which Auger includes in her comprehensive list of tech-noir films.

This thesis seeks to further bring an original contribution to knowledge by identifying trends in the perception 'emotional awakening' and 'storytelling ability' as important qualities of being human across cultures through incorporating examples from both Anglo-American and Japanese screen texts. Previous studies in tech noir, as acknowledged, have investigated western screen texts while other studies, such as *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*[17] edited by Christopher Bolton, Istavan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. and Tatsumi Takayuki, have analysed Japanese texts. My focus is not on the mediums of live action film or anime, nor on their differing production approaches; instead I investigate the content of these screen texts and the similarities in the adaptation and subversion of traditional film noir tropes to privilege the qualities of emotional awakening and human storytelling ability.

Furthermore, this thesis aims to explore a non-hierarchical approach to knowledge production in which the form reflects the content. Through figuring the screenplay as a posthuman text evolving towards *becoming-film*, and through channelling myself as a cyborg-screenwriter, my creative practice—an expression of the human storytelling ability which aims to generate an emotional awakening in the reader—aims to mirror the themes around these essential human traits within the subgenre. In this way, I aim to encourage the reader to engage both their emotional and rational thinking processes when reading the thesis; it is this balanced combination, which reflects human thought processes, that is validated within the subgenre.

2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Frankenstein* and yet creative practitioners are still asking the same questions about important qualities of being human,

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[14] Meehan, *Tech-Noir*, 200.
[15] Ibid., 206.
[16] Auger, *Tech-Noir Films*, 184.
[17] Christopher Bolton, Istavan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. and Tatsumi Takayuki, eds., *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

myself included. It is interesting to note that both these human qualities—emotional awakening and storytelling ability—are also considered to be positive attributes in *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley's early example of posthuman science fiction. The Creature experiences an emotional awakening through observing the interactions of the cottager De Lacey family[18] and is given access to knowledge and develops storytelling ability through learning to speak and read.[19] The Creature embraces the combination of rationality and emotionality that is part of the human condition and finds a way to express itself through its own narrative, unlike its creator, Victor, who pursues intellect to the detriment of emotional fulfilment. It is with the Creature that the reader is asked to sympathise. This is not dissimilar to the relationship and narrative arc between the A.I. creation, Ava (Alicia Vikander), and its creator, Nathan (Oscar Isaac), in the 2015 film *Ex_Machina* (although, as I will explore in more detail throughout this thesis, the ending of this latter film, as compared to the cautionary warning of *Frankenstein*, is decidedly more positive for the creation than for the creator).

While these questions about what it is to be human remain the same, their urgency has increased as the pace with which we engage with technologies that might make us posthuman becomes ever more rapid.[20] That is not to say that our present day and age is the only point in which human beings have questioned their relationship to technology, or have been changed by their interaction with their tools. However, the rate at which technology becomes ubiquitous is increasing. Compare, for example, how long it took for eye-glasses to become an easily available augmentation to the time taken for a smart phone to become as readily available. Eye-glasses were first used around the end of the 13th century but it was not until the 15th and 16th centuries that they came into wide circulation in Europe,[21] and it took further centuries until the

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[18] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 107-132. The Creature's emotional awakening is charted from its perspective as it reflects on its developing feelings, ibid., 94. It is the excess of emotion without hope of sympathy that causes its violent acts, and which earns reader empathy. See Jeanne M. Britton, "Novelistic Sympathy in Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'" *Studies in Romanticism* 48, No. 1 (2009): 3-22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25602177.

[19] Ibid. 115-126. The Creature expresses its storytelling ability as it relates its own narrative of events to Victor later in the novel, demonstrating how it has come to develop its own sense of identity. For more on the way the Creature manipulates narrative, see Beth Newman, "Narratives of Seduction and the Seductions of Narrative: The Frame Structure of Frankenstein" ELH 53, No. 1 (1986): 151-152. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873151.

[20] See Benjamin Noys, *Malign Velocities Acclerationism and Capitalism* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014).

[21] For a detailed look at the development of eye glasses, although focused on Florence, see Vincent Ilardi, *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007). Alternatively, the essays in Teresa Brennan and Jay Martin's edited collection *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight* (New York: Routledge, 1996) provide a broad overview of approaches to sight.

1850s for eye-glasses to appear in the format we know today. On the other hand, it has only taken around two decades for the smart phone to become an essential tool. The term 'smart phone' has been in use since 1995, although the first smart phone, a combination of mobile phone and PDA, was developed by IBM in 1992.[22] However, it was not until the release of the Apple iPhone, around 2007, which brought the smartphone into mainstream public use.[23] While glasses augment one element of the body, namely the eye, a smart phone augments the human mind and sense of identity in a variety of ways—whether through data collection and storage, or connectivity through digital networks, or the development of multiple virtual selves. We may already be on the path towards the posthuman.[24]

While writing this thesis, there have been other significant developments in posthuman technologies, primarily in the areas of artificial intelligence and genetics. In 2016, world Go champion Lee Se-dol competed against British-developed A.I. Alpha Go. The game of Go is considered more complicated than chess;[25] in Go there are more potential moves and therefore, more strategies than in chess, so it is a more difficult game to play and win. However, the A.I. defeated its human opponent. What I find fascinating is that, in discussing playing against the A.I., Se-dol stated: 'Normally, you can sense your opponent's breathing, their energy. And lots of times you make decisions which are dependent on the physical reactions of the person you're playing against. With a machine, you can't do that.'[26] This draws to the fore the way that embodied human decision making is informed not only by logic but also by interpreting the physiological changes in others and the external expression of our emotions.[27] Machines, on the

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[22] Steven Tweedie, "The world's first smartphone, Simon, was created 15 years before the iPhone," *Business Insider UK*, accessed July 31, 2017, http://uk.businessinsider.com/worlds-first-smartphone-simon-launched-before-iphone-2015-6.

[23] According to statista.com there are 2.3 billion smart phones in use across the globe in 2017, accessed August 1, 2017. https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/.

[24] See work of Neil Badmington; as a start his essay "Theorizing Posthumanism" in *Cultural Critique* 53, (2003) which uses the image of a computer as Time magazine's man of the year in 1983 as a springboard into discussion of posthuman and posthumanism; or Celia Lury *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and identity* (New York: Routledge, 2005) which explores this idea of how current photographic and digital technology is already enhancing ideas of the human self.

[25] In 1997 A.I. Deep Blue defeated chess champion Kasparov, and subsequent A.I.s have beaten human players since then. See "From the archive, 12 May 1997: Deep Blue win a giant step for computerkind" May 12, 1997, released online May 12, 2011. https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2011/may/12/deep-blue-beats-kasparov-1997.

[26] BBC News Technology, "Google AI wins second Go game against top player," accessed March 3, 2016. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-35771705.

[27] For more on human emotions see Chapter 3.2.

other hand, still rely only on logic to devise their strategies which can result favourably in winning games but is less effective in more social scenarios.[28] Although Alpha Go demonstrates how far programming has developed, there is still a gap between this A.I. and the artificial intelligences imagined in the Anglo-American films and Japanese anime explored in this thesis. Still, this evolution is enough to concern prominent thinkers like Stephan Hawking;[29] if a computer is capable of out-thinking a human in a complex strategy game, it may only be a matter of time before artificial intelligence supplants us. As programmers reconfigure artificial intelligence DeepMind to use imagination,[30] as well as logic, in decision making and emulate the human mind, it seems we are a step closer to the posthuman future.

A second example of recent advancements in posthuman technologies comes from the development of gene editing techniques. In 2015, a research group at the Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China announced that they had found, and implemented, a way of editing the genes in a human embryo using a process called CRISPR-Cas9.[31] This technique enables scientists to target specific genes more precisely and remove or alter those genes. The research group's lack of accuracy in their work on a genetic defection, beta-thalassemia, illustrated how problematic their process was, but their experiments still proved successful in some of the embryos—none of which were implanted into a womb—which could pave the way for further editing of genetic sequences in embryos in the future. These edits would be to the germline of cells, meaning they would be inherited by subsequent generations. Francis Fukuyama raises ethical questions about editing at the germline level, stating that it would be akin to 'giving your child a tattoo that she can never subsequently remove and has to hand down not just to her children but all subsequent descendants.'[32] Although Fukuyama's tone is designed to shock, and over-emphasises the negative aspects of this technology, its concern is echoed in the debates

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[28] Robert C. Schank discusses the deficiency in current artificial intelligence design which relies too much on logic in *Tell Me A Story: Narrative and Intelligence* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995, reprint 2000), 15.

[29] Stephan Hawking, interviewed by BBC technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones, in "Stephan Hawking warns that artificial intelligence could end mankind." accessed May 20, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-30290540.

[30] David Nield, "Google has started adding Imagination to its DeepMind AI," *Sciencealert.com*, accessed July 29, 2017. http://www.sciencealert.com/google-has-started-adding-imagination-to-its-deepmind-ai.

[31] Antonio Regalado, "Chinese team reports gene-editing human embryos," MIT Technology Review, accessed May 20, 2015, http://www.technologyreview.com/news/536971/chinese-team-reports-gene-editing-human-embryo/.

[32] Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (London: Profile books Ltd, 2002), 94.

about the need for regulation, or even a moratorium, on genetic editing in human embryos that earlier information about the Chinese research group sparked in the scientific community.[33] The ability to edit out defective or unwanted genes is the basis of the central conceit in *Gattaca*, one of the Anglo-American films I would group in the subgenre of *posthuman noir*. The film emerged from a period of key developments in genetic technology, such as the cloning of Dolly the sheep (in 1996), and the expansion of the Human Genome Project, which had begun in 1990.[34] *Gattaca* uses aesthetic, character and narrative tropes from traditional film noir to explore the ethical problems of a world in which all imperfection is removed through gene editing. The CRISPR-Cas9 process pushes this speculative future of human genetic engineering into our near future, provoking us to think about the ethical implications posed in films like *Gattaca*.

It is advancements like these in posthuman technologies in the past decade that influenced my decision to study the Anglo-American films and Japanese anime that I have grouped into *posthuman noir*. Creative practice reacts and reflects our attitudes to technology, and I argue that the screen texts I have mentioned act as markers for the ways in which we, as human beings, envision our future engagement with technology. In this period of accelerated technological change—Pramod K Nayar points out, 'previously taken-for-granted categories of the human/non-human are now subject to sustained, controversial examination'[35]—it is also increasingly important to examine creative outputs which reflect the impact of this change on what it means to be human. After all, science fiction is a genre which transports present day fears into a distanced space to examine those fears.[36] Human beings use storytelling abilities to explore possible outcomes and find the best solution before they act;[37] it is this creative impulse that helps them, and us, survive. It is also a skill that posthuman characters in this new subgenre *posthuman noir*, use to achieve their positive endings, which I will explore in Chapter 4. Human

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[33] Antonio Regalado, 'Engineering the perfect baby.' MIT Technology Review, accessed May 20, 2015, http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/535661/engineering-the-perfect-baby/.

[34] For more information on the Human Genome Project see http://www.genome.gov/10001772, accessed August 1, 2017.

[35] Pramod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 3.

[36] See J.P.Telotte's "Introduction to the World of Science Fiction" in his book *Science Fiction Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3-32. Also of interest might be an interview between Darko Suvin and Tatsumi Takayuki which explores impact of Suvin's ideas on Japanese science fiction in *Science Fiction Studies* 12, No. 2 (1985): 202-208.

[37] Brain Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition and Fiction* (U.S.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 193.

storytelling engages the emotions to capture audience attention or to enable an audience to simulate the feelings of others.[38] The two human qualities that I explore within *posthuman noir* are therefore interconnected; in displaying, or learning, one, the posthuman characters often learn the other. Throughout this thesis I will focus on either emotional awakening or storytelling ability, but for myself as a creative practitioner one does not exist without the other, they exist in a consistent feedback loop and when one is lacking the other tends to fail.[39]

As a creative practitioner, I employ my human storytelling ability in this thesis to create three original screenplays, of varying lengths, to complement, investigate and add to the subgenre of *posthuman noir*. The title of this thesis, "Creating Positive Posthumans", refers firstly, to how posthuman characters in the subgenre are developed to be viewed in a positive light; and secondly, to the ways I create my own scenarios to design posthuman characters who can be viewed positively. This PhD is conducted by creative practice research,[40] and thus seeks to employ two different methods of knowledge production: theoretical and analytical reading of existing material and the writing of original creative work.

It is this exploration of a feedback loop between theory and practice that provides the starting point for Chapter 1, in which I outline my methodology. I take a non-hierarchical attitude to these two ways of producing knowledge, preferring to view them as parts of a rhizome[41] which are interconnected and through which knowledge production flows freely. My theoretical research informs my practice and my practice informs my theoretical research. As emotional awakening and storytelling ability are inextricably linked, theory and practice combine in a feedback loop in which each element strengthens the other. As some posthuman theory seeks to blur binaries between human/non-human, male/female, organic/manufactured,[42] this thesis likewise seeks to blur the binary of practice and theory so the content of the thesis,

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[38] Patrick Colm Hogan, *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (USA: University of Nebraska Press Lincoln and London, 2011), 243.

[39] Screenwriting manuals and textbooks emphasise the connection between emotion and storytelling: see Linda Aronson, *The 21st Century Screenplay: A Comprehensive Guide to Writing Tomorrow's Films* (U.S.A.: Silman-James Press, 2010), 45 or Robert McKee, *Story* (London: Methuen, 1999), 110-112.

[40] For an overview of concept of creative practice research see Linda Candy, *Practice Based Research: A Guide*, (University of Technology, Sydney, CCS Report, Version, 1.0 November 2006).

[41] I take the image of the rhizome from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari which they explore in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brain Massumi (London: Continuum, 2008), E-book, 3-25.

[42] See Donna Haraway, *The Cyborg Manifesto* in *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 35, or for a broader overview Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

which explores human qualities of storytelling and emotional awakening, is reflected in its formal construction. Thus, in Chapter 1, I set out my methodology of creative practice in combination with close readings of screen texts.

In Chapter 2, I define the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, explaining its identifying features firstly through a short screenplay titled *Terminal* and then through illustrative examples across my list of *posthuman noir* Anglo-American films and Japanese anime. The creative output, *Terminal*, acts as an introduction to the subgenre and asks the reader to involve themselves in human qualities of emotional awakening and storytelling ability. This structure is reflected in subsequent chapters, where the reader is asked to first engage with a screenplay which establishes my creative interaction with the topic of the chapter before moving onto a theoretical analysis section.

Following the screenplay, *Terminal*, I contextualise the subgenre by first discussing traditional film noir (2.2). I engage with the debates around the status of film noir as a genre and set out some clear aesthetic, structural, character and thematic tropes before looking at the relationship between Japan and America, from the period of The Second World War through to the present day, explaining why I decided to focus on Japanese anime as well as Anglo-American film. It is impossible in a thesis of this length, with the constraints of practice, to cover a broader range of screen texts, thus I had to be selective. This is not to say that *posthuman noir* only exists in Anglo-American film and Japanese anime, and there are certainly examples in other film cultures.[43] However, there are more extensive examples in both areas and the most recent example, *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), is an Anglo-American remake of a Japanese anime. There is also a strong historical link of cross pollination of visual culture between America and Japan from the pre-war cartoons which inspired the birth of anime,[44] to the post-war occupation,[45] which occurred around the time of traditional film noir, to the boom years of the 1970s and 80s which heavily influenced the visions of the future represented in my chosen

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[43] One of the early precursors of the subgenre can be traced in Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (France: Athos Films,1965) and a recent example can be found in *Automata*, directed by Gabe Ibáñez, (Barcelona: Contracorrientes Films, 2014) which is a Spanish Bulgarian coproduction.

[44] See Christopher Bolton, *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime* (London: University of Minnesota Press. 2007).

[45] For a broad overview of Japan's development in twentieth century, and its relationship with America see James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (U.S.A: W. W. Norton &Company, Inc, 2002) and Jeffrey Kingston, *Japan in Transformation 1952 – 2000* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2001).

posthuman noir, starting point *Blade Runner*.[46] This film then went on to inspire the imagination of Japanese creators I have grouped into the subgenre such as Mamoru Oshii.[47] There is a strong creative connection between Japan and America, hence the selection of these two areas for the focus of my exploration of the subgenre.

I subsequently set out a definition for *posthuman noir* (2.3), beginning with the selection of the term posthuman by exploring the philosophical ideas of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism. I then lay out a series of defining features—aesthetics, characters, themes and structures—while highlighting how two human qualities, emotional awakening and storytelling ability, appear to hold a privileged position in the subgenre.

The final section of Chapter 2 is a creative reflection on the screenplay *Terminal*, drawing on, and placing it within, my theoretical reading. This section pulls together the various threads at play in Chapter 2 to form a comprehensive definition of the new subgenre and sets out a trajectory for the next chapters which focus on case studies into each of these two defining human traits.

Chapter 3 focuses on the first key quality of being human in *posthuman noir*—emotional awakening. The chapter begins with the screenplay *Hydrangea* (3.1), which is for a 30-minute anime episode, and follows the emotional awakening of the forestry robot, T.S. This screenplay challenges the idea that a robot needs to be humanoid for it to experience a human-like emotional awakening, an element that is barely presented thus far in existing *posthuman noir*. Thus, I wrote this screenplay to bring an original angle to the subgenre while also to exemplify the narrative arc that, as I will argue throughout this thesis, occurs when a posthuman character experiences an emotional awakening in *posthuman noir*.

The screenplay is once again followed by a theoretical section which first seeks to define more precisely what I mean by emotional awakening (3.2) before applying that idea to a close reading of Alex Garland's *Ex_Machina* (2015) (3.3). This close reading demonstrates how the tropes of traditional film noir are manipulated in the subgenre; characters are praised, rather than punished, for experiencing an emotional awakening. I conclude the chapter with a critical

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[46] See Wong Kin Yeun's essay "On the Edge of Space" in *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader*, edited by Sean Redmond (London: Wallflower Press, 2004): 105, which discusses the aesthetics world creation in *Blade Runner* and *Ghost in the Shell*.

[47] Nicholas Rucka, "Interview with Mamoru Oshii," *Midnight Eye*, accessed August 1, 2017. http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/mamoru-oshii/.

reflection (3.4) on *Hydrangea* which draws together the threads explored in the screenplay and the close reading. It also demonstrates my creative process, drawing on research I conducted in Japan into Japanese screenwriting methods.

Chapter 4 focuses on the other human quality, storytelling, and begins with the feature film screenplay, *Golems Inc* (4.1). This screenplay employs human storytelling abilities on multiple levels to interrogate how this quality enables human beings to survive. *Golems Inc.* is followed by a section which defines storytelling ability (4.2), and engages with the challenges this term presents before investigating how storytelling ability is used in Tensai Okamura's *Darker Than Black* (2007) (4.3). Through a close reading of this Japanese anime, I demonstrate the various ways human storytelling ability is interpreted and applied to enable the posthuman characters to achieve their positive endings.

As with Chapter 3, Chapter 4 concludes with a critical reflection on *Golems Inc.* (4.4) where I explore my own creative process and highlight the different ways I have used storytelling ability within the screenplay. I draw together the arguments made during the close reading, demonstrating how both creative and analytical sections engage in the same debates.

As a final note: In 2017 as of the time of submission of this thesis, two of the most anticipated Anglo-American films, *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Sanders) and *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve), are newly released; of note is also that they are related to earlier films and anime which I group into the *posthuman noir* subgenre. Continued interest in using traditional film noir tropes in posthuman science fiction screen texts is clearly unabated, which increases the value for examining the growing subgenre. The stakes are now clear, and as this subgenre captures the struggles humans face in the move toward the posthuman future, it also posits potential solutions for a positive version of that future.

Chapter 1:
Creating Positive Posthumans: Creative Practice Methodology

We come to the world theoretically only after we
have come to understand it through handling…
Barbara Bolt on Heidegger[1]

In this thesis, I use a methodology which combines film studies approaches, including close analysis of specific screen texts, with creative practice. In each of the following chapters, the reader is first asked to engage emotionally with the creative text—a screenplay story that I have written with the aim of awakening an emotional response in the reader—before engaging intellectually with the more traditionally academic section. This structure is significant because it reflects my core arguments on the qualities considered positively human in *posthuman noir* through asking the reader to engage with the thesis using a combination of emotional and rational thought processes and demonstrates how creative practice embraces a non-binary approach to theory and practice knowledge production.

In this chapter, I will explain my choice of methodology by first establishing how I use film analysis before moving on to creative practice, introducing the concept and giving an overview of its history and challenges. I then present my arguments for why creative practice is a particularly apt approach when considering the central research questions of this thesis through the dual lenses of the screenplay as a living text and of the screenwriter as a cyborg.

Film Analysis

Given that this study is concerned with defining and exploring a new film subgenre, *posthuman noir*, I draw on a number of approaches from film studies, starting with the concept of film genre.[2] I argue that these Anglo-American films and Japanese anime, to quote Tom Ryall

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[1] Barbara Bolt, *A Non Standard Deviation: Handleability, Praxical Knowledge and Practice Led Research*, accessed November 29, 2016.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251577028_A_Non_Standard_Deviation_Handlability_Praxical_Know ledge_and_Practice_Led_Research?enrichId=rgreq-913fea733bcbb9bd9d5697f17adb53f8- XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI1MTU3NzAyODtBUzoyNDM3NjAwMDkzMTQzMTVAMTQzNT EyODMyNTAyMA%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf. 6.
[2] Film genre exploration opens a series of debates which I do not have the space to address in this thesis, general points revolve around the validity of categorisation, assumptions surrounding production of a generic text, and around role of film critics in ascribing a set of conventions to texts which were not created explicitly to fit into. For an overview see Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) or Stephan Neale, *Genre* (1980; London: British Film Institute, 1983).

'may be defined [by] patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films,'[3] and it is these patterns that I seek to pull out in my study. As Rick Altman reflects, 'in order to be recognised as a genre, films must have both a common topic […] and a common structure, a common way of configuring that topic.'[4] My interest in defining this film subgenre is not in exploring these screen texts as genre films, which are considered 'imitative works of lesser quality and little originality.'[5] Instead, I primarily draw on genre as a method of categorisation, identifying and setting out specific tropes so that others might be able to recognise what they are viewing as a *posthuman noir* screen text. I also use this method of categorisation to establish my understanding of traditional film noir before investigating how the genre definers of traditional film noir are subverted in *posthuman noir*.

I also use close readings and case studies of selected screen texts to demonstrate how the subgenre employs its various tropes through analysis of film techniques such as lighting, framing and *mise-en-scène*. I have selected my case studies on the basis of how they best exemplify the critical elements I am focusing on within the subgenre.

Screenwriting manuals, such as Jule Selbo's *Film Genre for the Screenwriter*,[6] use genre as a framework to provide rules and boundaries which can be adhered to, or manipulated, for aspiring writers. In this thesis, I use my self-defined boundaries of *posthuman noir* as a starting point for creative work to demonstrate how the subgenre functions and explore the rationale behind these boundaries. However, I have not set out to prescribe a collection of guidelines for a writer to follow to create within this subgenre. Instead, I seek to draw on my observations around existing Anglo-American films and Japanese anime and demonstrate consistent similarities that bind these screen texts together, while I use creative practice to shed a different light on knowledge production.

My exploration of emotional awakening in *posthuman noir* draws on research from cognitive neuroscience, particularly the work of Antonio Damasio who generates links between emotional and logical processes in the human mind.[7] I argue that it is this combination that is privileged in the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir*. The academic study of emotions,

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[3] Tom Ryall quoted in Stephen Neale, *Genre* (1980; London: British Film Institute, 1983), 7.
[4] Altman, *Film/Genre*, 23.
[5] Jule Selbo, *Film Genre for the Screenwriter* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1. Selbo also gives an overview of the differences between film genre and genre film, 1-5.
[6] Selbo, *Film Genre for the Screenwriter*.
[7] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, (London; Vintage, 2004), 42.

which had been neglected in the mid twentieth century,[8] gained traction in the 1980s, the same period as *Blade Runner* (dir. R Scott, 1982), the first screen text I define as being *posthuman noir* was produced. As Kristyn Gorton discusses in *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* an 'affective turn'[9] developed across the sciences and the humanities in this period. My approach, which explores how the narrative arc of posthuman characters facilitates this mirroring of human emotional cognition, focuses on the neuroscientific definitions of emotions and feelings to ground my arguments.

In a similar fashion to other film scholars, such as Noël Carroll, Torben Grodal and Greg M. Smith, I have turned to the sciences to build my definition and frame my exploration of these screen texts.

From the 1990s onwards, Noël Carroll has used cognitive neuroscience to explore the cognitive focus of emotions on particular objects and how that translates to the way audiences identify with characters, and experience emotions towards narrative objects, in similar ways; for example in horror, the way the monster becomes an object of fear or disgust.[10] Torben Grodal, meanwhile envisions a meeting between cognition of emotions and their embodied responses in regards to fiction and narrative flows in *Moving Pictures: A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings and Cognition*,[11] and develops these thoughts in relation to human evolution in *Embodied Visions: Evolution, Emotion, Culture and Film*.[12] Building on both Carroll and Grodal, Greg Smith argues for reading the presentation of emotion in film through the way these texts generate a mood, mapping structure through a series of emotional cues that sustain the audience's emotional engagement with the text.[13] However, in this idea Smith breaks with Carroll through acknowledging that there are types of background emotional currents, moods,

[8] Greg M. Smith, *Film Structure and the Emotion System* (E-book, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

[9] Kristyn Gorton, *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 55.

[10] Noël Carroll "Film, Emotion, and Genre," *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*, eds. Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

[11] Torben Grodal, *Moving Pictures: A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings and Cognition* (E-book, Oxford: Clarendon, 2000).

[12] Torben Grodal, *Embodied Visions: Evolution, Emotion, Culture and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[13] See Smith, *Film Structure and the Emotion System*.

that are non-object specific and in arguing for and associative approach to figuring emotion and emotional responses to film texts.[14]

My thesis draws inspiration for these film studies scholars who have forged interdisciplinary methods to discuss the presentation of, and interaction with, emotion in screen studies. I ground my arguments around emotional awakening in the cognitive neurosciences and applies those concepts to a film studies analysis of screen texts. In addition, as I discuss in the next section, I use the method of creative practice to elicit an emotional response from the reader, seeking to actively engage them in the balanced model of the human mind that I argue is validated in *posthuman noir*.

Contextualising Creative Practice

The origins of the practice-based[15] PhD can be traced to Australia in the 1980s[16] where the University of Wollongong and the University of Technology, Sydney,[17] started PhD by creative practice programmes in creative writing. Since then, through the efforts of creative practitioner academics such as Graeme Harper,[18] the practice-based PhD has spread globally to embrace a variety of different creative mediums. The central argument for the inclusion of practice within academia is that this method opens new ways to approach developing knowledge. Barbara Bolt uses Heidegger's writing on handleability to explain how through 'handling' and 'doing'—the processes involved in a creative medium—relevant and exciting new pathways to knowledge can be explored.[19] David Gauntlett's work on creative exploration and creative making[20] is also useful to think about at this juncture; he highlights the ways in which active involvement in the creative process, in his case a more tactile approach through

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[14] Ibid., 29.

[15] Practice-based is a term used by Linda Candy, for more see Candy, *Practice Based Research: A Guide* (University of Technology, Sydney, CCS Report, Version 1.0 November 2006), 3.

[16] It is interesting to note here that the starting point of my investigation into *posthuman noir*, the film *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), was also a product of the 1980s.

[17] Candy, *Practice Based Research*, 4.

[18] Graeme Harper is the editor in chief of the journal *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, and has published extensively on creative writing and practice-led research; a list of books can be found on his website, accessed, August 1, 2017. http://www.graemeharper.com/Books.html. He has campaigned as part of the National Institute to include creative practice-led research in academia and was the founding Director of UK Creative Campus scheme which started in 2003.

[19] Bolt, *A Non Standard Deviation*, 6.

[20] For an overview of this concept see David Gauntlett & Peter Holzwarth, "Creative and visual methods for exploring identities," *Visual Studies* 21:01, (2006): 82-91. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14725860600613261.

the making of objects, can allow the practitioner/participant to come to new knowledge of their subject or themselves. This echoes Bolt's interpretation of Heidegger that 'we come to the world theoretically only after we have come to understand it through handling.'[21] Research conducted through creative practice embraces these ideas and allows the academic practitioner to develop 'understanding that originates in and through practice.'[22]

The blending of theory and practice is more ubiquitous in art colleges and film schools, where students are encouraged to explore theoretical concepts through their application in a particular technique or style.[23] Therefore, in an educational context there has always been a space for creative practice to mix with theory.

However, in the context of a PhD through creative practice, the environment is still maturing. As the area is developing, there is a proliferation of terms used to describe the type of research conducted in this blend of theory and practice, which highlight the subtle differences at play within this emerging research field. Linda Candy, for instance, differentiates between practice-based research and practice-led research.[24] Candy defines practice-based research as a process in which creative practice is combined with theoretical research to develop an original contribution to knowledge. On the other hand, she defines practice-led research as research that is focused on developing new knowledge about the process involved in a particular type of creative practice.[25] Using the example of writing a screenplay, practice-based research would focus more on the content of the created screenplay and the research questions explored within the screenplay and other written documents, often as a critical reflection or exegesis. Practice-led research, on the other hand, would focus on challenging the format of the screenplay itself, and research might manipulate various elements such as its structure or the appearance on the

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[21] Barbara Bolt, *A Non Standard Deviation*, 6.
[22] Ibid. 6.
[23] For an introduction to tensions between conservatoire and academic approaches to creative practice see Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). It is argued by Edward S. Small in *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), that experimental films exist in a space of creative/critical tension, where the creative medium is used to interrogate an idea or a form, or some cases both. Thus, experimental film engages with an interwoven process of practice and theory.
[24] Candy, *Practice Based Research*, 3.
[25] Ibid., 3.

page—both of these elements are strictly standardised and regulated in the film industry[26]—and seek to discover something new about the screenplay through deconstructing it.

I classify my PhD by creative practice as practice-based research, following Candy's definition, whereby this thesis uses creative outputs to explore research questions focused on the content of these creative outputs. This thesis's main focus is not on the form of screenwriting, but on the ways in which the content of a screenplay can be used to explore the central research question.

However, I would argue that it is impossible to fully divide these two ideas. Storytelling in screenwriting is inherently tied to the formal constraints of the screenplay; the spacing on the page, after all, is designed to equate each page to one minute of screen time.[27] Although my research through practice mainly focuses on the content, rather than form/format, in Chapter 3.1 I employ a different set of formal constraints when emulating the way an anime screenplay is structured to fully investigate that strand of my research. Thus, I would argue that for my creative practice with the screenplay, it is impossible to differentiate between Candy's two terms because these two supposedly separate areas influence and flow into each other. To this end, I find Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's terms of 'practice-led research [and] research-led practice'[28] more useful because their definitions of their terminology are more aware of the aforementioned tension between form and content, which they describe as being 'overlapping and interlinked.'[29] Smith and Dean's definition of practice-led research incorporates both of Candy's concepts, so that their term equates '*both* to the work of art as a form of research and to the creation of the work as generating research insights which might then be documented, theorised and generalised.'[30] In this way, both output and the process of creating the output are figured as generating new knowledge. Smith and Dean's other term research-led practice describes a process in which 'research work is directed not only towards the elucidation of

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[26] Most screenwriting textbooks and guides will have a section which explains the correct way to layout a screenplay so that it matches the industry standard, for an example see Philip Parker, *The Art and Science of Screenwriting* (second edition: Exeter: Intellect, 1999), 51-52.
[27] Kathryn Millard, *Screenwriting in a Digital Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 34. For a detailed history of the development of the screenplay in general see Steven Maras, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (London: Wallflower, 2009).
[28] Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, "Introduction: Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice – Towards the Iterative Cyclic Web," in *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, eds. Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 5-9.
[29] Ibid., 5.
[30] Ibid., 7.

falsifiable ideas but also towards the production of practical outcomes.'[31] In this second term there is an awareness of the tension inherent in the chicken-and-egg question: which takes the leading role, the research or the practice? In my thesis, for example, I explore a set of research questions which aim to add to knowledge through more traditional academic scholarship as well as through practical outputs, namely three screenplays. I therefore see my thesis as combining elements of both practice-led research and research-led practice.

As I will explain later in this chapter, my choice of writing screenplays is not just a decision to work within the medium I use as a creative practitioner, but is a way of exploring further the creating/ion of positive posthumans with a text that is also in a process of evolving, living and transitioning. Thus, I view research and practice, form and content, as part of an iterative cycle, a constant feedback loop in which progress in one area informs and shapes the other.[32]

This approach seeks to view the production of knowledges, not one single knowledge or one truth, but something that is 'treated, not monolithically, but as an activity which can appear in many guises across the spectrum of practice and research.'[33] Smith and Dean, unlike Candy, also note that research can lead towards creative outputs; this is where their concept of a creative iterative cycle is fully expressed. They discuss the way that 'development of faster and cheaper computers and by the science of digital signal processing' has facilitated 'the evolution of computer music.'[34] Research into one area can lead to creative production in another. I see the influence of my close reading of Anglo-American films and Japanese anime in my creative work just as often as I find writing a screenplay develops a new vantage point which informs my exploration of theory.

Finally, it is fruitful here to explain what I mean by 'research' as this term carries multiple meanings when related to the production of creative work. It is necessary to differentiate between the types of research involved in creative writing when discussing research-led practice. Andrew R. Brown and Andrew Sorenson develop their concept of research by making an important differentiation between the general research a practitioner does for any piece of creative work in which the knowledge is unknown to the practitioner but is

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[31] Ibid., 7.
[32] Ibid., 8.
[33] Ibid. 3.
[34] Ibid., 7.

known to others who are experts in that area; and the more specific academic research which is designed for 'uncovering/creating knowledge that was previously unknown to the field.'[35] This concept draws inspiration from the work of Margaret Boden, who makes a similar distinction when discussing the production of new ideas in the creative fields. She classifies the two types of ideas as 'psychological… [and] historical creativity.'[36] Psychological creativity is new to the creator but not to the world, while historical creativity is new to the creator and world. This maps onto the ideas of research used in Brown and Sorensen's analysis and in regard to the academic value of a PhD. Therefore, when the term 'research' is used within this thesis, it refers to the latter process in which the aim is to uncover/create knowledge that was previously unknown to the fields of film and cultural studies.

The screenplay as a living text

Craig Batty and Zara Waldeback describe screenwriting as 'an active form and screenplays as living products.'[37] This conception of the screenplay as a living document, I believe, is apt when considering the transitional nature of the screenplay text. During the development process, the screenplay is open to continued challenge and change; as Ian MacDonald describes, the screenplay is 'not a finished piece of work (in relation to the […] finished film). It is not normally, by the start of shooting, the work of only one person, despite what it might say on the cover.'[38] The screenplay is a transitional document designed to be open to interpretation, and while one could argue that all written texts are open to interpretation[39], unlike the novel or even the stage play, there is little interest in publishing a screenplay until after it has been made into a film and until recently there has been a similar lack of interest in the screenplay in academic circles.[40]

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[35] Andrew R. Brown and Andrew Sorensen "Integrating Creative Practice and Research in the Digital Media Arts," in *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, eds. Smith and Dean (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2009), 154.
[36] Margaret Boden, *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanism* (second edition; London: Routledge, 2004), 2.
[37] Craig Batty and Zara Waldeback, *Writing for the Screen: Creative and Critical Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 7.
[38] Ian W. MacDonald, "Disentangling the Screen Idea," *Journal of Media Practice* 5:2, (2004): 90.
[39] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 142-148.
[40] The Screenwriting Research Network, which was founded in 2006, has been at the vanguard of the change in attitude towards the screenplay as a text worthy of academic research. For more on this see the *Journal of Screenwriting*, or Ian W. MacDonald, *Screenwriting Poetics and the Screen Idea* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and Steven Maras, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (London: Wallflower, 2009).

Thus, I see the screenplay as a text in motion, one that I would argue is moving towards *becoming-film*[41] through its interaction with human and non-human others. The screenplay is written, to some degree, to encompass multiple potential visions for the films it might become. The screenwriter creates the text with the space for these multiple interpretations, almost like a spine around which the collaborators—directors, producers, designers, actors, to name a few—generate the cells and grow the end film. To some extent, the screenplay is 'less about what it is […] and more about what it can do, what it can affect and bring about.'[42] Thus, the screenplay is bursting with potential, but it is not until the screenplay connects with other filmmakers and their technologies that it becomes one specific film. Until that point, the screenplay exists on the cusp of *becoming-film.*

The development process generates a network around the screenplay, in which the text is subject to modification and mutation; as I stated previously, the screenplay text is always in motion. Aspects are revisited by the screenwriter and others involved in the development of the 'screen idea.'[43] I thus argue that the screenplay could be viewed using the concept of the rhizome posited by Deleuze and Guattari, where 'any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.'[44] Any section of the screenplay might be connected to different players in the *becoming-film* network: a designer will focus on locations presented, or aesthetics, and ask for changes to fit their vision or the real world locations they have identified.

'A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances relevant to the arts, sciences and social struggles.'[45] The screenplay is a text which links all elements of the screen idea together; it bridges and connects different levels of the filmmaking hierarchy; it enables the connection of artistic and technical elements; it is literary and not;[46] it is a combination of signs, both written and coded.

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[41] Here I draw on the concept of 'becoming' explored by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in Chapter 10, "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brain Massumi (London: Continuum, 2008), E-book, 232-309.

[42] Ben Swift, "Becoming-Sound: Affect and Assemblage in Improvisational Digital Music Making," *CHI* (2012): 1817.

[43] Ian W. MacDonald takes this term from Philip Parker's book *The Art and Science of Screenwriting*, to discuss the core idea of what a screen story is. "Disentangling the Screen Idea," *Journal of Media Practice* 5:2, (2004): 89.

[44] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 7.

[45] Ibid,7.

[46] See Ian W. MacDonald, "Disentangling the Screen Idea," *Journal of Media Practice* 5:2, (2004): 89-99.

Just as I use the rhizome as a concept in this thesis to explore the interconnected nature of theory and practice, the screenplays that I write are small rhizomes which must be connected to others—in this case theoretical sections—to form a complete whole which is working towards becoming a thesis. Form and content reflect and complement each other, demonstrating why I have chosen to use this methodology in my thesis.

Screenwriter as cyborg: screenplay as posthuman

In writing a screenplay, I engage with the network towards *becoming-film*, in which a combination of filmmakers and their tools becomes more than just a sum of their parts.[47] My image of this network draws on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage, which they describe as: 'On one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand, it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies.'[48] It is the networked connection of these bodies and tools in their social context which forms an assemblage that transforms the players into something greater than the sum of their parts. In the process of creating a screenplay, the organic—myself, the human writer—is tied to the technological—the computer/computer software—which begins to blur the boundaries between the human and the posthuman.[49] One could argue that all written texts now are a product of the human and the posthuman.[50] As a creative practitioner, I find myself bound to Final Draft™, a piece of screenwriting software that enables me to write more efficiently. It is coded so that through using keyboard shortcuts I can switch easily between the different components of the screenplay and the code makes sure these elements are correctly formatted. Final Draft™ also includes code that checks my spelling and grammar; it makes suggestions and assumes my intentions,[51] although not always accurately.

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[47] Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 90.

[48] Ibid. 88.

[49] N. Katherine Hayles writes about the process of the creator becoming cyborg through the use of computers in "Print is Flat, Code is Deep: The Importance of Media Specific Analysis," *Poetics Today* 25:1, (2004): 67-90.

[50] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 43.

[51] For more on this aspect of the ways in which code is incorporated into the process of writing see Lucas D. Introna, "The Enframing of Code: Agency, Originality and the Plagiarist," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28:6, (2011): 113-141.

The writing software that I use is not artificially intelligent; it does not have a consciousness of its own. Instead, it is an algorithm tool, although that tool is incorporated into the network of *becoming-film*. In relation to their concept of assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari state that 'tools exist only in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible.'[52] I interpret this in relation to my writing of a screenplay to think about the computer code and devices that enable my writing. These tools, in some way, move towards transforming me into a cyborg, they enhance my ability to write and I have become dependent on them. The image I have of myself as a writer is one which includes the computer (although, this is a vision which could be applied to writers in general, not just screenwriters).

However, in relation to the screenplay (which I have discussed as text which is alive and on the journey towards *becoming-film*), the intermingling of various organic—myself as human writer—and manufactured—computer and software—elements at this stage in the writing process also posits a question of whether we can look at the screenplay itself as a posthuman text. The screenplay is a product of the organic and the inorganic,[53] a recycling of the tales, narrative patterns and experiences that affected the screenwriter; it is created to affect an audience and to fulfil a purpose. Although the text itself may not have agency, the intention of the cyborg-screenwriter through the screenplay, aims to generate emotional awakenings in those who read it, changing how they might view the world around them; it also seeks to engage those readers into the network towards the screenplay *becoming-film*. Through the emotional responses of those who engage with the text, the screenplay is also changed and reshaped until it becomes a film: this is a reiterative cycle.

The posthuman characters in *posthuman noir*, in a similar way, are created by humans; they are often a combination of organic and inorganic processes—Rachel in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982); Neo in *The Matrix* (dir. the Wachowskis, 1999); Makoto Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Mamoru Oshii, 1995); Re-l, Vincent and Pino in *Ergo Proxy* (dir. Shukō Murase, 2006)—created by human characters with a need to address some deficiency in their

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[52] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 90.
[53] It is fruitful to think of N. Katherine Hayles concept of 'distributed cognition' in relation to the process of writing a screenplay. Hayles discusses the idea that print texts, and hyperlinked texts incorporate more than the reader in the cognitive process: 'When we read electronic hypertexts, we do so in environments that include the computer as an active cognizer performing sophisticated acts of interpretation and representation. Thus, cognition is distributed not only between writer, reader, and designer (who may or may not be separate people) but also between humans and machines (which may or may not be regarded as separate entities).' "Print is Flat, Code is Deep," 84.

worlds. The posthuman character emerges into their respective world fully formed to fulfil the purpose for which they were designed. However, this is not really a completed state, the posthuman characters within these screen texts are on the verge of becoming. These characters are placed into a narrative environment which emulates a world of change and flux. Here they experience emotional awakenings and an awakening of their storytelling abilities, this enables them to awaken the emotions of the characters they meet. In this fictional setting, the potential for becoming posthuman is explored.

Therefore, the route prescribed for a screenplay towards *becoming-film* reflects the fictional route that the posthuman characters experience in *posthuman noir*. In this way, I view the choice of screenplay as the output for my creative practice as a particularly apt method for this thesis. As the cyborg-screenwriter, I incorporate the technological and the organic in the early stages of the network towards *becoming-film*; my screenplays can be viewed as posthuman. Through the screenplay as a type of posthuman artefact and my own refiguring as cyborg-screenwriter, I aim to use and engage the two human traits—emotional awakening and storytelling ability—explored in this thesis. In this way, my method is bound into a feedback loop with my content.

Conclusion

To conclude: I have chosen this combined methodological approach, and structure for this thesis because I wanted the form—a mixture of film studies theoretical analysis and creative practice screenwriting—to reflect the content—an exploration of the *posthuman noir* subgenre and the two human traits, emotional awakening and storytelling ability, that are privileged in this subgenre. Therefore, through integrating creative and theoretical writing in this thesis I aim to develop a deeper understanding of *posthuman noir* from within the creative process, as well as from a more external observational analytic position. In this way, the process of knowledge acquisition between practice-based and research-based chapters is fluid and iterative.

I have argued that creative practice is a particularly apt method for this thesis because it allows me, as a cyborg-screenwriter, to employ these self-same human traits in the creation of my screenplays and affords me an alternative vantage point on these traits and the ways they are used in my chosen screen texts. The use of the screenplay as my creative output, also speaks to

my exploration of the subgenre because the screenplay is a text which can be viewed as a posthuman text, which reflects other aspects of my investigation into *posthuman noir*.

In this thesis, therefore, method, structure and content are fully connected in one singular purpose: to uncover and define the subgenre of *posthuman noir*.

Chapter 2: What is *Posthuman Noir*?

More human than human…

Tyrell Corporation[1]

This chapter focuses on categorisation, on unearthing the common features that tie a selection of Anglo-American films and Japanese anime together into a subgenre, and tracing the origins of the subgenre in traditional film noir and ideas of the posthuman, posthumanism and humanism. This is a subgenre I am titling *posthuman noir*, which I have identified at the intersection of science fiction and film noir.

Posthuman noir is present in American, British and Japanese creative outputs;[2] these countries, like many others, found their history intertwined in the 1940s in the wake of the Second World War. It was during this period that the body of films grouped under the term 'film noir' emerged in America[3] before flourishing in Britain and spreading globally, eventually reaching Japan, as many American cultural products did, in the aftermath of the Second World War.[4] As technological change accelerated through the latter half of the twentieth century into the twenty-first,[5] there was a resurgent interest in Anglo-American film and Japanese anime that explored humanity's relationship with technology, especially in the figure of the posthuman character. Curiously, some of the films and anime that explored questions of the human and posthuman started to use the aesthetics, characters and narrative patterns of film noir, landmarked by the release of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* in 1982. At its core, *posthuman noir* is concerned with the fears and possibilities afforded by the modification of humanity through

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[1] *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott (1982; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

[2] That is not to say that *posthuman noir* only exists in Britain, America and Japan and I acknowledge that it is present in variety of European films and other East Asian films and television shows. However, for the constraints of this thesis I have focused on Anglo-American film and Japanese anime because they present a cross cultural sample in which the key themes of *posthuman noir* can be investigated. This area is rich in potential for further exploration and expansion to other global cinemas in the future.

[3] James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts Updated and Expanded* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 9-27.

[4] For an overview of the Allied Occupation in Japan see Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, second edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 253-274.

[5] Since discovering fire and tools, mankind has been considered in relation to technology, however, the pace of technological change through the twentieth century has accelerated in a way that generates growing anxiety about the place of the human in the posthuman future. For an overview of this gear shift in technological change see Benjamin Noys, *Malign Velocities: Acclerationism and Capitalism* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014).

actions of 'extension'[6] (cybernetics and robotics), 'enhancement'[7] (genetic modification), and 'extrusion'[8] (virtual realities, connected consciousness), and how human nature is preserved or perpetuated through these changes. I argue that these concerns are presented to the audience by this subgenre through adopting elements found in the body of films labelled as film noir—films made during the period between *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941) and *Touch of Evil* (dir. Orson Welles, 1958)[9]—and adapting or subverting them.

Each of the Anglo-American films and Japanese anime discussed in this study—as exemplar texts of this subgenre I am identifying as *posthuman noir*—take on atmospheric and aesthetic devices that are associated with film noir, such as the emphases in their settings on the 'constant opposition of light and shadow [...use of] oblique camera angles [...with a] disruptive compositional balance of frames and scenes, with characters placed in awkward and unconventional positions within a particular shot.'[10] *Posthuman noir* also populates its dark worlds with character types that are drawn from film noir: the detective, the criminal, the conman, and the everyman, all manipulated by desire for what the femme, or homme, fatale offers them.[11] Moral ambiguity pervades *posthuman noir* narratives, building a rhizomatic maze of deceit[12] which mirrors the urban maze of the science fictional metropolises in which these stories are based. Finally, *posthuman noir* draws on thematic tropes of film noir, such as fatalism and existential malaise,[13] but modifies those ideas to question humanity's engagement with technological futures.

Notwithstanding these common elements between film noir and this subgenre of science fiction, my main argument in this thesis is that *posthuman noir* subverts the structure, and subsequently the character roles of traditional film noir. Structurally, traditional film noir stories

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[6] Julie Clarke, *The Paradox of the Posthuman: Science Fiction/Techno-Horror Films and Visual Media* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller Aktiengesellscchaft & Co. KG, 2004), 203.

[7] Ibid., 203.

[8] Ibid., 203.

[9] As with most details relating to film noir this grouping of films faces some contention; although the period between *The Maltese Falcon* and *A Touch of Evil* is generally considered the period of traditional film noir there are some who consider film noir starting earlier and finishing later. See the essays collected in Joan Copjec, ed. *Shades of Noir*: *A Reader* (London: Verso, 1998) and James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts Updated and Expanded* (London: University of California Press, 2008).

[10] Mark T. Conard, *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 1.

[11] Ian Brookes, *Film Noir: A Critical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 57-58.

[12] Jerold J. Abrams, "From Sherlock Holmes to the Hardboiled Detective in Film Noir" in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Mark Conard (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 72.

[13] Ian Brookes, *Film Noir*, 48-53.

set out a downward spiral of destruction and tragedy for protagonists who transgress societal norms. For these protagonists, 'death always comes at the end of a tortured journey.'[14] I argue that this subversion of the traditional film noir narrative structure occurs in *posthuman noir* when posthuman characters experience an emotional awakening and/or engage their storytelling ability. It is these two human traits that I will investigate throughout this thesis. These awakenings (re)connect the posthuman characters with intangible human traits in ways that place value on these traits and ameliorate the anxiety that the human, as we currently think about it, will be superseded.

In part 2.1 of this chapter, I begin my investigation into the subgenre with a short screenplay titled *Terminal*. This establishes through creative practice the way *posthuman noir* adapts and subverts traditional film noir tropes. It engages the reader actively with a *posthuman noir* future, encouraging them to employ both emotional and critical faculties in the pursuit of understanding the subgenre. As I explored in Chapter 1, in this thesis there is no superior/inferior binary between rational and emotional forms of intelligence.[15] Instead, one should combine these two forms just as the human mind combines them, and just as the positive posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* come to combine them.

I chose the format of a short screenplay for this initial exploration because it is designed to be self-contained,[16] and in this contained space, I establish the tropes which I investigate in greater depth throughout this thesis. After all, 'the short film is all about compression;'[17] it is the distillation of a story idea into a precise expression. This echoes the way I use the theoretical section of this chapter to set out the rules and defining features of the subgenre from my perspective as a scholar.

Terminal, however, is also an expression of the defining features of *posthuman noir* in action. The screenplay invites the reader to engage both rationally and emotionally with its content, mirroring the themes underpinning *posthuman noir*. To be human is to engage with the

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[14] Raymond Borde and Ètienne Chaumenton, "Towards a Definition of Film Noir" (1955) in *Film Noir Reader*, ed. A. Silver and J. Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 19.

[15] Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant School Master: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 7.

[16] A short screenplay is generally 30 pages or less in length, equating to 30 minutes or less of screen time, see Pat Cooper and Ken Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film* (London: Elsevier Focal Press, 2005), 1.

[17] Cooper and Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film*, 164.

world through stories,[18] storytelling ability, and, through a combination of reason and emotion,[19] to experience emotional awakenings. The screenplay invites the reader to reconnect with the combination of the two traits I use in this thesis as definers of humanity, like the posthuman characters within the script.

After the screenplay, in section 2.2, I delve into the antecedents of the subgenre, establishing ideas of traditional film noir in order to provide context for my subgenre of *posthuman noir*. I examine the key debates surrounding this contested genre/style before exploring the tropes—aesthetic, structural, character and thematic—in both American and Japanese contexts which I will subsequently use in my investigation of *posthuman noir*. In the following section, I set up some key factors in the relationship between America and Japan, explaining why I have chosen to look at screen materials from these two cultures in examining *posthuman noir*.

In section, 2.5, I define the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, identifying why I have chosen this specific title for the subgenre through exploring concepts of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism. I then explore the subgenre's common facets, including defining features, such as aesthetics, characters and themes, by drawing across a broad range of Anglo-American films and Japanese anime. Throughout this section, I begin to weave my argument about the ways in which the genre subverts traditional film noir tropes to privilege human qualities of emotionality and storytelling, and explain why this is the case.

I conclude Chapter 2 with a critical reflection on the screenplay *Terminal* (2.4). This section draws out the ways that I employ the tropes of *posthuman noir* to create a script which aims to introduce the subgenre, pulling together the creative and theoretical strands of the chapter.

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[18] Reynolds Price, *A Palpable God: Thirty Stories Translated from the Bible with an Essay on the Origins and Life of Narrative* (U.S.A.: North Point Press, 1985), 3.
[19] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (1994; London: Vintage, 2006), xvii.

<u>TERMINAL</u>

Written by

Maxine Gee

FADE IN

INT. JOB CENTRE OFFICE - MORNING

A windowless, blank slate of a room, stylistically
reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984. On two of the walls
there are doors. Above one is the sign: TERMINAL STAGE 2.

A simple desk, with a futuristic computer console on it,
divides the room.

KIM, 25, female, with a kind, approachable face, sits at the
desk, completely focused on the screen. She's dressed
immaculately in a skirt suit, futuristic meets 1940s.

Blue light dissects the grey space, creating bars of light
and shadow. Occasionally poster images appear on the walls--

THE TERMINAL - "We are all truly equal." A person on the
projected poster cycles through 24 generic body types, 12
male, 12 female.

WOOSH. A door slides open and ALEX, a bearded juggernaut,
with heterochromic blue/brown eyes, enters awkwardly. Kim
gestures for him to sit.

Kim taps on the screen and a text prompt appears, she reads:

> KIM
> Good morning... Alex, my name's
> Kim. I'm here to make your job
> reassignment as painless as
> possible. Let's get your file up.

That last bit wasn't in the script, it's for Alex who sits in
the offered chair, a tower of nervous energy.

> KIM (CONT'D)
> Wow, this is you're seventh
> reassignment, you're an old pro.

> ALEX
> Unlucky, kinda sums it up better.

> KIM
> Nonsense. Let's see what wonderful
> new job the list has for you today.

Kim's back on script. Kim taps through the menu, as prompted
by the programme to the JOB LIST. Seeing the job at the top
of the list, Kim can't help SWALLOWING audibly.

Alex's worried fidgeting ramps up a notch. Kim forces a
neutral smile.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   Just a minute, Alex, the system is
>   a little slow today.

On the screen ASSIGN JOB flashes. Kim ignores it, scrolling
down the job list, the second and third listings are:

CONSTRUCTION WORKER - C-3: FEMALE - HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT SITE

LUMBERJACK - C-2: MALE - ECOLOGICALLY AWARE FORESTRY SITE

Kim glances from the powerfully built Alex to the job list.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   You're a C-2 Male at the moment,
>   right?

>   ALEX
>   Fucking robots.

Kim shoots Alex a questioning look.

>   ALEX (CONT'D)
>   Sorry I didn't mean you, you're not
>   a robot, it's just...I really liked
>   my last job.

Kim ratchets that smile up another notch.

>   KIM
>   You're not alone, mechanization is
>   causing disruptions right across
>   the labour market. But you'll be
>   perfect for this next job, I
>   guarantee.

Determined, Kim tries to drag the third job to the top of the
list. An ERROR noise plays. Alex's fists clench.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   This system today. You'd think
>   they'd work out the bugs with so
>   many people depending on it.

Kim, even more determined, tries to drag the job again. The
ERROR noise repeats. No such luck.

Kim contemplates trying it a third time but stalls, looking
at ASSIGN JOB which is flashing at the top of the screen.

Resigned, Kim clicks on the job a the top of the list which
sends the information to Alex's wristband.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   I can assure you, Alex, your next
>   job won't be under threat from any
>   robots. Definite placement for
>   fifteen years, at least.

PING. Alex taps his wristband. While reading, Alex's face twists into a look filled with disbelief.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          I'm sure you'll make a wonderful
          mother. You can proceed to stage
          two of The Terminal.

Alex shoves the chair back, standing. Kim's eyes flick between Alex and the screen. Kim reads the prompt.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          Have a good day, Alex.

Kim gestures to the door labelled THE TERMINAL STAGE 2, all business.

The fight drains from Alex who slumps out of the door.

Kim's eyes remain on the door.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          Equality, Equality, Equality.

Kim grumpily taps the NEXT CUSTOMER tab on the screen.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          Number 47 report to your job
          assignment officer.

Kim's voice, on delay, echoes from behind the other door.

Kim resets that smile and sits up attentively as the door opposite opens and a MOUSEY WOMAN, 30s, walks in.

It takes all Kim's effort not to groan.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
               (under her breath)
          Equality, equality, equality.
               (to the woman)
          Good morning, my name is Kim. I'm
          here to make your reassignment as
          quick as possible.

INT. TERMINAL CORRIDOR – MOMENTS LATER

Alex walks down the blank, grey corridor. As Alex moves along, the walls come alive with infomercials.

INFOMERCIAL ONE – In a blank white space a WOMAN stands, smiling at the camera.

                    VOICE (V.O.)
          Female. Male. Tall. Small.

As the voice begins the woman's body morphs into that of a
TALL MAN and then it becomes a SHORT MAN.

                         VOICE (V.O.)
                    Any job can be done by anyone.

INFOMERCIAL TWO - a graphic shows the TERMINAL TANK - A
stylised man is suspended in liquid. Text: "WHILE YOU SLEEP
LET OUR NANOBOTS WORK. WAKE UP A BRAND NEW YOU."

INFOMERCIAL THREE - Is the same as in Kim's office, a
stylised person cycles through 24 models. Text: "24 MODELS TO
TRY OUT."

                         VOICE (V.O.)
                    With The Terminal we are all truly
                    equal.

The logo for The Terminal appears, it's a stylised doorway.

Alex pauses a moment before pressing a palm to the scanner by
the door at the end of the corridor. It opens and Alex
disappears through it.

INT. JOB CENTRE ROOF - LUNCH

                         JAY (O.S.)
                    "I'm sure you'll make a wonderful
                    mother." You didn't actually say
                    that?

JAY, 50/60s, with the allure of an aging film star, sits next
to Kim. Both are eating sandwiches, leaning against the
railings of the roof terrace, looking out at the futuristic
skyline.

                         KIM
                    I had to, they looked so lost.

Jay bursts into raucous LAUGHTER.

                         KIM (CONT'D)
                    It's not funny.

                         JAY
                    Sometimes the fairest system in the
                    world can seem pretty unfair.

Kim grumpily rips off a chunk of a sandwich and chews it.

                         JAY (CONT'D)
                    You're wondering if it wouldn't
                    kill them to be a little flexible,
                    right?

                         KIM
                    Careful.

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Kim gestures at the building. Jay gives it the finger.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   Jay...

Kim can't help smiling, exhilarated by Jay's attitude.

>   JAY
>   There's no one watching us here.
>   It's just you and me.

Jay holds Kim gaze. The look is loaded. Kim breaks it,
concentrating on the sandwich, flustered. Jay smirks.

>   JAY (CONT'D)
>   Did you know this place gets its
>   name from some Roman God? Terminus,
>   the god of boundaries.

>   KIM
>   Hilarious.

>   JAY
>   Yeah, I said the same thing to the
>   friend who told me this little
>   useless nugget of trivia.

A pained expression crosses Jay's face. Kim doesn't notice.

>   KIM
>   I guess gods don't compromise.

>   JAY
>   It's a slippery slope. One day you
>   change an assignment the next
>   there'll be misogyny in the
>   streets.

Kim finally cracks a smile, Jay's pleased.

>   JAY (CONT'D)
>   You're just too nice.

Jay leans across and wipes crumbs off Kim's cheek. Flustered,
Kim jerks back, wiping their face. Jay's amused.

>   KIM
>   I, **we**, were engineered that way.
>   Empathetic women make the best job
>   centre officers.

>   JAY
>   Uh-huh. Were you engineered to
>   cover for people who fell behind in
>   your last job?

KIM
          No... I guess it helped with
          productivity on the assembly line--

                    JAY
          Designed for teamwork, yeah, we all
          are, kiddo. But you're more than
          that.

                    KIM
          Not this 'personality' crap again.

                    JAY
          You just haven't been through
          enough changes to understand. I'm
          the same, no matter how smart,
          dumb, tall or even male I am.

                    KIM
          I can't imagine you as a guy.

Jay shifts and everything about their posture screams
masculine. Jay walks round behind Kim, pulling a device like
a compact from their pocket.

                    JAY
          Here.

Jay leans over Kim's shoulder, placing the opened device in
Kim's hands. The contact is seductive, Kim's starting to go
with the flow. Kim's fingers linger on Jay's.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          People even thought I was handsome.

Kim looks at the printed photo in the compact and pulls an
unimpressed face. MALE JAY, late 20s, more striking than
handsome. Jay slaps Kim's back playfully.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          Okay one person did. Vic.

Kim looks at the next photo which shows Male Jay and a WOMAN
(VIC), 30s, pretty, pulling goofy faces.

Kim looks at the next photo: Male Jay and MALE VIC, 30s, a
masculine version of the woman in the last photo.

                    KIM
          Are these all you and Vic?
              (Jay nods)
          No way. You look so cute, you're
          kinda perfect together.

Determination crosses Jay's face. Kim's too focused on the
photos to notice.

KIM (CONT'D)
          Did you stay in touch?

                    JAY
          They tell us that all the old ties,
          relationships, family, were cut for
          a reason. That they lead to
          catastrophe. But it's a lie.

Kim's hooked.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          I know it's against the rules, but
          straight, gay, lesbian, we've been
          together for thirty years.
                    (beat)
          I shouldn't keep the pictures.

Kim, carefully closes the device and hands it back to Jay.

                    KIM
          Screw that, keep them. I don't
          think there's anything wrong with
          what those images show.

                    JAY
          Vic's why I believe in essential
          personalities. Every time we'd have
          a reassignment we'd both worry that
          things would be different...

                    KIM
          But the spark was still there?

Jay smiles, fighting back tears.

                    JAY
          Look at me making a fool of myself.
          This isn't your problem.

                    KIM
          Tell me, you're the one who said I
          was proper nice, not engineered.

Jay takes a moment to collect their thoughts, looking out
across the indifferent cityscape.

                    JAY
          Vic's last reassignment didn't go
          well. Vic only has a couple of days
          left, some sort of cell rejection,
          the doctors said.

Jay breaks down, Kim hurries over and hugs Jay, tight.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          They took Vic straight to the
          hospice.

Kim rubs Jay's back, soothingly.

                    KIM
          That's the best care--
               (beat)
          Shit, they won't let you into the
          hospice, will they?

Jay breaks apart to lock eyes with Kim.

                    JAY
          Our faithfulness shows a 'distinct
          lack of equality.'

                    KIM
          You're joking? Someone actually
          told you that?

Jay buries their face further into Kim's shoulder.

                    JAY
          They were just repeating what they
          believed.

                    KIM
          Well I don't believe it. You should
          be allowed to be with the person
          you love when they're dying.
          Equality be damned.

Kim immediately regrets that, looking back at the building.

                    JAY
          I was hoping you'd say that.

Jay wipes their face on a sleeve and holds out an INFO-SHARD,
a small, jagged piece of plastic that has replaced USB
drives. Kim eyes it suspiciously.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          This is a clone of the job list,
          don't ask how I got it, I'd rather
          not go through that again.

Kim scoots back from Jay, confused, but Jay just barrels on.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          On this version I'm reassigned to
          be a nurse in Vic's hospice. The
          job just came up, like a sign or
          something.

                    KIM
          Do you have any idea what will
          happen to you if someone finds--

                JAY
        We'll end up in the nerve banks, I
        expect.

Kim moves further back on 'we.'

                KIM
        You might be mad enough to spend a
        couple of months, years even as a
        bundle of nerves in a tank but I'm
        certainly not--

                JAY
        It won't happen, honestly Kim.

Kim looks for an escape route, but Jay's in the way.

                KIM
        You can't know that. Nope. Whatever
        you're planning, I won't tell
        anyone but I can't--

                JAY
        But you're the only one who can
        without any suspicion. Sam will
        just think all prayers have been
        answered.

                KIM
        Oh no, I'm not interested in Sam.
        Icebergs couldn't be less
        encouraging.

Jay, not listening, advances on Kim as Kim backs away.

                JAY
        Sam's in charge of updating the job
        server, carries the job list around
        on a shard just like this.

Kim hits the wall, there's no where else to go, except over
the edge and that's one hell of drop. Jay advances,
predatory.

                JAY (CONT'D)
        I'd do it myself if I thought Sam
        would let me close enough but my
        being there would trigger
        suspicion.

                KIM
        Is this a sting?

That takes Jay by surprise, Jay takes a step back.

                JAY
        Do you think anyone would pick me
        for loyalty checks?

KIM
          I might say those things when I'm
          grumpy and had a bad day, but I'm a
          hundred percent behind The
          Terminal.

                    JAY
          Kim this isn't a test.

                    KIM
          We are all truly equal.

                    JAY
          NO we're not.

Jay slams hands onto the wall either side of Kim.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          Human's don't know how to be equal.

Jay leans in, right by Kim's ear.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          It's not in our nature.

With one hand Jay slips the info shard into Kim's front
pocket.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          Easy, isn't it.

                    KIM
          For you, maybe. I don't know if I
          can--? How do I distract---

                    JAY
          Sam's a B-3, their wrists, here,
          are very... responsive. I should
          know.

Kim tries to break away from Jay but Jay's too strong.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          I can't bear it. I'll fake being a
          nurse, I'll break in, I'll set fire
          to this whole fucking system. I'll
          do anything to be with Vic.

Kim sees the pain in Jay's eyes and softens.

                    JAY (CONT'D)
          We're friends, proper friends,
          right? I wouldn't trust anyone
          else.

Kim's about to protest when Jay's wrist band BEEPS.

JAY (CONT'D)
                    End of lunch. You're scheduled to
                    see Sam before you start this
                    afternoon.

Jay picks up their rubbish.

                              JAY (CONT'D)
                    I trust you to do the right thing.
                    I'd do it for you in a heart beat.

Jay holds Kim's eyes for a moment and Kim can see Jay's
sincerity. Jay leaves.

Kim takes the info-shard out and looks at it.

                              KIM
                    How can I..?

Kim sees a flash of the photo of Jay and Vic smiling.

Kim holds up a hand to their ear where Jay whispered.

                              SAM (O.S.) INTERCOM
                    Job assignment officer five, report
                    for daily debrief.

Kim startles.

                              SAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)INTERCOM
                    I repeat, Job assignment officer
                    five, report for daily debrief.

Determined, Kim straightens up, pockets the info-shard and
heads off the roof.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Kim walks down the corridor as if heading to an execution.
Ahead is a small WOMAN with heterochromic eyes, it's FEMALE
ALEX.

                              KIM
                    Alex?

What a change, Alex, beaming, practically skips down the
corridor towards Kim.

                              KIM (CONT'D)
                    Someone looks a lot happier.

Alex shrugs, the same awkward mannerisms as the juggernaut
from earlier.

                              ALEX
                    You were right, I think I will make
                    a wonderful mother.

Seeing the surprise on Kim's face, Alex hugs Kim.

>   ALEX (CONT'D)
>   Who are we to question The
>   Terminal? We are all truly equal.

Kim fights to maintain a happy expression.

>   KIM
>   Yeah, exactly.

INT. HEAD TECH OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A cross between a boardroom and an office. One wall is all
glass offering a view of the ordered, futuristic utopia
outside. Another wall is dominated by screens displaying
different CCTV feeds.

Worshiping at this alter of control is SAM, 30s, officious
with a serious superiority complex.

Sam tracks Kim's progress, savouring this voyeuristic power,
until on screen Kim raises a hand to knock on a door--

>   SAM
>   Come on in, Kim.

Kim enters, a little wrong footed.

>   KIM
>   Hi Sam, how's your day been?

Kim cringes at how false that sounds.

>   SAM
>   Everything's just peachy in
>   equality's paradise. I've been
>   keeping my eyes on all of you.

Sam gestures to the screens, with a calm, cold smile.

>   KIM
>   I haven't been doing anything to
>   make you need to watch me, have I?

>   SAM
>   No, you're a model employee, Kim.
>   (beat)
>   Unfortunately the same can't be
>   said for everyone around here.

Sam taps a finger against the screen which shows a CLEANER,
zombie-like, mopping a floor.

>   SAM (CONT'D)
>   Have a seat and we can talk about
>   the hold up with 46.

KIM
          46?

Sam taps at the console and CCTV footage of Kim and Alex in
the job centre office plays.

                    SAM
          You mention the system being slow
          twice in that session.

                    KIM
          Yes, well, it was going slowly.

                    SAM
          I was monitoring it the whole time
          and I didn't notice anything out of
          order.

                    KIM
          Maybe I was just using it wrong.

Sam nods sympathetically.

                    SAM
          I suppose it isn't your fault.
          You're only engineered to be a
          friendly face.

Kim bristles, a hand goes to the info shard in their pocket.

                    KIM
          Maybe you could log for an
          improvement in the next job centre
          officers.

Kim looks at Sam's front pocket for the job list info-shard.
It isn't there.

It's hanging on a cord around Sam's neck instead. Shit.

                    SAM
          Maybe... Do you want to show me how
          you've been using the system?

Sam gestures for Kim to take a seat. Kim tries to keep a
neutral expression, moving into Sam's personal space.

Kim logs on and taps through the menus, no problems, as Sam
leans over Kim's shoulder, mirroring Jay's movements earlier.

The info-shard around Sam's neck, taps Kim's back as Sam
leans further over.

                    SAM (CONT'D)
          Well this all seems fine. What did
          I say, you're a model employee.

                         49

Kim is hyper aware of Sam's presence, especially where a
sleeve has pulled back to reveal Sam's wrist.

>   SAM (CONT'D)
>   Who knows, next assignment you
>   might have my job. You can be just
>   like me.

Kim reaches for Sam's wrist with one hand, while the other
goes for Jay's info-shard in Kim's pocket.

>   KIM
>   I'm not sure I have it in me to be
>   just like you.

Kim runs a finger along the inside of Sam's wrist, like Jay
showed earlier.

>   KIM (CONT'D)
>   It would be too hard an act to
>   follow.

Sam and Kim's eyes meet. Kim coyly drops the look first when--

Kim spots something on the screen, way down the job list and
freezes.

NURSE - D2 - HOSPICE

Kim recovers, but the moment's broken.

>   SAM
>   Maybe.
>   (beat)
>   There's been so many reassignments,
>   the nerve bank's getting pretty
>   full too. And the ones they spit
>   back out...

Sam points to the zombie Cleaner on the screen who is still
mopping the same spot.

>   SAM (CONT'D)
>   ...are a bit broken. Not that you'd
>   expect more, they were a bundle of
>   thinking, feeling nerves for two
>   years. If I were the judge I'd have
>   given that dissident much longer.

Kim's nerve breaks. Kim shoves Jay's info-shard deep into
their pocket.

>   SAM (CONT'D)
>   And now they're a problem to my
>   productivity figures.

KIM
          They don't make your job easier do
          they?

                    SAM
          Don't they realise how important we
          are? We keep the Terminal running.
          It's enough to give you a headache.

Kim focuses on the screen, nervous that any look at Sam will
give them away.

                    KIM
          I'm sorry to hear that.

                    SAM
          Thank you, Kim. That means a lot.

For a moment Sam shows a little vulnerability before covering
it.

                    SAM (CONT'D)
          Well, let's run that process
          through once more and I think
          you'll be good to go.

                    KIM
          Good, I wouldn't want to be a
          problem to your productivity too.

Sam cracks a dry CHUCKLE.

                    SAM
          Let's try it with the updated list.

Kim can't believe their luck, Sam takes the info-shard off
the cord and inserts it into the console.

The screen shows the job list, Kim tries to scroll past the
HOSPICE NURSE but Sam freezes the screen.

                    SAM (CONT'D)
          Talking of efficiency, this job
          only became available this morning.

                    KIM
          And by tomorrow I'm sure someone
          will have filled the role.

                    SAM
          The system is truly beautiful.
          Although someone's head will roll.

Kim fights to keep an impassive expression.

                    SAM (CONT'D)
          Whoever did the brain chem,
          probably.

KIM
Oh?

                    SAM
The previous job owner killed
themselves. Come to think of it one
of the other job centre officers
found the body.

                    KIM
     (breathes)
Jay.

                    SAM
Jay, I think. They saw something
odd hanging out the window of this
nurse's house apparently.

                    JAY (V.O.)
     (in Kim's mind)
I'll do anything to be with Vic.

                    SAM
Good job Jay was passing or who
knows how long they'd have been
hanging there. Legs twitching.

Kim processes this new information, turning the info-shard in
their pocket, horror dawning.

                    KIM
You don't think the previous nurse
killed themselves because they were
in love with someone and--

                    SAM
Love? There's no such thing, is
there?

Sam spins the chair Kim's on round so Kim faces them.

                    SAM (CONT'D)
You're pretty close to Jay, right?
Did they mention it to you?

                    KIM
NO... no. We're not that close
really.

                    SAM
Good. Between you and me, Jay's on
thin ice. There's talk of deviant
behaviour. You haven't noticed
anything?

Sam leans forward fixing Kim with a menacing stare.

KIM
             Anything deviant? From Jay?

This is the moment of choice. Kim's hand closes round the
info-shard in their pocket.

In Kim's mind, there's a flash of the photo of Jay and Vic
smiling.

                         KIM (CONT'D)
             No, I haven't noticed anything
             wrong with Jay's behaviour.

Mind made up, Kim runs a finger up Sam's wrist as Kim pushes
their mouth up to meet Sam's.

Sam is initially surprised then enamoured. Their embrace
intensifies.

Sam pushes Kim back onto the desk.

As Sam is preoccupied, Kim reaches back and pulls the info-
shard from the console.

The screen flickers a second when Kim substitutes Jay's
doctored info-shard into the console.

The entry now reads "NURSE – D2, MALE – HOSPICE – ASSIGNED."

INT. JOB CENTRE ROOF – LATER

Kim's alone, lost in thought.

There's a tap on the wall, Jay peers around the corner.

                         JAY
             Thought you'd be here and I wanted
             to say goodbye. Can I join you?

Kim gestures for Jay to do so, but Kim's colder than usual.
Jay's buzzing too much to notice.

                         JAY (CONT'D)
             I don't know how to thank you.

                         KIM
             There's no need.

Jay stalls, coming out of the euphoric bubble.

                         JAY
             Was it that bad?

                         KIM
             No, not really, compared to the
             alternative. Would you have killed
             me too?

JAY
          What are you talking about sweetie?
          Are you coming down with something?

Jay reaches across to check Kim's temperature but Kim jerks
back.

                    KIM
          When you said you'd do anything I
          didn't realise you meant murder.

Jay sits down maintaining eye contact with Kim.

                    JAY
          What are you going to do?

                    KIM
          Nothing.

Jay shoots Kim a questioning look.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          Well if I tell anyone I'll be
          punished alongside you for
          substituting the job list, won't I?

Jay leans back.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          Plus I'm not entirely sure I did
          the wrong thing.

Jay startles, genuinely surprised.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          If there had been another way,
          without killing that poor person,
          would you have taken it?

Jay looks Kim over, re-evaluating them. For the first time
Kim holds Jay's gaze.

                    KIM (CONT'D)
          If there was a system for people
          like you to--

                    JAY
          Cheat the gods? I knew I'd chosen
          wisely.

                    KIM
          And your plan worked out perfectly.

                    JAY
          Clearly better than I thought.

Jay places a tiny computer chip in a plastic envelope into
Kim's hand.

JAY (CONT'D)
          You ever want to follow through on
          that offer, you put that in your
          wristband. We aren't the only ones
          who see through all this.

Jay gestures to the Terminal building and the city below
them.

Kim's wristband BEEPS.

                         KIM
          You'd better go to Vic.
               (beat)
          We won't see each other again, will
          we?

                         JAY
          No. I don't think so.

Both stand and embrace.

                         KIM
          I'll contact them, I want to help,
          if I can.

Jay nods. Nothing more needs to be said.

Kim watches Jay walk to the door, before turning back to the
city with new purpose - the chip firmly grasped in one hand.

INT. JOB CENTRE OFFICE - LATER

Kim taps on the console and the screen comes up with a
flashing prompt at the tab marked NEXT CUSTOMER.

                         KIM
          Number 36 report to your job
          assignment officer.

On screen the text prompt appears:

"Good morning, my name's Kim. I'm here to make your job
reassignment as painless as possible."

                                             FADE OUT.

2.2: Traditional Film Noir

She kisses him so he'll kill.[20]

In this section I explore the antecedents of *posthuman noir* in traditional film noir by establishing key figures in the evolution of the genre and defining the genre conventions. I then explore the influence of the Second World War on the themes of traditional film noir and finish by discussing the presence of film noir in Japan. Therefore, this section, and 2.3 which follows, unearth the roots of *posthuman noir* and draw links between Anglo-American and Japanese precursors.

It is generally agreed that the period of traditional film noir runs between *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941) and *Touch of Evil* (dir. Orson Welles, 1958).[21] However, there are dissenting scholarly voices that want to extend the dates both ways, incorporating earlier and later versions.[22] Scholars and critics still cannot reach a consensus; books are still being published on the topic such as Ian Brookes' *Film Noir* released in 2017, and conferences are still being organised to deconstruct the elements of film noir.[23] One of the key features of noir, it seems, is its mercurial nature. Is film noir a style, a genre or a collection of films retrospectively grouped together by French theorists?[24] For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to lay out the key points surrounding film noir as it provides crucial context for my new subgenre, *posthuman noir*. As I have argued, it is through the application of elements associated with film noir that *posthuman noir* expresses concerns about the way the human is being changed through interactions with technology.

Nino Frank was the first to notice a tonal shift in American crime films around 1946; these films were much darker and more violent than other general crime dramas and so he labelled these films 'dark films,' or film noir in French.[25] However, it was Raymond Borde and Ètienne Chaumenton, in their 1955 book *Panorama du Film Noir Américain*, who took up the

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[20] The tagline on the poster to *Double Indemnity*, dir. Billy Wilder (1944, Universal City, CA: Universal Studios).
[21] Alain Sliver, "Introduction" in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 11.
[22] For more on the way the period of film noir is contested see Brookes, *Film Noir*, 11-29.
[23] In May 2017, I gave a paper on *Ex_Machina* at a conference titled 'Hardboiled History: A Noir Lens on America's Past', while there were several panels on film noir at the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies Conference in April 2017, which was focused around the topic of genre.
[24] Andrew Spicer in Mark T. Conard, *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 10.
[25] Raymond Borde and Ètienne Chaumenton, "Towards a Definition of Film Noir", 17.

mantle of defining film noir, although even they realised that this was not a simple task. They isolated some key features of film noir, namely, that it is 'nightmarish, weird, erotic, ambivalent, and cruel.'[26] But they also realised this was not enough to develop a coherent understanding of noir and, perhaps by its very nature, film noir defied coherence. They did, however, make the first attempts to generate a list of films, a key element in the categorisation of a genre,[27] which they considered to be film noir and identified key tropes which later critics built upon.

Andrew Spicer attributes the slow build of critical interest in film noir outside of France through to the late 1960s to the fact that 'there was no equivalent intellectual film culture in America [… compared to] French critics-turned-directors, [like] Claude Chaborl, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut.'[28] However, by the 1970s two influential American essays emerged to try to explain and define film noir: Raymond Durgnat's 'Paint it Black: The Family Tree of the Film Noir' and Paul Schrader's 'Notes on *Film Noir.*'[29]

Paul Schrader, while not entirely convinced that film noir was a genre, noticed that there was something linking these films, something subtler, like a common sense of tone and mood.[30] Thus he established a set of elements, or tropes, by which one can identify a film noir. Firstly, there were stylistic features which included low lighting, a preference for oblique and vertical lines, a prevalence of water, voice over narration and complex chronological structures, i.e. flashbacks. Secondly, there were tonal features which included paranoia, claustrophobia, plumbing psychological depths, post war disillusionment and alienation.[31] In section 2.4, I will demonstrate how these stylistic and thematic features are present and serve to identify a screen text as *posthuman noir*.

For the purposes of this thesis, the key thematic and structural element of film noir is the tragic downfall of the protagonist. Corrupted by his—it is nearly always his—darker emotions, manipulated and seduced by the femme fatale, or by his greed, until he is lost to an excess of emotion, the protagonist has nowhere to escape; the only way out of the rhizomatic maze of lies and deceit is death. Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) in *Double Indemnity* (dir. Billy Wilder,

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[26] Ibid., 18.
[27] Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 17.
[28] Andrew Spicer, *Film Noir* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 2-3.
[29] Both of these essays can be found in Alain Silver and James Ursini. eds. *Film Noir Reader* (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 37-51 and 53-63 respectively.
[30] Paul Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir" (1972) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Silver and Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 53.
[31] Ibid., 57-58.

1944), Hank Quinlan (Orson Welles) in *Touch of Evil*, and other film noir protagonists are punished for their transgression from the moral codes of law and order. This is where the noir genre is at its most conservative, reaffirming the idea that criminals cannot prosper,[32] and that failure to repent or atone for sins committed will result in those sins returning to condemn the protagonists.

Therefore, emotional awakening in traditional film noir is a negative and extremely destructive factor which undermines reason. There is an aspect of the cautionary tale at work here, which takes on greater resonance when seen through the lens of the post war period. This was a time in which the world had suffered great upheaval due to an excess of passion and fervour. The Nazi regime, and to some extent the imperial nationalism of Japan, were portrayed as regimes run on the mass outpouring of emotion without reason[33]—although it is important to be aware that the further one gets from the Second World War, the more the Nazi regime is described as cold, calculating and unfeeling in its mechanisation of death and its dehumanisation of swathes of the population.[34] It is this climate that influences the treatment of emotional excess in film noir. Due to the significant role of emotions in film noir, emotional awakenings will thus play an important role in my exploration of *posthuman noir* and the changing attitude towards the emotion will be examined further in Chapter 3.2.

Traditional film noir is also almost obsessive in its use of storytelling, the second human trait I investigate. Not only is storytelling present in the macro structure—e.g. the narrated flashback structure present in many traditional film noir, such as *Sunset Boulevard* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1950) or *Double Indemnity*—but it can also be seen in the ways that characters attempt to manipulate each other, recycling and reinterpreting the facts to suit their own narratives and to try to develop sympathy or empathy in the characters around them. Schrader, when detailing his ideas on the defining characteristics of film noir, comments that there is 'a love of romantic narration […] a complex chronological order is frequently used to reinforce the feelings of hopelessness.'[35] There is an element of self-awareness in the way traditional film noir is

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[32] Philippa Gates, *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film* (Albany: State University of New York, 2006), 84.

[33] For more on this idea see *Science and Emotions after 1945*: *A Transatlantic Perspective*, eds. Biess and Daniel M. Gross (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), E-book, especially the introduction.

[34] Naremore, *More Than Night*, 88.

[35] Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir," 57-58.

constructed around the use of stories,[36] with the subjective experience placed at the heart of the story. Roger Schank argues that 'to communicate as a human is to change experiences into stories.'[37] Traditional film noir narratives are constructed around the human instinct to exchange experience into narrative. This is often in the form of the fatalistic retelling of circumstances from a doomed position at the end of the story; for example, take the confessional tone of Walter Neff in *Double Indemnity*, or Joe Gillis' (William Holden) wry narrative from beyond the grave in *Sunset Boulevard*. These almost confessional voice over narratives act as a warning to the listener, just as the earliest of stories existed as cautionary tales to prevent others repeating dangerous actions.[38]

In many a film noir, one or more of the characters are storytellers by trade, like Joe Gillis, who is a screenwriter in *Sunset Boulevard*, or Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), a pulp fiction novelist in *The Third Man* (dir. Carol Reed, 1949)[39], or Waldo Lydecker (Clifton Webb), a writer in *Laura* (dir. Otto Preminger, 1944).[40] This emphasises the importance of fabrication and perspective in film noir. On top of that, it is not only characters cast as storytellers who use this human ability; there is prevalence of conmen, femme fatales and other duplicitous characters who manipulate those around them by spinning tales, omitting important information, and presenting subjective perspectives of events to get what they want. In all these ways, the use of storytelling techniques to subvert and obscure the truth is at the heart of traditional film noir.[41]

Robert Porfirio states, in relation to film noir, that 'we must ground the term in some sort of adequate working definition if it is to warrant serious consideration as an object of either film or culture.'[42] Thus, my thesis takes the standpoint that there is more than a shared set of stylistic devices that unites the oeuvre that is often referred to as film noir. In the words of Foster

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[36] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 75.
[37] Roger C. Schank, *Tell Me A Story: Narrative and Intelligence* (1995; Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 12.
[38] Brain Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition and Fiction* (U.S.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 10.
[39] *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed (1949; London: British Lion Films) DVD.
[40] *Laura*, directed by Otto Preminger (1944; Los Angeles, CA: Twentieth Century Fox), DVD.
[41] For more on this idea of the obscuring of truth in film noir see J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 181.
[42] Robert G. Porfirio, "No Way Out: Existential Motifs in the Film Noir" (1976) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Silver and Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 77.

Hirsch: there is a unity of 'narrative structure, characterisation and theme'[43] which binds these films together. It is in noticing the manipulation and subversion of these tropes within *posthuman noir* that a pattern emerges that privileges certain aspects of the 'human'—storytelling ability and emotional awakening—in the technological, posthuman world.

Film noir themes and the Second World War

The Second World War, and the period just after it, generated a set of social and cultural conditions from which film noir emerged. 'One who seeks the root of this "style" must think in terms of an affected and possibly ephemeral reaction to a moment in history,'[44] posit Borde and Chaumenton. The Second World War is a node from which multiple points of my thesis emerge; it would, therefore, be fruitful to examine these influences on traditional film noir style and tone as this is pertinent to the evolution of *posthuman noir*.

Cultural products reflect the periods in which they are constructed and can provide a window into prevailing attitudes of an era, albeit this may not be a conscious decision on the part of the creative team behind them. Although there seems to be some indication that traditional film noir reflects public concerns generated by the Second World War, it cannot be definitively asserted. For example, there seems to be a correlation in the cynical and morally ambiguous tone of traditional film noir, which Tom Flinn describes as 'a melodramatic reaction to a world gone mad,'[45] and the shift in American attitudes during the period. After the attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese—which demonstrated that even American soil could be breached[46]—Americans engaged in warfare differently: they could no longer hold an observational/rescuer role now that their own lands were open to attack. This sense of threat added to a growing sense of pessimism within America; the positive narrative of the American dream had begun to turn stale. The prolonged period of economic difficulty that had started with the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and continued through the years of the Great Depression

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[43] Mark T. Conard, *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 9.
[44] Borde and Chaumenton, "Towards a Definition of Film Noir," 19.
[45] Tom Flinn, "Three Faces of Film Noir," (1972) in *Film Noir Reader 2*, eds., Alain Silver and James Ursini, (New York: Limelight editions, 1999), 35.
[46] Robert Porfirio "Foreword" in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, Conard, ed., xii.

dampened the stereotypical narratives of optimism.[47] In addition, the horrific revelation of atrocities in Europe—the Nazi concentration camps and Stalin's brutal communism—brought questions to the fore around the capacity for seemingly ordinary people to acquiesce to acts of evil.[48] The final straw in the fight for absolute moral values snapped when the United States decided to use atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The tremendous loss of life, not only in the initial explosion, but in the decades that followed,[49] prompted questions about the moral and ethical validity of the action.

In a climate of moral ambiguity, traditional film noir which, according to Jean-Pierre Chartier, showed a 'pessimism and disgust towards humanity,'[50] struck a chord with contemporary audiences; the tone of 'cynicism, pessimism and darkness'[51] became a feature through which to identify films in this genre/style. However, there are also critics who take an opposing view to the impact of the Second World War. In his 1945 article, Lloyd Shearer dismisses the psychological argument that these films provide a 'violent escape in tune with the violence of the times, a cathartic for pent-up emotions.'[52] Shearer places greater emphasis on the realisation of producers that films like *Double Indemnity* sold well and thus other studios quickly followed suit to make money,[53] rather than someone making a conscious decision to produce these darker films to fit the psychologically different tastes of the audience. That both coincide is perhaps a fortuitous coincidence for Shearer; however, I do not think the idea that the audience had become desensitised to violence during, and after, the events of the Second

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[47] See Robert Porfirio "No Way Out: Existential Motifs in Film Noir," (1976) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Silver and Ursini, 80. Also see James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts Updated and Expanded* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 125, and James Damico, "Film Noir: A Modest Proposal" (1978) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Silver and Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 99, where although Damico argues against the reductive and insufficiently researched approach of many to film noir he draws attention to some social, cultural and economic issues in America from which, he argues, film noir sprung.

[48] For more on levels of moral ambiguity and morality in general in film noir see Aeon J. Skoble, "Moral Clarity and Practical Reason in Film Noir," in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Mark T. Conard, 41-48.

[49] Even into the 1980s, thousands in the areas of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were dying of radiation sickness. Between 1986-87 there were 4,619 deaths in Hiroshima and 2,539 deaths in Nagasaki which were related to radiation sickness. See Paul J. Bailey, *Postwar Japan 1945 to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996), 22.

[50] Jean-Pierre Chartier quoted in James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts Updated and Expanded* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 16.

[51] Raymond Durgnat quoted in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Mark T. Conard, 12.

[52] Lloyd Shearer, "Crime Certainly Pays on the Screen" (1945) in *Film Noir Reader 2*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1999), 9.

[53] Ibid. 10.

World War[54] can be so easily dismissed. That this was a conscious decision by a filmmaker, producer or studio is a less relevant argument because, whether conscious or not, creative outputs cannot help but be influenced by the times in which they exist.[55] To argue that the events of the Second World War did not influence the stories that were made in the period requires one to ignore evidence to the contrary. Perhaps, as Shearer was writing in 1945, he was too close to the times, and had he had the distance that scholars have had to combine analysis of the films and their context he might have been less dismissive of the period's psychological impact.

As I mentioned, the Second World War, and the era that followed it, generated an environment of great change and upheaval where traditional social roles were challenged; the position of men in particular became unstable.[56] Ian Brookes describes male figures in traditional film noir as experiencing 'a profound sense of emasculation; they feel that they are losing their power over women and over their own destinies, a power that they had once considered their birthright.'[57] There could be a link between the portrayal of men in traditional film noir and the new found independence that women experienced during and after the Second World War. Women had entered masculine work spaces during the war, and gained a new level of independence which they were unwilling to forfeit;[58] despite a shift in attitude towards their position in the workplace after the war, where they were encouraged to relinquish their roles to make room of returning veterans.[59] There may, therefore, be some correlation between these gender anxieties and the way femme fatale characters who step outside of social norms are portrayed in a negative light and who often find themselves incarcerated, or dead, at the end of the narrative.[60]

The final point I want to make on the impact of the Second World War is to highlight one of the consequences of a shift towards moral ambiguity which resulted in a loss of belief in traditional institutions of authority.[61] This could be seen to coincide with the explosion of

[54] Alain Silver, "Introduction" in *Film Noir Reader*, ed. Silver and Ursini, 4.
[55] Robert Porfirio echoes this sentiment in his "Foreward" to *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Conard, where he states that 'culture does not exist in a vacuum.' Xii.
[56] Gates, *Detecting Men*, 84.
[57] Brookes, *Film Noir*, 30.
[58] William Luhr, *Film Noir* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 35.
[59] Brookes, *Film Noir*, 32.
[60] Ibid., *Film Noir*, 68.
[61] Naremore, *More Than Night*, 23.

postmodernist theory which questioned traditional definitions and, with analytically obsessive precision, began to unpick the values which had underpinned society.[62]

The post-war world was one in a state of flux, like the fictional worlds portrayed in film noir; it was a constantly shifting and evolving maze that is reflected in the writing of Sartre who considered modern life to have become fantastical.[63] There are strong traces of existentialism at work in the undercurrents of film noir,[64] although it is difficult to argue about the conscious inclusion of the ideas associated with existentialism in these films—as Porfirio points out, 'existentialism as a philosophical movement was largely unknown in America until after World War Two.'[65] As always with critical focus applied after the creation of the source material, it is important to maintain a balanced view which acknowledges the potential for certain social, political, philosophical and historical movements to have an impact on how films are read, but also maintain a level of detached scepticism about the influence of such movements. I employ a critical, perhaps postmodernist, view that is suspicious of absolute statements but which does not dismiss the notions which underpin those statements.

Film noir in Japan

In the introduction to *East Asian Film Noir: Transnational Encounters and Intercultural Dialogue*, Mark Gallagher states that 'film noir has long been distinguished by its internationalism,'[66] referencing the international backgrounds of the film crews involved in traditional film noir,[67] and the global reach of noir influences to this day. This collection expands the definition of film noir through an East Asian lens and includes a section specifically on

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[62] For an overview of postmodernism see Steven Connor, *Postmodernist Culture*: *An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers,1989). The scepticism of postmodernism flows into *posthuman noir* where the traditionally accepted boundaries of human and non-human are questioned and critically reconfigured. See Donna Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto" in *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), in which Haraway calls for this blurring and reassessment of the boundaries of human and non-human.

[63] Naremore, *More Than Night*, 24.

[64] See Steven M. Sanders "Film noir and the Meaning of Life," in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Conard, 91-105, for an overview of some existentialist interpretations or see Robert Porfirio "No Way Out: Existential Motifs in Film Noir," (1976) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Silver and Ursini, 77-93.

[65] Ibid. 80.

[66] Chi-Yun Shin and Mark Gallagher, eds., *East Asian Film Noir: Transnational Encounters and Intercultural Dialogue* (London: I.B Tauris. 2015.)

[67] Further discussion of the influence of international crew on Hollywood for example the German émigrés, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Otto Preminger and Robert Siodmak, can be found in Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg "Noir Cinema" (1968) in Silver and J. Ursini, eds., *Film Noir Reader* (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 27.

Japanese iterations of film noir.[68] The chapters that focus on Japan demonstrate the breadth of this research area: from Daisuke Miyao's investigation on noir sensibilities of contrasting lighting and whiteness[69]—a sensibility I discuss in relation to *posthuman noir* anime *Serial Experiments Lain* (dir. Ryutaro Nakamura, 1998) in section 2.4—to a study of the *Ghost in the Shell* franchise that focuses on memory and nostalgia.[70] The scope of my thesis cannot investigate the myriad variations of film noir explored through Japanese cinema, however, there are two points that I believe are fruitful to explore in relation to Japan and film noir as they relate to the presentation of these tropes in Japanese *posthuman noir* anime.

The first is to recognise that although American films had an impact on the way that Japanese film noir[71] developed, there were also more homegrown influences and cultural antecedents.[72] The sharp contrast of light and shadow which are characteristic of film noir, are present in the *sumi-e* and *kokuei* styles of traditional Japanese art.[73] The word for black in Japanese *kuro* has multiple levels of meaning, covering "emptiness, mystery, and evil" [74] as is the French word *noir*. The colour black in Japanese culture is often associated with things that are tainted or polluted, for example the *barakumin*, an underclass whose families had been associated with tainted jobs such as grave digging and butchery[75] and, therefore, had black blood—*kuroi chi*. After the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the irradiated material combined with the rain to create downpours of poisonous black liquid, called *kuro ame*, or black rain.[76] Therefore, stories related to this notion of *kuro* already had a cultural cache before the importation of film noir from Americans during the Occupation (1945-1952).

The second point is that in Japanese film noir, some characters are presented differently. Early Japanese noir focused on female protagonists striving to break free from moulds of

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[68] Expanding the horizons of film noir is also the focus of *International Noir*, eds., Homer B Pettey and R. Barton Palmer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014) which also includes a section on Japanese film noir.

[69] See Daisuke Miyao, "Out of the Past: Film Noir, Whiteness and the End of the Monochrome Era in Japanese Cinema" in *East Asian Film Noir*, eds. Chi-Yun Shin and Mark Gallagher, 21-36.

[70] Dan North, "*Ghost in the Shell*: The Noir Instinct" in in *East Asian Film Noir*, eds. Chi-Yun Shin and Mark Gallagher, 71-88.

[71] In Japan, there was a failed attempt to boycott foreign films in 1924 to try and boost interest in Japanese film and stem the impact of foreign cinema, for more see Homer B. Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir" in *International Noir*, eds. Pettey and Palmer, 88.

[72] Ibid., 91. Pettey discusses Yasujiro Ozu's *Dragnet Girl* (1933) as an example of a film which transitioned from early Japanese cinema's experimentation with pro-noir effects to a more realised version of film noir.

[73] Ibid., 86.

[74] Ibid., 85.

[75] Bailey, *Postwar Japan,* 44.

[76] Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir," 86.

traditional patriarchal society. The 1920s and 30s saw a change in the role women could play in society as increasing numbers chose to work and live independently.[77] This development in female identity was met with suspicion, and there was a fear that the Western dress and values that these New Women, or *atarashii onna*, followed was a corrupting and dangerous influence.[78] There was vigorous propaganda to reinforce traditional, stereotypical roles for women in society[79] in the period leading up to the Second World War. However, after the Occupation, the 1947 Civil Code nevertheless gave women equal rights to work, equal rights to property when married and 12 weeks maternity cover.[80] These policies, which aimed to usher in a new era for women in Japan, can also be seen reflected in Japanese noir. Pettey describes the Japanese noir woman as 'a liminal figure outside the conventions and traditions of marriage and the family [...] expressing her individuality and independence by means of self-imposed isolation.'[81] In this regard, she sounds like the male characters of American film noir, both striving to find new identities in changing and uncertain times.

However, the liminal figure in Japanese noir is not viewed in the same way as the heroic loner of traditional film noir. Japanese culture, drawn from Buddhist and Shinto philosophy,[82] privileges membership of society,[83] of the collective unit even, over being an outsider, which resulted in some character types taking longer to find their roots in Japanese film noir. For example, the private investigator, who is a figure on the margins of society was, as David Desser argues, less prevalent in Japanese noir films of the 1950s and 1960s. Desser comments that 'to be alienated and alone, adrift from family and friends, is a fate worse than death.'[84] Such figures who became disconnected from the traditional, socially orientated system were considered a 'disgrace.'[85] Thus, liminal characters, like private investigators or ronin—of both traditional

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[77] Although it is important to note that many women had begun to work in factories in the 19th Century, see James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (U.S.A: W. W. Norton &Company, Inc, 2002) 246.
[78] Homer B. Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir," 97
[79] Ibid. 98. See also Bailey, *Postwar Japan*, 19, for an overview of the Japanese notion of superiority in Asia.
[80] Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir," 43.
[81] Ibid., 109-110.
[82] Susan J. Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle – Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2005), 113, or M. Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation* (London: Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd. 1930), 66.
[83] Jeffrey Kingston, *Japan in Transformation 1952 – 2000* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 3-11. For more on this difference between Japanese and Anglo-American attitudes see section 2.3.
[84] David Desser, "The Gunman and the Gun: Japanese film noir since the late 1950s" in *International Noir*, ed. Pettey and Palmer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 133.
[85] Ibid. 121.

samurai connotations and unemployed students or salarymen—are cast more as 'tragic figures'
than the privileged loners of American films.[86]

Conclusion

In this section I have established the antecedents for *posthuman noir* in traditional film noir,
setting out the terms and conventions that I will use to categorise the new subgenre.
Concurrently I also began to draw together the threads that connect these Anglo-American films
and Japanese anime, through charting the influence of the Second World War on themes in
traditional film noir and discussing the spread of film noir in Japan, focusing on two elements
that play an important role in *posthuman noir*. In the next section, I deepen my exploration of
the links between America and Japan, to provide further grounding for my investigation of
posthuman noir.

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[86] Ibid. 120-121.

2.3: Japan, America and *posthuman noir*

I have chosen to look at Anglo-American and Japanese screen texts in this thesis and in this section, I trace the connections which led me to focus on these materials. Although *posthuman noir* may be present in a variety of global screen cultures, I believe it is more prominent in the outputs of my chosen countries. There are also visual signifiers of Japanese and East Asian cultures in *Blade Runner*, my chosen starting point—Los Angeles in 2019 is peppered with neon signs using Japanese and Chinese characters, while the adverts use Geishas projected onto the sides of buildings—which then feed back into Japanese anime[87] and loop round to later Anglo-American films. There is a consistent ebb and flow between these countries' engagement with the subgenre which explains my interest in exploring both Anglo-American film and Japanese anime.

Points of Cultural Connection

From the Meiji period (1868-1912) onwards, there has been a cross-cultural flow of ideas between Japan, America and Europe which peaked at various points. Initial contact during the Meiji period prompted Japan to look to the West, both America and Europe, to modernise and equip itself to deal with a world which was becoming increasingly connected.[88]

However, one of the most influential shifts of American-Japanese relations in the twentieth century came with the Allied occupation of Japan (1945-1952), which occurred after Japan's defeat in the Second World War. It is important to note that this is also the main production period of traditional film noir, whereby the connection between Japan and America in the post-war period generated a link where cultural products, like film noir, could cross continents and influence creative output. During the Occupation, American policy attempted to change Japanese national identity: for example, its conditions included the demilitarisation of Japan[89]—although Article 9, the Peace Clause, included a loophole allowing for some armament

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[87] Wong Kin Yeun, "On the Edge of Space" in *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader*, ed. Sean Redmond (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 105.

[88] Janet Hunter argues that by 'the end of the Meiji period control was focused in a highly centralised state whose functions were carried out through Western style political, administrative and judicial institutions' in *The Emergence of Modern Japan*: *An Introductory History since 1853* (Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited, 1989), 8.

[89] McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 534.

for self-defence leading to the creation of the Self Defence Force in 1954.[90] Another condition of the Occupation was an emphasis on decentralisation and removal of monopolies as the huge *zaibatsu* companies were perceived to have facilitated Japan's war machine.[91] This, like the plans for demilitarisation, was watered down during the *gyakkosu,* or reverse course, of the 1950s when America realised it needed a strong Japan as a counter to the growing influence of communism in the region.[92] Therefore, America's influence on Japan generates a bond between these cultures that is one of the reasons behind my choice of these two cultures in my exploration of *posthuman noir*.

The final period of connection between America and Japan I want to highlight evolves from the American influence in the Occupation. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, Japan experienced an economic boom which placed it in a position to threaten the economic power of its previous occupier in the late 1970s and 1980s.[93] This era presents a shift in cultural dominance where Anglo-American fictional texts, such as William Gibson's *Neuromancer*[94] and *Blade Runner*, start to present Japan and other East Asian countries as the location of technologically advanced futures. *Posthuman noir* emerges from this period, and it is interesting to note that Japan plays a renewed role as a place of threat in more conventional neo-noir Anglo-American films of the 1980s.[95] I find it fascinating that both Anglo-American science fiction films and Japanese anime return to visual tropes of film from this period, and that they use these tropes in very similar ways to address humanity's interactions with technology. Does this hint at cross-cultural pollination that has continued between these countries? To that end, Susan Napier draws attention to the ways in which anime 'influenced and was influenced by plethora of western cultural products', while 'a similar process is happening in the West as many youths open up to a more international entertainment culture.'[96]

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[90] Bailey, *Postwar Japan*, 77.
[91] Ibid., 36.
[92] McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 550.
[93] For a comprehensive look at the economics of Japan in the twentieth century see Jeff Kingston, *Contemporary Japan* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
[94] William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984; London: Voyager Harper Collins, 1995).
[95] Naremore, *More than Night*, 227.
[96] Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, 22. Although it is important to be aware that fictional texts and creative technologies have been exchanged between America and Japan since the Meiji period. See J. Scott Miller, *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001) and McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 355.

Points of Cultural Divergence

While the above examples demonstrate the flow of connection and influence between America and Japan, there are two points in particular I wish to raise in relation to where Anglo-American films and Japanese anime diverge which are relevant to my exploration of *posthuman noir*. The first can be seen through the way the position of the individual is figured in relation to society. As I mentioned in the section on film noir and Japan, there is a difference in the way characters on the margins of society are portrayed; this is a trait that is carried through, I argue, from Japanese film noir to Japanese *posthuman noir*.

One reason for this difference could be traced to the varying levels of impact of neoliberal ideas between America and Japan. Neoliberalism—which privileges the agency of the individual over membership of a collective identity—developed partially in reaction to the rise of totalitarian and interventionist ideas in European countries during the 1930s and 40s through thinkers such as Friedrich Hayek.[97] These ideas evolved through integration with Milton Friedman's free market economic ideas[98] and flourished in Britain and America from 1970s through the 1980s under the guiding hands of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan respectively. Therefore, the outsider character—the individual on the periphery of society, or even alienated from society—who emerged in traditional film noir remained a popular figure for the neoliberal age in Anglo-American film. This characterisation can be seen in the Anglo-American films I have selected as part of the *posthuman noir* subgenre. In *The Matrix* (dir. the Wachowskis, 1999), Neo (Keanu Reeves) is told by his boss at Metacortex that 'every single employee understands that they are part of a whole. Thus, if an employee has a problem, the company has a problem.'[99] In this world, all humans are collectively connected, like cells in a battery, networked to provide power for the machines. Humans are equated to worker drones and it is imperative for their survival that they break free from the system: the collective here is presented in a negative light. Characters like Vincent in *Gattaca* (dir. Andrew Niccol, 1997), or Neo and the other inhabitants of the Nebuchadnezzar in *The Matrix*, struggle against the

[97] N. Marsh, P. Crosthwaite, and P. Knight, "Show me the Money: The Culture of Neoliberalism." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics*, 80-81 (2013): 209
[98] Ibid. 210.
[99] *The Matrix* directed by the Wachowskis, (1999), 00:00:12.

dominant totalitarian regimes to gain their success, their humanity and their positive endings through their individualist ideals.[100]

In contrast, although neoliberal ideas permeated Japan during the Occupation,[101] they did not take as firm a hold on the social and political structure of Japan. That is not to say that there were no figures calling for Japan to embrace Western values earlier; for example, Yukichi Fukuzawa, in the Meiji period, wanted to follow a more individualist approach to society.[102] However, in general the philosophical, cultural and religious influences of Buddhism and Shinto continued to play an important role in Japanese society and those ideologies privilege the collective over the individual.[103] Creative outputs, like anime, reflect some of this deferral to older storytelling modes and traditional ideas of Shinto and Buddhism.[104] *Serial Experiments Lain* (dir. Ryutaro Nakamura, 1998) and *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Mamoru Oshii, 1995), in particular, show ideas of collective consciousness in a far more positive light. The emphasis on 'one-ness' or 'unity'[105] with both human and non-human others—such as plants and animals with Buddhism, or *kami*, spirits/gods in Shinto, or by extension posthumans—feeds the generally positive tone applied to the endings of *Serial Experiments Lain*—where Lain merges with the collective consciousness of the Wired after regaining her humanity—and the first *Ghost in the Shell* film—where Major Kusanagi joins minds with the Puppet Master, the antagonist of the film, to form a new entity.

However, one needs to be wary of being too essentialist: as with any culture, Japanese culture is complex and as Jeffrey Kingston argues, 'paradoxically, it is possible for Japanese to express their individuality and assert themselves within their conformity. If one plays by the rules sufficiently, one can get away with quite a bit of individualism and society will look the other way.'[106] Therefore, even though there is evidence to support an argument that Japanese people view membership of the society or community as important, this does not mean it is at the total rejection of the important role of the individual.

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[100] The issue of collective consciousness continues to form a distinct difference between the two cultures *Transcendence*, directed by Wally Pfister. (London: Summit Entertainment. 2014) DVD, once again casts a negative tone on the use of collective consciousness as a means of becoming posthuman.
[101] See McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 550-565.
[102] For more on this see McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 176.
[103] Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, 113.
[104] For more on connection between Shinto and anime see Jolyon Baraka Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition: Manga, Anime and Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012).
[105] M. Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion*, 66.
[106] Kingston, *Japan in Transformation 1952 – 2000*, 3.

The second point of divergence relates to the way Japanese and Anglo-American screen texts end which comes to bear on the subgenre of *posthuman noir*. Antonia Levi points out that Japanese anime, more generally, favours ambiguous endings; this stems from the traditions of Japanese folklore and mythic storytelling which forgo definitive answers to 'lead their viewers to the brink of discovery and allow them to make the rest of the journey alone.'[107] These tonal variations also branch into notions of theme: the fatalism of Anglo-American films is contrasted with the Japanese concept of *mono-no-aware*—'pathos of things'[108]—which views the transient nature of our world without complaint. Both *mono-no-aware* and fatalism are concerned with the concept that everything has an ending; living things are in a state of flux moving toward their inescapable death. However, *mono-no-aware* views this state of nature in a more positive light than fatalism which carries negative connotations of a doomed fate.[109] This again returns to the different philosophical perspective in Japan, rooted in Shinto and Buddhism.

Why Anime?

Before proceeding to the next section, a quick note about my choice of Japanese anime: I have chosen to look at Japanese anime, rather than live action film, because there are more examples in anime that fit into the subgenre *posthuman noir* which exposes a trend in the way Japanese screen texts explore the posthuman, as evidenced in the number I have grouped into a *posthuman noir* corpus.[110] Moreover, I agree with the argument Shana Heinricy makes, that 'animated bodies […] are so ripe with the human body in a state of becoming.'[111] The nature of the medium allows for malleable presentation of the human body that fits explorations of the posthuman, where the traditional boundaries of the human are challenged and changed, and thus enables a different approach to critical engagement with reality and fiction, human and posthuman. In anime, the characters can be illustrated to do things normal human bodies cannot.[112]

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[107] Antonia Levi in J. Lent, ed. *Animation in Asia and the Pacific* (Eastleigh: Libby Publishing, 2001), 36.
[108] Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving* Castle, 31.
[109] Naremore, *More Than Night*, 34.
[110] Shana Heinricy comments on the number of posthuman characters in anime in "Take a Ride on the Catbus" in *Anime and Philosophy: Wide eyed Wonder*, eds. Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2010), 5.
[111] Ibid., 9.
[112] See Toshiya Ueno's essay "Kurenai no metalsuits, Anime to wa nani ka/What is animation," trans. Michael Arnold, in *Mechademia* vol.1, ed. Frenchy Lunning, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 111-

But what exactly do I mean when I use the term anime? It is important to define what is meant by anime because as Rayna Denison states it is 'a shifting, sliding category.'[113] Anime studies in the west initially focused on defining what constituted as anime.[114] Antonia Levi charts the use of the word anime, a term the Japanese borrowed from the French which has been reapplied by the Americans to refer to 'the unique type of animation that comes from Japan.'[115] Levi's definition is broad and her study encompasses the way creators and fans engage with the term. As Dension unpicks in her excellent study of anime, multiple terms have been used in Japan to refer to animated texts, and the rise of one term 'anime' for these texts has as much to do with media distributors creating a cultural product, or conceiving marketing strategies, as it does with fan and community interaction.[116] The experience of anime is not confined to watching screen texts but, as part of fan culture incorporates, multimedia engagements through merchandise, events and other narrative platforms such as video games.[117]

In this thesis, I take a broad definition of the term and use anime to refer to animated television series and films produced in Japan, which use both cel and computer animation techniques. My research into *posthuman noir* anime seeks adds to this growing field of study through focusing on the content, rather than the medium itself, in contrast to Thomas Lamarre's *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*, which explores anime through the machines and processes involved in making anime texts.[118] My approach instead thinks about that content of anime texts in relation to a global trend in exploring what it means to be human.

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118. It is also interesting to note that CGI improves, anime, like *Ghost in the Shell*, are being adapted into live action films; perhaps CGI offers live action films the creative freedom that anime had.

[113] Rayna Denison, *Anime: A Critical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 1.

[114] Antonia Levi, *Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation* (U.S.A.: Open Court Publishing Company, 1996).

[115] Ibid., 1.

[116] Dension, *Anime*, 5. See also Jonathan Clements, *Anime*: *A History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[117] See Denison, *Anime*, 133-151 and Clements, *Anime*: *A History*, 208-210.

[118] Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

2.4 Defining *Posthuman noir*

Now that I have provided context for the subgenre, I turn to examine the criteria I have chosen for *posthuman noir*—most, if not all of which I have also exposed in the creative practice screenplay, *Terminal*. As I discussed in the introduction I have chosen the term *posthuman noir* to differentiate the set of screen texts I explore in this thesis from those covered by the terms tech-noir and neo noir. A definition for *posthuman noir* can be summarised as: a screen text set in a future with posthuman technology—where characters are modified through scientific intervention, or by means which can be explained through science[119]—which uses tropes of traditional film noir—including aesthetics, structures, characters and themes—to validate the human qualities—namely emotional awakening and storytelling—crucial for survival in a posthuman future.

In this section, I elaborate on that definition by firstly explaining my title choice, *posthuman noir*, before setting out its defining features in relation to aesthetic, character, structural and thematic tropes. Finally, I establish a pattern which privileges human qualities of emotional awakening and storytelling ability that I further explore in the remaining chapters, 3 and 4, of this thesis.

What's in a name: Labelling *posthuman noir*

I decided to name the subgenre *posthuman noir* primarily for the posthuman characters within it, who have evolved beyond current parameters of the human.[120] Although the screen

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[119] Although this seems a redundant statement to make, this is crucial to explain as there is an extensive genre of anime which has the aesthetic, thematic and narrative tropes of film noir, but whose beyond-human characters have been modified by otherworldly, or supernatural, means. The anime *Un-Go* (dir. Seiji Mizushima, 2011) for example, follows the investigations of a cynical private detective, Shinjuurou Yuuki (Ryo Katsuji), in a future Tokyo with his shape shifting boss Inga (Aki Toyosaki)—who sometimes appears as femme fatale and at others as a jovial young boy. The landscapes are war torn and urban, the visual composition is disorientating and often claustrophobic. The focus of each episode is a crime, for which there is no simple answer and the investigation unearths uncomfortable truths about human nature. Although, Shinjuurou, Inga and the antagonist Bettenou are beyond the current parameters of what constitutes a human, posthuman if you will, their posthumanity comes via supernatural means. They are adapted and evolved through interactions with *kami*, Shinto gods. Nor is this idea of posthuman via otherworldly means confined to Japanese anime. *Byzantium* (dir. Neil Jordan, 2012) a British neo noir thriller, reminiscent of *Brighton Rock* (dir. John Boulting, 1947), follows two femme fatale posthuman characters regaining their sense of humanity through emotional engagement with the human characters in a seaside resort. However, the medium through which their posthuman transformation is enacted is otherworldly rather than scientific; they visit a cave on a remote Irish Island where, as in *Un-Go*, old world gods enable them to evolve.

[120] The human in this context is a thinking, feeling flesh and blood, homo sapiens, that is not genetically modified nor augmented beyond common prosthesis, such as hearing aids or artificial limbs. For more on parameters of the

texts within this subgenre touch on concepts of transhumanism and posthumanism, they ultimately fall back on an anthropocentric privileging of the human qualities of emotion and storytelling. However, it is important to develop an understanding of these philosophical standpoints to demonstrate how aspects of these theories are used or ignored in *posthuman noir*.

Transhumanism is the branch of posthumanism often described as the true child of humanism.[121] The history of humanism dates back to antiquity,[122] but it can be summed up as 'simply human-being-ism, that is, devotion to the interests of human beings, wherever they live and whatever their status.'[123] Humanism, as a concept, is more typically associated with the interest in a scientific and rational attitude towards the world, the removal of myth and superstition, and a focus on the anthropocentric, with the human being at the centre of that world.[124] Corliss Lamont argues that humanism in the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries also places emphasis on the care of other humans.[125]

'Transhumanism has its roots in humanism';[126] it is concerned with the rational, logical human figure who remains at the centre of the universe working to perfect themselves through technological means of evolution.[127] Julian Huxley, credited with first using the term, explained the concept as 'man remaining man, but transcending himself by realising new possibilities of and for his human nature.'[128] Whatever modifications occur, the human body and the individual identity—that human beings are in charge of their own destiny and choices—remain as markers to be preserved through evolution to post-human futures. There is little desire to network and blur with non-human elements, be they artificial intelligence, non-human animals or other life forms on Earth. The human remains clearly defined and when the boundaries between humans

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human in relation to technology see David Bell "Cybercultures Reader: A User's Guide," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.

[121] Ibid., xiii.

[122] Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (sixth edition; U.S.A: Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co. 1982), 11.

[123] Ibid., 15.

[124] Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, xiv.

[125] Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 13-14. Although, for a critical reading of humanism see David Erenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[126] Nick Bostrom, "A History of Transhumanist Thought," *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 14 (1), (2005): 2. Accessed July 17th 2017. http://www.jetpress.org/volume14/bostrom.html.

[127] Male gendered pronouns are more often used in humanist discourse, for more on this see Pramod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (2014), 5.

[128] Julian Huxley in Bostrom, 'A History of Transhumanist Thought,' 6.

and non-human others break down, when man and machine invade each other, techno-terror is unleashed to generate fear and re-affirm the need for the human to remain an isolated being.[129]

On the other hand, philosophical posthumanism aims to escape the bounds of the anthropocentric.[130] Philosophical posthumanism attempts to situate the human within a network of other non-human animals and life forms and seeks to find ways to express humanity through these networks. Stefan Herbrechter describes posthumanism as being 'the cultural malaise or euphoria that is caused by the feeling that arises once you start taking the idea of "postanthropocentrism" seriously.'[131] Inherent in his definition is this move away from anthropocentrism. Whether viewed in a positive or negative light, posthumanist philosophy posits that the non-human plays an equally pivotal role as the human in shaping the world. As such, philosophical posthumanism works to break down the binaries which currently define human identity—male/female, human/non-human animal, organic/technological—and seeks to throw out the pre-existing power structures that limit what is considered 'human.' In this vein, Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* calls for the breaking of traditional power structures and binary definitions of the human, and in its place Haraway would like to posit unity of races, of genders, of species, of man and machine towards a destruction of boundaries.[132]

There are elements of both transhumanism and posthumanism at play in *posthuman noir*. Some texts seem to explore a posthumanist blurring of boundaries between the human/nonhuman such as *Ghost in the Shell* (1995). At the end of the anime, Motoko Kusangai (Atsuko Tanaka), a human/gynoid hybrid, and the Puppet Master (Iemasa Kayumi), an A.I., merge consciousnesses and find a new physical body. The technological and the human find harmony in combination towards a new entity, which seems to challenge humanist and transhumanist strands that emphasise an anthropocentric viewpoint. A posthumanist agenda also blends into the fabric of *Blade Runner*. The emphasis on trans-species empathy—the focus of the Voight Kampff and the reason the replicants are given a four-year lifespan, (because that is how long it takes for them to develop empathy, as Bryant (M. Emmet Walsh) points out to Deckard (Harrison Ford) with a leer, as if this evolution of replicant emotion were as sordid as

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[129] See Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner "Technophobia/Dystopia" in *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader*, ed. Sean Redmond (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 48-56 and Emily E. Auger, *Tech Noir Film* (Bristol: Intellect. 2011).

[130] See Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minnapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2010) xiv-xx.

[131] Herbrechter, *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*, (London; Bloomsbury, 2013), 3.

[132] Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto" in *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 35.

some sexual perversion)[133]—hints at another way to view the world: one that does not focus on a single species but begins to take all species into account. However, this idea is superficially formed in *Blade Runner*. The blurring of boundaries between the posthuman other and the human is undermined by the fact that it is humans with which the replicants have become indistinguishable, and for all the talk focused around animals—not as much as in the novel *Blade Runner* is based on[134]—there is no trace that a blurring of human with non-human animals is on the cards. Instead, as with transhumanist thought, it is these posthuman characters' 'human' qualities that remain the focus of attention.

Rosi Braidotti argues, in relation to the presentation of posthuman characters in general, that very rarely, if ever, do they exhibit traits that move from an anthropocentric viewpoint.[135] In *posthuman noir,* posthuman characters embody humanist and transhumanist ideas of self-improvement; they are Human 2.0, the next stage in the human operating system. Through scientific methods, the human is 'expanded, enhanced and extruded'[136] towards perfection, or an idea of perfection which deals with specific defects perceived in normal human characters.

However, here posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* veer away from transhumanist ideas which tend to focus on making humans more rational. Human beings use a combination of emotional and rational reasoning processes[137] and it is the posthuman and human characters in *posthuman noir* who exhibit this balanced ability that are more successful. I argue that, through experiencing an emotional awakening, these posthuman characters also experience the awakening of storytelling abilities which allow them to navigate their way out of the maze-like narratives they inhabit. These humanised posthumans are also able to interact more effectively with humans; in most cases they are indistinguishable from the human characters in the society that surrounds them. At the end of their respective screen texts, Hei and Yin in *Darker than Black* (dir. Tensai Okamura, 2007) and Ava in *Ex_Machina* (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) disappear into their crowded cities; to all intents and purposes, they appear like humans. Thus, these characters are rehabilitated to function effectively in future human societies. This could be seen

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[133] *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott, (1982; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD, 00:15:00.

[134] See Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968; London: Gollancz. 2010).

[135] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 190.

[136] Julie Clarke, *The Paradox of the Posthuman: Science Fiction/Techno-Horror Films and Visual Media* (Saarbrücken; VDM Verlag Dr. Müller Aktiengesellscchaft & Co. KG, 2004), 3.

[137] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (1994; London; Vintage, 2006), xvii.

to conform to a strand of transhumanism, posited by P.J. Manney, which focuses on not only improving the physical human body via techno science, but also the need to enhance humanity's empathetic capacity.[138] However, the way these characters simulate being human casts their posthuman abilities as secondary to their human qualities, transforming these screen texts into humanist, more than transhumanist, tales. It is for this reason that I term the subgenre neither transhumanist noir nor posthumanist noir, but posthuman noir.

In film noir, the human qualities of storytelling and emotional awakening are exploited by femme fatales to corrupt the male protagonists. In *posthuman noir*, I argue that these very flaws demonstrate our humanity and, once awoken in posthuman characters, result in their change from tragic to triumphant endings. It is through remaining firm to humanist ideals, not posthumanist ones, that these screen texts demonstrate their true agenda. *Posthuman noir* is not about trying to blur and break the boundaries of humanity, even though it demonstrates how this might be done, and it is not about trying to remove humans from the centre of the debate. If anything, *posthuman noir* places the human firmly back into the limelight.

Posthuman noir aesthetic tropes

One of the ways in which I identify Anglo-American films and Japanese anime under the banner of *posthuman noir* is by their use of aesthetic devices often associated with traditional film noir. As previously mentioned, I consider the first *posthuman noir* Anglo-American film to be *Blade Runner*, which established in 1982 a pattern for the ways film noir aesthetics could be adapted for a science fictional future.[139] The visual style of *Blade Runner* is defined by deep contrasts between light and shadow. It is set in an urban space shrouded in rain and fog[140] lit by neon signs. It features dark alleys or rooms with claustrophobically complex *mise-en-scène*, like J R Sebastian's (William Sanderson) apartment, that provide spaces for criminals to hide in and investigations to become diverted. As previously mentioned, aesthetic tropes of film noir can be described as 'constant opposition of light and shadow [...use of] oblique camera angles [...with

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[138] See P.J. Manney, "Empathy in the Time of Technology: How Storytelling is Key to Empathy," *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, 19:1, (2008) 51-61, accessed 16/02/2015. http://jetpress.org/v19/manney.htm.
[139] Although *Alphaville*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard, (1965; France; Athos Films), combines science fiction with film noir, for this thesis the focus is on Anglo and American film and Japanese anime, and thus *Blade Runner* signals the start of the sub-genre.
[140] *Blade Runner*, dir. Scott (1982), 00:00:07.

a] disruptive compositional balance of frames and scenes…'[141] An examination of an early scene in *Blade Runner* demonstrates how these techniques which typify traditional film noir are present in *posthuman noir*. In this scene, a Blade Runner, Holden (Morgan Paull), sits in a smoke-filled interrogation room. Holden is placed to the far left of the shot, bathed in blue light which cuts diagonally across the room, at odds with geometric patterns on the wall. Above, a ceiling fan turns slowly, dispersing the smoke from Holden's cigarette.[142] The smoke, like fog, obscures elements of the environment, as well as providing a backdrop to add emphasis to the contrast between light and shadow in the room.[143] As with traditional film noir, these aesthetic devices generate an atmosphere of disorientation and alienation. The use of high and off-centre angles make Holden appear small in the space, perhaps hinting at the inferiority of the human characters in the world of the posthuman. When Leon (Brion James), a suspected posthuman replicant, arrives, Holden seems boxed into the space; Leon is more physically imposing than he is. Unusual and oblique camera angles set the viewer on edge; during the test/interrogation, the point of view shifts from the table, where the depth of field blurs the objects at the front of the frame, to perfectly symmetrical shots.[144] Just as in traditional film noir, the visual aesthetics, which conceal and obscure, reflect the story hinting that all is not as it seems.

Posthuman noir Japanese anime similarly use the aesthetic tropes of traditional film noir through emulating camera angles that play heavily on more oblique angles. The opening five minutes of the first episode of *Ergo Proxy* (dir. Shukō Murase, 2006) establishes this aesthetic trope of visual disorientation, where there is not a single shot which uses a balanced composition. The focus is always to one side or another, the angles are almost always cantered, buildings loom nightmarishly over characters, or extremely dark spaces hem a character in, threateningly concealing aggressors.[145] The combined effect of these constantly shifting images is one of overwhelming disorientation which signifies the complex psychological and philosophical questions the series posits about what it means to be human.

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[141] Mark T. Conard, *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 1.
[142] *Blade Runner*, dir. Scott (1982), 00:00:04.
[143] One of the more iconic film noir openings, *Double Indemnity*, features a man on crutches emerging from the fog. See Luhr, *Film Noir*, 1.
[144] For more on the effects of this and use in *posthuman noir* see Chapter 3.3, in relation to *Ex_Machina*.
[145] 'The Pulse of Awakening/Awakening,' episode 1, *Ergo Proxy*, directed by Shukō Murase, (2006; Chepstow: MVM Entertainment, 2007), DVD.

Ryutaro Nakamura's *Serial Experiments Lain* (1998) also manipulates these aesthetic tropes of traditional film noir to explore his Japanese heritage, shown in the distinctly Japanese nature of the urban and school spaces. Ryutaro Nakamura's use of chiaroscuro draws as much from the patterns of shadow on shoji paper screens and Japanese noir movies from the 1950s and 60s as it does from Anglo-American versions of film noir.[146] In the opening episode, wires create bars of light and shadow that divide the image,[147] which is reminiscent of the lines on paper screens or shadows cast upon them by bamboo or tree branches. The sky is either a blinding white[148] or a muted shade of grey, crisscrossed by the wires which carry information and connect the characters of the world. Repeated shots of this image emphasise their importance to the world within the wires, and their use to constantly divide and obscure shots is a clever manipulation of the way shadow is used in traditional film noir.

When discussing film noir aesthetics, Andrew Spicer writes that the 'city is presented as at once all-enveloping and unreal.'[149] This description could also be applied to *posthuman noir* films. Take, for example, the nightmare city environment of *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998), which appears to have been influenced, like film noir, by German Expressionism;[150] there are distinct similarities in the aesthetics of *Dark City* and *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927). In both, a city above ground is powered by an infernal machine below ground. In the opening sequence, *Dark City*'s dark city is established as an 'all-enveloping and unreal' maze or warren. The first scene shows the vastness of space, potentially establishing the insignificance of the characters' struggles in relation to the cosmos, hinting at themes of fatalism and isolation that are also present in traditional film noir.[151] The next shot pans down through the clouds and smog, more of that obscuring smoke, past the tallest spires to the labyrinth of buildings and interconnecting

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[146] See Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir" in *International Noir*, eds. Pettey and Palmer (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 85-111, for the Japanese roots of Japanese film noir.

[147] *Serial Experiments Lain*, directed by Ryutaro Nakamura (1998; Chepstow: MVM Entertainment, 2006), DVD, 00:00:06.

[148] For more on use of the colour white in Japanese noir see Miyao, Daisuke. "Out of the Past: Film Noir, Whiteness and the End of the Monochrome Era in Japanese Cinema." in *East Asian Film Noir: Transnational Encounters and Intercultural Dialogue*, eds., by Chi-Yun Shin and Mark Gallagher (London: I.B Tauris. 2015), 21-36.

[149] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 67.

[150] Vivian Sobchack, "Cities on the Edge of Time: The Urban Science Fiction Film," in *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader*, ed. Sean Redmond, (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 86. See also Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg "Noir Cinema" (1968) in *Film Noir Reader*, ed. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 27.

[151] Tom Flinn, "Three Faces of Film Noir," 35.

roads and passageways which join them.[152] The buildings are more like stylised shadows than three-dimensional objects. As mentioned, the appearance of this city draws comparisons to the city in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.[153] This establishes a link between *Dark City* and one of the first science fiction films, as well as connecting it to the German Expressionist film style which influenced traditional film noir.[154] The buildings also generate a visual link to the illustrations of folktales;[155] thus the aesthetics hint towards human storytelling, one of the key human traits which I argue are privileged in *posthuman noir*.

In addition to these aesthetic borrowings, many *posthuman noir* films and anime adopt production design elements that reflect the period of traditional film noir, namely the 1940s and 1950s. *Blade Runner* owes much to the 1940s and 1950s in its production design and characterisation. The characters are dressed in fashions of that period: Rachel's (Sean Young) tightly pinned hair, red lipstick and outfit with shoulder pads, reminiscent of the 1940s femme fatale[156] is a perfect example of nostalgic borrowing of *Blade Runner*'s aesthetic, while the men wear fedoras and trench coats, like the hardboiled detectives in *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941) or *The Big Sleep* (dir. Howard Hawkes, 1946). However, this is the fashion of the past retrofitted to match the future, which can be seen in Deckard's outfit: although it borrows the trench coat, rumpled formal shirt and tie combination of the film noir detective, the tie is a plastic type material while the shirt colours are more lurid and futuristic, and the trench coat has added patches and a flying jacket collar which do not match the 1940/50s aesthetic.

This stylistic nod to the fashion and architectural designs of film noir's golden age is repeated in *Gattaca*, particularly the scene where Vincent (Ethan Hawke) takes Irene (Uma Thurman) out for the evening in an art deco-styled restaurant and dance hall. Irene's metallic dress is reminiscent of a 1940s femme fatale and her side-parted waved hair style harkens to the iconic poster image of Gilda (Rita Hayworth)[157]. In *The Matrix,* it is the antagonists who appropriate the fashion of 1950/60s G-men, representing the homogenised collective

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[152] *Dark City,* directed by Alex Proyas (1998; London: Entertainment in Video Ltd, 1999), DVD, 00:00:01.

[153] *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang (1927; London: Eureka, 2005) DVD, 00:00:16.

[154] Higham and Greenberg "Noir Cinema," 27.

[155] For more see Chapter 4.

[156] Judith Barad, "Blade Runner and Sartre," in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir*, ed. Mark T. Conard (USA: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 27.

[157] *Gilda*, directed by Charles Vidor (1946; Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures).

consciousness, while the protagonists present a sharp contrast in their individual cyberpunk outfits, their position outside of the system celebrated in their personalised clothing.

This tendency to reference the style of traditional film noir is not restricted to Anglo-American films. Japanese anime also borrows heavily from the fashion and architecture of the 1940/50s. Spaces in *Metropolis* (dir. Rintaro, 2001) heavily reflect the 1940/1950s architectural style and the characters once again wear trilbies, fedoras, trench coats, suits and other staples of male fashion from that period. In similar style to *Blade Runner* and *Gattaca*, the stylisation of characters in *Darker Than Black, Paprika* (dir. Satoshi Kon, 2006) and *Ghost in the Shell* (both the movies and television shows) adapt the fashion of the 1940/1950s to match their more futuristic settings. The use of fashion from the period of traditional film noir hints at the nostalgia for a human character who is not technologically modified, and who can display essential human traits.

Although films like *The Island* (dir. Michael Bay, 2005) explore similar themes to those mentioned above, they lack the visual signifiers of traditional film noir. This in combination with structures that fall into the category of action film, rather than noir thriller, discounts them from the *posthuman noir* subgenre. In relation to this, I also do not include Japanese anime like *Chobits* (dir. Morio Asaka, 2002) in the *posthuman noir* subgenre, because even though it has posthuman characters, its genre leanings fall closer to romantic comedy and its aesthetics are too bright and cheerful.

Posthuman noir character tropes

As mentioned above, another important signifier of the films and anime included in the *posthuman noir* corpus is the use of archetypal characters from film noir: detectives, either private or working for the police; members of criminal gangs or organisations; conmen and women; femme fatales and, in many Japanese anime, the hommes fatal. Taking *Blade Runner* as an example, we see the roles of detective and femme fatale occupied by Deckard and Rachel respectively. Rachel, and—depending on whether one is watching the director's cut released in 1992 or the original release from 1982—Deckard, to some extent, survive the film's narrative when they exhibit the human qualities of emotional awakening and storytelling ability. In traditional film noir, James Maxfield suggests that the male protagonist 'has emotions that he has been unable to control, emotions that have indeed dominated him and driven him inexorably

to his doom.'[158] Deckard succumbs to the seduction of Rachel's posthuman femme fatale, which in traditional film noir should result in his death, and quite possibly hers as well, by the end of the film.[159] However, this is where traditional film noir tropes are subverted in *posthuman noir*: rather than be doomed for exhibiting an emotional awakening, the posthuman characters are rewarded for demonstrating this key human trait. When Rachel kills Leon, a replicant like herself, to protect Deckard, who she considers human—whether or not he actually is—she demonstrates trans-species empathy and emotional, not just rational, judgement.[160] At this point, Rachel steps away from her programming and starts to make her own decisions about her life. Sartre's rhetoric of human essence posits that existence precedes essence; a human does not have an inherent design, or predetermined essence, but chooses to be who they want to be. A replicant, like Rachel, is designed to fit a function; this means their essence comes first. Unlike a human, they are not created with the capacity to choose. When Rachel turns against her programming, she becomes authentically human; she no longer conforms to the essence or design of her makers; she is her own person.[161] This pattern is displayed throughout *posthuman noir*, where what might be expected of traditional film noir archetypes is subverted. In turn, I would argue that this indicates the way these films and anime express their notions of what is important to preserve of the human in the technologically advanced world.

A similar pattern is applied to the figure of the homme fatal, a character that is less frequently seen in Anglo-American traditional film noir, even though this character is present in noir, or hardboiled, literature. The most iconic example might be Patricia Highsmith's Tom Ripley,[162] where Tom uses his charm and his erotic appeal to manipulate both male and female characters to achieve his goals. Nevertheless, it is present in *posthuman noir*, a key example being the characters of Vincent and Jerome (Jude Law) in *Gattaca*. Both these male characters act the part of the homme fatal, seducing each other and Irene to ensure the success of their

[158] James F. Maxfield, *The Fatal Woman: Sources of Male Anxiety in American Film Noir, 1941-1991*. (London: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1996), 28.
[159] Stevie Simkin, *Cultural Constructions of the Femme Fatale: From Pandora's Box to Amanda Knox* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.)
[160] Ralph Adolphs, "Could a Robot Have Emotions? Theoretical Perspectives from Social Cognitive Neuroscience," in *Who Needs emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, eds. Jean-Marc Fellous and Michael A. Arbib (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 15.
[161] Barad, "Blade Runner and Sartre," in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir*, ed. Conard, 33.
[162] Tom Ripley first appears in Patricia Highsmith's novels *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1955) and then has further appearances in *Ripley Under Ground* (1970), *Ripley's Game* (1974), *The Boy Who Followed Ripley* (1980) and *Ripley Under Water* (1991).

scheme. Jerome is an alluring and psychologically damaged character. He enables Vincent to achieve his dream of working at *Gattaca*, but he is also a destructive force, whose drinking and depression threatens to undermine Vincent's con. As Jackie Stacey points out, the relationship between these two men is erotically charged.[163] It seems that the emotionally charged connections can lead to the characters successfully achieving their goals—in the case of *Gattaca* that is the conning the corporation into thinking Vincent is Jerome so that Vincent can travel to space—when they re-engage with this inherent human trait and experience an emotional awakening through collaborating. This enables Vincent to lie more convincingly, thus enhancing his storytelling ability. There is a distinct correlation between these two inherent human characteristics: they feed into each other and tie back to the idea that these human traits are undefinable or unprogrammable; they must be learned through the connections between the human and the posthuman.

The real space where the homme fatal is featured is in Japanese anime. Since the 1980s and 1990s, Japanese male celebrities have embraced androgynous, almost feminised, appearances with ordinary men following suit to take greater care of their looks and use beauty products. Yumiko Iida discusses this phenomenon as a type of feminisation of masculine culture in Japan.[164] She argues that one of the reasons the traditional male role of the salaryman came under threat was because the bubble economies of the 1980s burst and Japan entered a period of stagflation. This was exacerbated by the increasing number of women who wanted to find jobs, rather than remaining in the tradition female sphere of the home. The male identity as the breadwinner, therefore, came under attack from two fronts and younger generations began to reject the image of the corporate man. 'The decline in corporate masculine culture in post bubble Japan,' Iida argues, 'provided young men and women with renewed opportunities to explore and exert new gender identities.'[165] The effect of a stronger, more vocal, female presence in Japanese society has also led to what Iida believes as a turn towards the female gaze, where women start to objectify men and the interest Japanese men take in their appearance is related to satisfying this female need.

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[163] Jackie Stacey, *The Cinematic Life of the Gene* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 119.
[164] Yumiko Iida, *"*Beyond the 'feminization of masculinity': transforming patriarchy with the 'feminine' in contemporary Japanese youth culture" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6:1 (2005): 60.
[165] Ibid. 61.

In this context, it is interesting to note that often the role which would be taken by the femme fatale in Anglo-American films is instead occupied by a man in Japanese anime. These homme fatal characteristics are exemplified in the character of Shogo Makishima (Takahiro Sakurai) in *Psycho Pass,* whose charm and attractive, slightly feminised appearance—he wears tight fitting, open necked shirts, tight trousers and has long silver hair—seduce both male and female characters into committing crimes, and provide a level of homoerotic fascination between the series antagonist Makishima and one of the posthuman protagonists, Kogami (Tomokazu Seki). This is not to say that Makishima is effeminate; he is shown as violent, sadistic and a capable fighter on numerous occasions throughout the series. However, his ability to destabilise the foundations on which *Psycho Pass's* Tokyo is based stems not only from the fact that he is criminally asymptomatic, a true psychopath, but from the way his seductive charm endangers the male characters. The homme fatal character is also present in *Darker Than Black* in the form of Wei (Takeshi Kusao) who has an obsessional, erotically charged relationship to Hei. Likewise, there is a similarly charged relationship between the protagonist Shu Ouma (Yuki Kaji) and mentor/antagonist Gai (Yuichi Nakamura) in *Guilty Crown* (dir. Tetsuro Araki, 2011-12).

Homme and femme fatales in *posthuman noir* may carry out a similar role to those in traditional noir—they exist to seduce and manipulate the protagonists—but the outcome of their seduction is positive rather than destructive, which leads to the question: can these characters be classed as fatal? In the traditional sense, their inability to destroy the protagonists undermines their fatal role; however, I have continued to use the term fatal(e) despite this change in role to illustrate the link between traditional film noir and *posthuman noir.* In *Blade Runner*, Rachel's seduction of Deckard reawakens his and her emotions; Jerome enables Vincent's con in *Gattaca* and keeps Vincent in touch with his emotions and his true identity; Amber (Tomoko Kawakami) in *Darker Than Black* manipulates Hei into solving the investigation of his past which sparks the emotional awakening of himself and Yin. Therefore, the key subversion of traditional film noir characters in *posthuman noir* is seen in the changing role of the fatal(e), who becomes the agent of emotional awakening; they are a locus of connection between human qualities in the posthuman.

Posthuman noir **thematic tropes**

The final area which defines and unites the Anglo-American films and Japanese anime in *posthuman noir* is their use of film noir thematic tropes, particularly the pervading tones of fatalism and existentialism. The tone that pervades traditional film noir is dark, cynical and morally ambiguous.[166] In the previous section, I explored the correlation between the Second World War and the appeal of traditional film noir narratives which followed fatalistic trajectories and posed existential questions about the nature of humanity. A person's nature was defined through his or her actions, not through an authoritarian figure; while morality was flexible, rather than being tied to immutable societal laws it was moulded to fit situation and circumstance.[167] Characters in film noir were able to make good choices, they just tended to be ruled by their passions and succumbed to temptation; the responsibility for these decisions were placed solely on their heads and they were punished for these transgressions.

This theme—that human essence is defined through an individual's action rather than some pre-determined force—is carried through into *posthuman noir*. In all the screen texts I have grouped within the subgenre, posthuman characters that are designed to be more perfect or rational become 'authentically human'[168] when they are able to learn human abilities of storytelling and experience an emotional awakening. However, unlike in film noir where a character's own actions, beyond the control of an authoritarian figure or society, lead to their destruction, when posthuman characters cast off their pre-determined programming and take control of the narrative, this is figured in a positive light. For example, when Sonny (Alan Tudyk), the robotic posthuman character in *I, Robot* (dir. Alex Proyas, 2004), gains the ability to lie—a storytelling ability—and begins to feel—an emotional awakening—it transcends the programming that other robots follow and this sets Sonny on the path to become the saviour of the robots in this science fictional world.

In this transformation to a thinking and feeling robot, Sonny shifts from following its programming to making its own decisions; it exercises its agency. Through using storytelling ability and emotions, it is able to convince the robot hater, Detective Del Spooner (Will Smith), to see it as human rather than simply a machine. V.I.K.I.—Virtual Interactive Kinetic

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[166] Brookes, *Film Noir*, 51.
[167] See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1960).
[168] Barad, "Blade Runner and Sartre" in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir*, ed. Conard, 33.

Intelligence—(Fiona Hogan), the central computer A.I. system, on the other hand, does not develop the capacity for storytelling, nor does it experience an emotional awakening. Instead, V.I.K.I. remains resolutely rational and therefore not able to comprehend the flaws in its emotionless calculations. It decides that to protect humans and the world they inhabit, imprisoning them or killing them is the best plan because humans are a threat to their own safety and the planet's. There is an argument currently made in cognitive neuroscience that a lack of emotion is as dangerous to decision making as an excess of emotion.[169] Humans have evolved to incorporate emotion and storytelling ability, through the recall of memory,[170] into cognitive processes: 'emotions remind us of past reasoning and allow use to make intuitive decisions.' [171] Sonny exhibits these human traits; its father figure, Dr. Alfred Lanning (James Cromwell), appeals to Sonny's emotions and together they concoct a story—Lanning's suspected suicide which is a murder—to expose the laws in V.I.K.I.'s problematic programming. Sonny performs the role of a criminal, manipulating the narrative, demonstrating a human-like agency which appears to be figured as a positive. This is a pattern that develops across the screen texts in the subgenre, and in subsequent chapters I will further explore the ways emotional awakening and storytelling abilities are used in *posthuman noir*.

Another interesting thematic development in *posthuman noir* is presented in the figure of the genetically modified posthuman. As alluded to previously, traditional film noir emerged from, and reacted to, a cynical climate haunted by the atrocities committed in the Second World War such as the eugenic experimentations present in both the Nazi regime—which culminated in the concentration camps—and Japanese Unit 731[172]—a secret unit of Japanese army in China that undertook research in biological and chemical warfare through human experimentation.[173] The emphasis placed by both the Nazi and Japanese regimes on experimenting with the human body, as well as questions of racial purity,[174] continue to spark and resonate with humanity's

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[169] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 53.

[170] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 10.

[171] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, xviii.

[172] Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future*, 85.

[173] It is important to note that those involved in Unit 731 did not face as strict punitive measures after the war as other Japanese military officials because their research was appropriated by the Americans to enhance their bio-weaponry capabilities, for more see Paul J. Bailey, *Postwar Japan*, 34.

[174] Japan's problematic relationship with notions of racial purity have continued to surface over the twentieth century; in 1986, during the period of economic boom, Japanese prime minister Shigeru Nakasone commented on the superior intelligence of the Japanese race, accrediting some of this to the lower levels of immigration in Japan compared to America, see Bailey, *Postwar Japan*, 156.

anxieties about our posthuman futures. Again, as also mentioned in this thesis Introduction, gene editing methods have been used by scientists to remove defective DNA from embryos in research tests, sparking debate around the ethics of this process and interfering with human DNA.[175] These concerns are present within *posthuman noir* screen texts, where I argue that genetically modified posthumans carry the stigma of association with eugenic ideologies, and physical and mental perfection lead to a loss of empathy.[176] Only those posthuman characters that connect with storytelling and emotions that enable empathy are portrayed positively.

For example, the genetically perfect posthumans deemed 'valid' in *Gattaca* have formed a new class structure to keep those who are genetically inferior, or 'invalid', at the bottom of the food chain. These posthuman characters have a cold superiority which reflects their antiseptically sterile environments. Irene (Uma Thurman) initially appears to be a perfect example of this icy, statuesque perfection; she is almost robotic in her lack of expression. It is later revealed that she, like Vincent Freeman (Ethan Hawke), the protagonist, is genetically inferior, although Irene is not a 'faith-birth',[177] unlike Vincent. However, it is the characters in *Gattaca* who are genetically inferior that thrive and have positive narrative arcs; they are shown outwitting the automaton-like, genetically perfect posthumans. These characters engage the intangible human qualities of emotion and storytelling to navigate their environments and ultimately achieve their goals. This ambivalence to the genetically modified posthuman also surfaces in *Blade Runner*'s synthetically engineered, superior replicants, the strongest of whom, Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer), is visually similar to the ideal of Aryan perfection espoused by the Nazi regime.[178]

In Japanese anime, too, genetically modified characters are viewed with suspicion and fear. The genetically superior 'proxy'[179] characters of *Ergo Proxy,* with their superhuman

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[175] James Gallagher, 'Human embryos edited to stop disease,' *BBC News*, accessed 08/08/17, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-40802147.

[176] See David A. Kirby, "The New Eugenics in Cinema: Genetic Determinism and Gene Therapy in GATTACA," in *Science Fiction Studies* 27, No. 2 (2000): 193-215. See also Jon Turney, *Frankenstein's Footsteps: Science, Genetics and Popular Culture* (London: Yale University Press. 1998), 61. Jackie Stacey also talks of a 'science haunted by its eugenic past' in *The Cinematic Life of the Gene* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 107.

[177] *Gattaca*. DVD. Directed by Andrew Niccol. Los Angeles, CA: Columbia. 1997.

[178] For more on Aryan reading of Roy Batty see Dominic Alessio "Redemption, 'Race,' Religion, Reality and the Far-Right: Science Fiction Film Adaptations of Philip K. Dick," and Peter Brooker "Imagining the Real: Blade Runner and Discourses on the Postmetropolis," in *The Blade Runner Experience: The Legacy of a Science Fiction Classic*, ed. Will Brooker (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), 68 and 221 respectively.

[179] In *Ergo Proxy*, 'proxies' are a more advanced strand of human evolutionary scale who were designed by a creator to take over if humans ruined the planet.

abilities and immortal genes, are cast as the enemy which must be hunted down. Vincent Law, who discovers the ability to transform into the eponymous Ergo Proxy, is an innocuous immigrant, whose ability to pass amongst other humans perhaps highlights one of the more troubling issues of genetically modified posthumans: will we be able to recognise them as posthuman? This is a question also presented in *Darker Than Black*, where the posthuman characters have experienced a change in their cells so they have evolved superhuman abilities; however, their outward appearance remains human. However, as previously mentioned, blending in with human society is cast as a positive attribute when the posthuman characters exhibit internal human qualities to match their external human appearance. The danger, then, comes when these characters are only visibly human, and it is these characters who appear to fare less well in these screen texts.

In privileging intangible human qualities, rather than forwarding a posthumanist agenda, the screen texts in *posthuman noir* illuminate the humanist tendency which exists at the core of the subgenre. Fatalism in *posthuman noir* is an acceptance of inevitable integration between human beings and technology, but, as humans change and evolve, there are aspects that are important to connect with, so that something of the human survives. This section has charted my process in creating a definition for *posthuman noir*, laying out the key features that manipulate traditional film noir conventions. Through examples from across a range of *posthuman noir* screen texts I have created a template for identifying screen texts that can be classified as part of this subgenre. Concurrently, these examples have also started to demonstrate the ways *posthuman noir* figures human qualities in posthuman characters; it is these themes that I explore in more detail in chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis.

Chapter 2.5: Critical Reflection on *Terminal*

At the beginning of Chapter 2, through the screenplay *Terminal*, I asked the reader to engage both the head and the heart,[180] and to actively participate in the processes that the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* go through to be rewarded with survival. Now I want to dissect the techniques I used to generate this experience and demonstrate how creative practice, as a methodology, can be used to identity defining elements of the subgenre.

Screenplays of all lengths are structured around moments of choice in which the lives of the characters change; it is this disruption of the status quo that provides the impetus for dramatic action.[181] In a longer screenplay, characters are presented with a series of moments of change, often with rising levels of intensity. However, the short screenplay is a compressed expression of dramatic intent.[182] Therefore, short screenplays are often based around a moment of choice—a window of opportunity—for the protagonists.[183] Due to the constraints of the form, this choice or goal is often presented in terms of it being more urgent.[184] *Terminal* presents a moment of profound change for the protagonist, Kim, which pivots around her emotional awakening and the engaging of her storytelling ability. When Kim changes the job list, she makes a stand against the whole system of The Terminal. To make this screenplay fit the narrative patterns of *posthuman noir*, I gave Kim a positive ending; I rewarded this character who reconnects with her intangible human traits: her emotions and her ability to tell a story.

The aesthetics of *Terminal*

I stated that the stylistic definers of traditional film noir were a 'constant opposition of light and shadow […with a] disruptive compositional balance of frames and scenes'[185] and 'a preference of oblique and vertical lines.'[186] Stylistic features are more predominant in the filmed version of a screenplay; the text, after all, as discussed is on the cusp of becoming-film and

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[180] *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang (1927: London: Eureka, 2005).

[181] Jule Selbo discusses Aristotle's concept of the way plot should revolve around the change of status quo and how this relates to screenplay structure in *Screenplay: Building Story through Character*, second edition, (London: Routledge, 2015), E-book, 83.

[182] Cooper and Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film*, 164.

[183] Claudia Hunter Johnson, *Crafting Short Screenplays that Connect* (second edition; Oxford: Elsevier Focal Press, 2005), 78.

[184] Cooper and Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film*, 164.

[185] Mark T. Conrad, *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 1.

[186] Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir," 57-58.

needs to connect with designers and other members of the crew to fulfil its potential. However, it is possible in the action—the screenplay equivalent of stage directions—to convey a strong sense of the visual aesthetic. Kim's job centre office is introduced as 'stylistically reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984.'[187] This sets the tone of a dystopian environment, drawing on the austere and totalitarian connotations of the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).[188] There is a hint of the way *mise-en-scène* could be used to generate a visual complexity in the way the desk is described as 'dividing'[189] the space, and I make use of the light to reinforce a film noir aesthetic, where 'blue light dissects the grey space, creating bars of light and shadow,'[190] while references to the shifting holographic posters destabilise the rigid boundaries of the room. Blurring the boundaries between the virtual and material, and between male and female, is a strong theme throughout the screenplay and draws on the work of Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hayles[191] in their exploration of posthumanism. *Terminal* questions the stability of embodied human identity in a world where the posthuman characters have their sex and other physical attributes reassigned whenever they change jobs. However, as I will explain later in this chapter, the posthumanist elements of this screenplay are only skin deep.

When Kim is introduced, I continue to signify the film noir style of the piece by describing her clothes as 'a skirt suit, futuristic meets 1940s,'[192] which echoes the costume choices of *Blade Runner*, *Gattaca* or *Ergo Proxy*. There is a sense of nostalgia in the costumes of *posthuman noir*, a surface reflection of the nostalgia for the figure of the human in the posthuman future. These details combine to develop a picture of the noir aesthetic in the reader's mind; when this is tied to the urban location[193] of the screenplay, they establish the stylistic preferences of *posthuman noir*.

As *Terminal* is set in a corporate environment where posthuman characters are genetically modified, I drew aesthetic inspiration from *Gattaca*. The style of *Gattaca* is one of

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[187] Maxine Gee, "*Terminal*," in "*Posthuman Noir: Creating Positive Posthumans*" (PhD thesis; University of York, 2017), 37.

[188] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949; London: Everyman Library, 1992).

[189] Gee, "*Terminal*," 37.

[190] Ibid., 37.

[191] See Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto" in *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004) and N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)

[192] Gee, "*Terminal*," 37.

[193] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 66. In Chapter 3, I further explore the juxtaposition of urban and rural spaces in relation to the more positive ending of *posthuman noir* through the screenplay *Hydrangea* and close reading of *Ex_Machina*.

'formal repetition and sterility;'[194] the environments aim for visual symmetry and perfection which mirror the film's obsessive hunt for genetic perfection. 'Visually, GATTACA conveys an antiseptic world that has been purged of imperfections and blemishes,'[195] which renders the environments cold and emotionless, like the people who inhabit them. The locations provide little space in which to hide and, as this film follows the criminal as opposed to the investigator, these open spaces visualise how exposed Vincent is; his act must be perfect for him to survive. In *Terminal*, the cold corporate office in which Kim works and where she seduces Sam are clinically controlled, and they reference the geometric, stylised lines of art deco while also hinting at the emotionless state of the posthuman characters. It is only when Kim and Jay meet outside on a secluded terrace of The Terminal building that their environment incorporates the natural world. I wanted to draw this contrast between the sterile, contained manmade spaces and the emotionally charged terrace which is open to the elements and the natural light from the sky. In this way, I refer to the contrast between natural and man-made spaces present in *posthuman noir*.

The characters in *Terminal*

There are three principal characters in *Terminal* and I created each to map onto character types presented in traditional film noir. Kim, the protagonist, mirrors the struggles of the traditional film noir protagonist. They are good at their job but emotionally starved—a similar position to Walter Neff, the protagonist of *Double Indemnity*. However, the seeds of Kim's transgression are planted from the first scene with Alex—the moment when Kim tries unsuccessfully to alter the choice of jobs on the list. I constructed Kim to be a character who is starting to question the system and who is ripe for change. To act as an exemplar of the character subversion that occurs in *posthuman noir*, Kim had to embrace this moment of change and succumb to the seduction of the fatale, Jay. In this seduction, Kim's emotions are brought to the fore and she is taught how to lie, to tell stories. Thus, I provided Kim with the tools to survive the second half of the short and emerge triumphant.

Jay embodies the role of the femme fatale, the agent of emotional awakening and the facilitator for Kim's storytelling ability, who seduces the protagonist into transgressing the

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[194] Jackie Stacey, *The Cinematic Life of the Gene* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 116.
[195] Kirby, "The New Eugenics in Cinema," 204.

moral boundaries of their world. Jay manipulates Kim into swapping the job list and getting one over on the husband/authority figure, Sam. This authority figure in traditional film noir is a character against whom the protagonist and the femme fatale conspire. Once this figure is defeated, the downward spiral of doom begins for the protagonist and femme fatale. However, in *posthuman noir*, this structure is subverted and the defeat of this husband/authority figure leads to the success of the posthuman characters who have emotionally engaged with each other, or other humans. In *Terminal*, this is demonstrated by the successful swapping of the job list[196] and the recruitment of Kim to the resistance.[197] Jay's femme fatale is no longer a source of danger but is refigured as a source of hope, of returning to older ideals of the human: a character that combines emotionality and rationality. Therefore, in presenting the characters in this way, I set out the pattern I have identified in other Anglo-American films and Japanese anime in the *posthuman noir* subgenre.

Finally, I wanted the names of this future to reflect the androgynous nature of the characters. Thus, I comprised a list of androgynous names from across the globe and selected my main characters' names from this list. I also wanted to reflect the film noir tone in the names, and so I chose old-fashioned, mid-twentieth century names such as Kim, Jay, Vic, Sam. These I felt had that sense of nostalgia which modern versions of film noir manipulate.

The structure of *Terminal*

To understand the world of *Terminal*, it is important to start with the protagonist, Kim, in their normal environment.[198] This grounds the reader in the world of the screenplay and develops the stakes; this is what normality looks like, but from this point on Kim will face a choice to maintain the status quo or break it down. In some ways, this differs from the structure of traditional film noir, which often starts near the end and then uses flashback.[199] However, in other regards, the structure of *Terminal* provides a snapshot of the traditional film noir structure. The protagonist is seen in their normal world, a space which they find emotionally unfulfilling; they then encounter the femme fatale and a seduction takes place which results in the protagonist

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[196] Gee, "*Terminal*," 43.
[197] Ibid. 55.
[198] Cooper and Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film*, 55.
[199] J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 40.

being convinced to commit a moral transgression, which then results in the death, or incarceration, of the protagonist and femme fatale.[200] The structure of *Terminal* mirrors this: Kim is dissatisfied with her normal world until the fateful lunch with Jay. During the lunch, Kim is seduced into agreeing to switch the job list by Jay's use of their human traits of emotional manipulation and storytelling ability. An emotionally woken Kim then commits a moral transgression against the system when they use their storytelling ability to lie to Sam and swap the job lists. However, because I wanted this script to act as an example for *posthuman noir*, here I diverge from the traditional film noir structure. Kim has discovered Jay's secret, but because Jay's actions were motivated by emotion, namely love, and Kim's actions were also motivated by emotional awakening, I allowed them both to survive the script. Kim decides to take her newfound motivations to continue to subvert the system, while Jay is free to take on a new job assignment and be with Vic, the person they love.

Posthumanism in *Terminal*

There are posthumanist elements in *Terminal*; Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* provided the inspiration for the unusual construction of the society in the far future of *Terminal*. The desire was to blur traditional human binaries of male and female, and create an environment where everyone had at some point in their lives been both sexes.[201] This conceit brought to the fore the emotional plot of this screenplay: could a couple whose physicality frequently changed fall in love, and if they did, how would this society view that relationship. Because I wanted this to be the central challenge, the social order had to view this type of relationship negatively. Drawing inspiration from the dystopia of *Brave New World* (1932),[202] the environment of *Terminal* encouraged free love without commitment, with reproduction taken out of the procreation equation.

Terminal promotes a tyranny of equality without really embracing the posthumanist ideals at its heart. Although people do change sexes and therefore the stigma of sexism is removed in the world's rhetoric, the jobs remain heavily and conservatively gendered: a job

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[200] Telotte, *Voices in the Dark*, 217.
[201] The idea of characters who can be both male and female is explored to some extent by Ursula Le Guin in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969; London: Gollancz, 2001), in the figures of her genderless characters on the planet Gethen.
[202] Aldus Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932; London: Vintage, 2007).

centre officer is female, a lumberjack male.[203] I wanted to make a comment that this posthuman future is not a post-prejudice,[204] posthumanist future. For example, as well as maintaining gender stereotypes, I made no attempt to blur the boundaries between the human and the non-human.

Finally, I drew inspiration from a pre-film noir posthuman film, *Metropolis* (1927). In Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, the work force is transformed into the living cogs of the machine that powers the city, and through this process they are dehumanised.[205] I wanted to capture the essence of this in *Terminal*; this future society no longer sees the population as individuals, only raw material to be broken down and reformed to suit the needs of the collective. In *Terminal*, the characters are sedated and placed in tanks filled with nanobots that break the human down to a brain and a nervous system before rebuilding them. In this way, a person's health would be constantly monitored, with any defects removed. This is also deliberately reminiscent of the environment in *Gattaca*, on which this screenplay draws heavily, as discussed above.

This idea of the technology in *Terminal* also provided me with the punishment system in this future Britain: the danger that threatens Kim if she fails to seduce Sam. In this future, a person is placed in the tank with nanobots and reduced to a thinking, sensing nervous system for a determined period. This plays on the idea of imprisonment but takes it to a different level, in which the human is dehumanised and disembodied.

In this screenplay, therefore, I employ the method of creative practice to illustrate the defining features of the subgenre, establishing the aesthetic, character and narrative tropes. Through intercutting creative practice sections with more traditional academic sections, I demonstrate the narrative flow I perceive in *posthuman noir* texts: a balance between emotion and logic. In summary, *Terminal* defines the terms that will be used throughout the latter part of this thesis through active engagement with creative production of new material in the sub-genre of *posthuman noir*. Now that I have established the genre, the next chapters focus on emotional awakening and storytelling ability respectively, exposing the ways that this subgenre continues to place elements of the human centre stage despite our speculative evolution.

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[203] Although this screenplay opens up a series of challenges towards gender perceptions, this thesis does not focus on gender studies, but does question notions of human identity, therefore it is on that facet that I devote my attention.

[204] For more on this see David Theo Goldberg, *Are We All Postracial Yet?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

[205] For more on the ways the human body is figured against mechanisation in *Metropolis* see Michael Minden, *Fritz Lang's Metropolis: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear* (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002).

Chapter 3: Emotional Awakening

I have therefore regarded human passions… not as vices of human nature, inconvenient though they be, such things are necessary, they have definite uses.

Baruch Spinoza[1]

In traditional film noir, the fate of the protagonist is sealed when they experience an emotional awakening;[2] in *posthuman noir*, I argue that this point is subverted. When posthuman characters experience an emotional awakening—when they process their environments and experiences through a combination of emotional and logical reasoning as humans do[3]—they avoid the doomed trajectory of their counterparts in traditional film noir. This chapter seeks to explore the concept of emotional awakening in greater depth, beginning in section 3.1 with the screenplay titled *Hydrangea*. This screenplay acts as a provocation to the reader, asking them to engage their own emotional responses to the topic through experiencing an emotional awakening with the protagonist robot T.S.

Mimicking the themes of *posthuman noir* that call for a balance between rational and emotional processes, the structure of this chapter moves from the screenplay which attempts to elicit an emotional response from the reader to section 3.2, which focuses on critical analysis. This section establishes key terminology, including 'emotions,' 'feelings', and 'emotional awakening' (3.2.1). I explore how these traits are present in human beings, and chart the changing way 'emotions' have been viewed over time (3.2.2) and how emotions can be viewed as a social and cultural construct (3.2.3). Section 3.3 then applies these ideas about emotional awakening to a close reading of *Ex_Machina* (dir. Alex Garland, 2015). Here, I demonstrate how traditional film noir tropes are subverted to validate the human quality of processing the world both rationally and emotionally, illustrating the argument I bring to this research area.

Finally, this chapter concludes in section 3.4 with a critical reflection on the creative practice screenplay, *Hydrangea*. I explain my choice of a non-humanoid protagonist to experience an emotional awakening and my use of traditional film noir aesthetics, narrative

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[1] Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics* in R.J. Delahunty, *Spinoza: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (1985; London: Routledge, 2002), 4.

[2] See Chapter 2.2 where I discuss narrative structure of traditional film noir.

[3] Throughout this Chapter I argue that human beings use a combination of emotional and logical reasoning in decision making and in the way they encounter the world around them, for more detail see section 3.2.

structure and characters. This screenplay employs some techniques that are specific to Japanese anime, so I will also discuss how this structural experimentation attempts to emulate the Japanese storytelling style.

I chose to engage with the Anglo-American and Japanese elements of the thesis in this chapter through balancing a screenplay which speaks to the Japanese anime elements of the thesis, with a close reading of an Anglo-American film. In this way, I demonstrate how these strands are in constant conversation with each other, across practice and theory, and continue to pursue research in a non-hierarchical way which treats creative practice and theory as equals.

<u>HYDRANGEA</u>

Written by

Maxine Gee

FADE IN

A PART

INT. FORGE - DAY

Pure unadulterated darkness.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
              One moment can change a day.

NOTES of a KOTO break the darkness, sounding like the first
drops of rain.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
              One day can change a life.

                                        BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

On the stage, the harsh light illuminates a single, female
performer, AKI, 40s, in a hydrangea covered kimono, totally
focused on her performance.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
              One life can change the world.

The AUDIENCE, masked in the shadows, sit unnaturally still.
Light glints off what must be opera glasses.

The music picks up pace. Aki's fingers fly over the strings,
occasional mistakes slip in.

But the audience remains impassive, watching with all the
interest of marble statues.

Aki throws all she is into the piece. Her mistakes bring
emotion, improving the sound. It really feels like a storm is
reverberating through the auditorium.

Occasional whispers punctuate the still audience.

                    AUDIENCE MEMBER #1 (O.C.)
              There are limits to its
              construction.

                    AUDIENCE MEMBER #2 (O.C.)
              That's why they built better
              versions.

Aki's lost in the piece; for her there is only the koto, the
music.

                              98

Each plucked note generates the image of a node, arsenic green, interconnected with straight lines over the dark auditorium, like the pattern of computer circuitry.

These geometric shapes flow from the koto, through the auditorium...

...between the still audience and up onto the balcony where...

...they flood into the 'opera glasses' of the only engrossed member of the audience, T.S...

INT. T.S.'S MIND - CONTINUOUS

...The circuitry surges through the black space, forming an entire world, an overgrown, neon-lit city drenched in rain.

The change in timbre of notes causes a shift in focus from empty pavements...

...to rain soaked windows on futuristic skyscrapers...

...to water-saturated flowers in a garden...

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

...And though we're out of T.S.'s mind, this imaginary, music-inspired cityscape is overlaid across the auditorium.

T.S. leans out of the shadow, eager not to miss a single note, revealing its METALLIC HEAD. On the front of its 'face' area is a screen panel and a circular scanner.

> T.S. (V.O.)
> There is a protocol that, when
> activated by a human wanting to
> play music, sends us to the
> auditorium.

T.S. is a ROBOT -- a tree spider model, with multiple limbs for climbing trees and a flattened back to carry large objects. Right now its spindly limbs are configured into a human-like sitting pose.

And T.S. isn't the only one. Those perceived opera glasses are really manufactured glassy eyes. Every audience member is a ROBOT, a carnival of different makes and models.

> T.S. (V.O.)
> The logic follows that performers
> need an audience.

The only human here, sweating under the stages lights, is Aki.

                T.S. (V.O.)
      Do you think they actually enjoyed
      having us there?

Aki slows the piece down.

                T.S. (V.O.)
      I guess we'll never know...

The koto becomes single rain drops which change timbre and
merge into...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

...Rain drops on T.S's upturned metal hand.

T.S. is in the canopy of a pine and cedar forest.

Four of its spider-like legs hold steady on the tree trunk.
The ends of its other limbs have transformed into pruning
tools.

T.S. focuses on the rain drops SPLASHING on its hand. It HUMS
parts of the koto tune in time to the rain drops.

                T.S. (V.O.)
      It was after the performance that I
      really noticed my switch in
      perception.

Other TREE SPIDER ROBOTS scurry up and down nearby pine
trees, tending to the forest.

They avoid the immaculately clean, smooth surfaces of
futuristic skyscrapers that jut between trees.

                T.S. (V.O.)
      Although the forest was the same
      forest I scanned the day before...

CLEANER ROBOTS move up and down the windows of the
skyscrapers.

Through these polished windows, ROBOTS inside the buildings
maintain rooms despite a lack of human occupants.

In all this activity, only T.S. is stationary.

                T.S. (V.O.)
      I perceived it differently.

T.S.'s POV: the rain amplified, its gaze shifts around the
forest focusing in on each note in nature's orchestra--

--The PERCUSSIVE TONE of water on the broad flat disc of a
newly felled tree stump.

--The SOFT FEATHERY notes of rain on pine needles.

--The METALLIC TONES of water streaming in rivulets off other
tree spider robots and the buildings.

--The damp THUD on moss covered roof of a broken, wooden
shrine.

                      T.S. (V.O.)
          Other units soon noticed my change.

WHIP. CRACK. Cable WHIRS, as TREE SPIDER 2 zips up its rope
line to reach T.S.

Tree Spider 2 slows its ascent as it sees T.S. move.

                      TREE SPIDER 2
          You stopped. Are you broken?

                      T.S.
          I was listening to the rain.

A light flashes across Tree Spider 2's ocular display.

                      TREE SPIDER 2
          That is not a registered response.

                      T.S.
          It is what I was doing.

                      TREE SPIDER 2
          Why did you stop?

                      T.S.
          Because I was listening to the
          rain. It sounds like music. Listen.

Tree Spider 2 and T.S. listen to the rain for a moment.

                      T.S. (CONT'D)
          It is like music.

                      TREE SPIDER 2
          You are malfunctioning.

                      T.S.
          I am not. Can't you hear it?

                      TREE SPIDER 2
          I hear rain.

                      T.S.
          Yes. It sounds like the music
          yesterday.

T.S. plays a snippet of the KOTO MUSIC from a recording on
its hard drive. Tree Spider 2 listens to both.

TREE SPIDER 2
                    There is disorder in both.

                         T.S.
                    There is more than that.

                         TREE SPIDER 2
                    That is not a registered response.
                    You are malfunctioning.

                         T.S.
                    I am not.

T.S. conducts an internal scan. Letters and numbers, code,
zoom across its ocular area.

Tree Spider 2 waits, impassive.

T.S. finishes the scan. It cocks its head confused.

                         T.S. (CONT'D)
                    I am functioning to optimum
                    capacity.

                         TREE SPIDER 2
                    I must verify this.

A small, retractable arm emerges from Tree Spider 2's side.

T.S. opens a port in its side, Tree Spider 2 connects to it.

Information flows across Tree Spider 2's ocular area. It
stalls on a set of numbers and letters.

                         TREE SPIDER 2 (CONT'D)
                    Unknown modification. Verify this
                    modification.

                         T.S.
                    An upgrade?

Tree Spider 2 runs the numbers again, continuing to the end.

                         TREE SPIDER 2
                    You are functioning to greater than
                    optimum capacity. Affirmative. This
                    modified path must be an upgrade.

                         T.S.
                    What did I say?

Tree Spider 2 disconnects from T.S.

                         TREE SPIDER 2
                    Refrain from using non-registered
                    responses. Continue with your
                    programmed tasks.

Tree Spider 2 hops off the branch. The cable attaching it to
the tree extending as it descends.

                         T.S. (V.O.)
                 I knew it wasn't an upgrade...

T.S. watches Tree Spider 2 descend, listening to the rope
whirring.

MONTAGE - FOREST - DAY

-- T.S. bores a tiny hole, with a little tool on the end of
its limb, into a tree.

                         T.S. (V.O.)
                 ...There was no logic behind my
                 change in perception.

It checks the colour of the sap.

Happy, T.S. moves on to check another tree.

-- T.S. rearranges a bird's nest which is about to fall from
the crook of two branches.

                         T.S. (V.O.)
                 Although there were tasks in which
                 this new perception was an asset.

T.S. steps back, blending into the trees.

Sensing the threat gone, two birds resettle in the nest which
is right by a skyscraper window.

T.S.'s display reconfigures into what could be a smile.

Inside the building, a ROBOT vacuums the floors, just
following the programme.

-- T.S. saws through the trunk of an old, decaying pine.

It crashes to the ground, just avoiding destroying a bus stop
and plants nearby.

                         T.S. (V.O.)
                 But I kept doing what I was
                 programmed to, I didn't know any
                 better then.

-- T.S. and other Tree Spiders place cut logs on their backs.
They fit perfectly into the trug-like groove.

Once done they move out in convoy, all that's missing is the
high-ho, high-ho.

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

In the summer rain, T.S and the Tree Spider convoy move along
a broad tarmac street.

Trees and skyscrapers line the route; living and inanimate
sentinels.

Nestled between the trees is a small, walled garden.
Hydrangeas flood the space. A tsunami of purple, blue, pink
and white.

In the centre is a small gazebo made from ceder wood.

And in that gazebo sits a FIGURE. A human.

T.S. sees the figure as it passes. It's Aki, in a green
cotton dress somewhere between a yukata and 1950s day dress.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I recognised her immediately, the
          performer.

She's alone, surrounded by a sea of blossoms and rain. Her
eyes closed, lost in thought.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I sensed something inside me shift.
          I wanted to stop but there was no
          good reason to, so I followed my
          programming.

T.S. keeps pace with the rest of the convoy. In a moment Aki
is out of sight, lost behind the wall of hydrangeas.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

The rain has not let up. T.S., no longer loaded with logs,
passes the garden on its way back.

Movement catches its attention. It stops.

In the gazebo, Aki stands animatedly waving at T.S.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Noticing she has its attention, Aki beckons T.S. over.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I was curious about her, she was
          so... alive.

T.S. pauses a moment, indecisive, before it turns into the
garden.

AKI
          Thank heavens you stopped. I've
          been waving at you guys forever.

                    T.S.
          It couldn't be forever, I passed
          here an hour ago. You were not
          waving then.

Aki laughs, it's clear and musical.

                    AKI
          Of course you did. It's just a
          figure of speech. Can you help me?

T.S. winds its way towards Aki.

                    AKI (CONT'D)
          I'm not supposed to go out in the
          rain.

T.S.'s gaze follows her pointing finger to a stalled humanoid
COMPANION ROBOT. It looks like it's fallen asleep.

Rain pools in the mud by its face.

An umbrella lies at an angle, a little way from the robot's
hands.

                    T.S.
          I'll report this failure.

                    AKI
          Don't. Please don't.

                    T.S.
          This unit is broken. It needs to be
          fixed. If I report it--

                    AKI
          Can't it just rest? Resurrecting
          them over and over again, why can't
          you just let them die?

                    T.S.
          It doesn't care, its function is to
          serve humans. It's not really alive
          so I don't think it can--

                    AKI
              (firm)
          If I could just have the umbrella?

T.S. picks up the umbrella and carries it to Aki's
outstretched hand.

She snatches it from T.S.

AKI (CONT'D)
                    (an after thought)
               Thank you.

There's a pause. The silence between them only broken by the
rain.

                          T.S. (V.O.)
               The word I'd use now is fascinated.
               I was fascinated by her.

                          AKI
               Aren't you going to report it?

                          T.S.
               No.

Aki startles, she inspects T.S. again, it seems like your
average Tree Spider.

                          AKI
               Isn't that part of your
               programming? To maintain the
               efficiency of the system or
               something? One of the girls in my
               facility said that.

                          T.S.
               Yes. But it seemed to cause you
               distress.

                          AKI
               So you stopped?

                          T.S.
               Yes. And I thought about what you
               said.

Aki circles T.S., curious.

                          AKI
               There's something funny in your
               wiring, kid.

                          T.S.
               I am not an infantile goat. I am a
               Tree Spider model, level seven,
               robotic forestry worker.

                          AKI
               I can see that. What's a forestry
               worker doing empathising with a
               human?

The word 'empathise' appears on T.S.'s ocular area, followed
by 'Empathy. Noun. The ability to understand and share the
feelings of another.'

T.S.
          Is that what I was doing?

                    AKI
          Pretty much.

                    T.S.
          I didn't know. Empathy.

Aki can't help laughing again.

                    AKI
          But the bigger question is how.
          It's outside your protocols, right?
          You don't deal with people.

                    T.S.
          I've been upgraded.

                    AKI
          Huh. Cool.

Aki sits on the wall of the gazebo.

                    T.S.
          No. That is a lie. I am running a
          modified programme but it is not an
          upgrade. Another Tree Spider called
          it an upgrade when it scanned me.

                    AKI
          Why'd it do that?

Amused, Aki looks out into the garden where hydrangea flowers
droop under the pressure of the rain.

                    T.S.
          I was listening to the rain.

Aki gestures, rolling her hands, for T.S. to go on.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          I thought the rain sounded like
          music. It thought I had broken
          down.

Aki shakes her head at T.S., she can't believe it.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          Is that what you were doing?
          Before, when I passed, you had your
          eyes closed and you were very
          still.

                    AKI
          Busted.
              (Beat)
          That means yes.

T.S.
          It is similar to what you played
          yesterday.

                    AKI
          Yeah?

                    T.S.
          Yes. When I listened yesterday I
          could see this, inside here.

T.S taps its head.

                    AKI
          You imagined it? Really?

The word 'imagined' appears on T.S.'s ocular display followed
by 'Imagine. Verb. Form a mental image or concept of.'

                    AKI (CONT'D)
          A tree spider that imagines things.
          Weird.

                    T.S.
          I downloaded the music but it did
          not create the same images. Why?

                    AKI
          Each performance is different, I
          guess. I made a lot of mistakes.
          Maybe the version you have is more
          perfect.

                    T.S.
          Your version was perfect. For me.

                    AKI
          You're sweet. Play it. Go on.

T.S. HUMS the piece, it's technically accurate. It hangs flat
against the garden.

                    AKI (CONT'D)
          Try making it match the rain.
          Change the length of the notes,
          like this...

Aki SINGS the piece, she slows it down to match the tempo of
rain on the gazebo roof. T.S. listens, enthralled.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          It was perfect, the way it fit
          together, the rain and her voice.

Aki gestures for T.S. to try it. T.S. starts, again it is
technically accurate.

Aki cuts it off with shake of her head. T.S. listens to the rain in the garden...

> T.S. (V.O.)
> I didn't know how to express it then, but I wanted to make her happy.

...the difference in tone of water on the gazebo roof to...

...the rain dribbling between the leaves and flowers of the hydrangeas to...

...the splatter of drops on the fallen Companion Robot.

T.S. HUMS the tune again, this time it fits perfectly with the rain. Aki gives it a round of applause.

> AKI
> Our feelings change the music. And that's what I just got, T.S., you don't mind if I call ya that, your feelings about this moment.

> T.S.
> Robots do not have feelings.

> AKI
> In general no, but you do. Couldn't have performed like that if you didn't. Some upgrade, huh?

A quiet settles between them as they both process this. Both their gazes drift to the fallen Companion Robot.

> T.S.
> Why don't you want it to be fixed?

> AKI
> Oh boy, how do I explain that?

Aki looks at her hands, at the signs of preternatural aging. She quickly hides them.

> AKI (CONT'D)
> You see, I believe our world is in a state of flux, all things need to change.

> T.S.
> You would prefer I sent it for redistribution?

> AKI
> No, well, maybe. It's not quite that. Everything natural is constantly changing.

Aki reaches out to pluck a hydrangea flower, at the moment of
breaking the stalk she decides against it. She stares
ruefully at the traces of disease on her hands again.

                    AKI (CONT'D)
          Each raindrop, flower, cell in my
          body. And there's nothing bad in
          that, just happens. It's kinda
          painfully beautiful, the transient
          nature of it.

The word 'transient' appears on T.S. ocular screen, then,
'passing away quickly or soon, brief, momentary, fleeting;
not durable or permanent.'

                    AKI (CONT'D)
          It's tough for you to get, robots
          don't even rust now. You're
          basically immortal.

                    T.S.
          Sometimes, in the forest, a tree
          falls. Inside the remains many
          creatures and small plants
          flourish.

Aki shoots T.S. a look of complete surprise.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          Other times I notice that, despite
          the regularity of my care, the
          branches grow differently and the
          shape of the forest changes. Is
          this what you mean?

                    AKI
          Yeah. Yeah, it is. Well shit. When
          did you start noticing stuff like
          that?

T.S. thinks. Numbers and code whizz across its ocular area as
it remembers.

                    T.S.
          There was a storm...

                                        BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The sky is the colour of an angry bruise. Lightening cracks
across it. Thunder booms.

The trees of the forest sway battered by rain.

T.S. continues clearing the forest floor despite the rain.

CRACK OF WOOD. T.S. looks up and--

--a patch of dazzling sunlight bursts through the clouds.

The light reflects and refracts off the windows of a
skyscraper. And through every drop of water.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   The sky was bright.

A sound, deep, below normal human hearing, the sort of thing
that you feel rather than hear, rumbles around T.S.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   There was a sound, low and clear.
>   Something switched on then.
>   I didn't feel it shift but my
>   perception changed from that point.

T.S. scans the forest, everything is clearer, more vibrantly
alive. Even the storm has taken on a musical quality.

>   END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN – DAY

>   T.S.
>   Why do you think that happened to
>   me?

Aki stares intently at T.S.

>   AKI
>   Because nature abhors a vacuum? I
>   really don't know.

The rain has eased. Aki pops the umbrella up.

>   AKI (CONT'D)
>   Let me give you something to think
>   about. Now that you do feel
>   something, how do you feel about
>   being in the forest?

>   T.S.
>   It's my purpose.

>   AKI
>   You can't answer like that anymore.
>   Go, live it a bit and then tell me,
>   why do you still do what you do?

Aki gives T.S. a knowing smile as she walks off into the
rain.

>   AKI (CONT'D)
>   My name's Aki, by the way.

T.S. watches her until the burnt orange of her umbrella
disappears.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          If I hadn't spoken to her that day,
          I don't know if I would have
          changed as much.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

T.S. uses wire to train the branches of a pine away from what
used to be a police box.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I couldn't get her questions out of
          my processor. How did I feel about
          being in the forest?

It analyses the way the branches have grown, looking at other
pines nearby. All are so different.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          Why do I still do what I do?

EXT. TEMPLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Neon lights the temple grounds where BUILDER ROBOTS construct
a shinto shrine.

T.S. removes a log from it's back, placing it carefully onto
a pile. Other Tree Spiders follow suit, dropping off their
logs and then, in convoy, leaving the temple grounds.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I had to know what other units
          thought.

T.S. stops to let BUILDER ROBOT #1 pass. After a moment T.S.
follows Builder #1.

                    T.S.
          Why do you what you do?

                    BUILDER #1
          It is programmed.

                    T.S.
          You don't believe in gods. Why do
          you build a place to worship them?

                    BUILDER #1
          It is programmed. Your question is
          not logical.

                    T.S.
          Your actions aren't logical.

T.S. rejoins the convoy of other Tree Spiders.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   From my new perspective I couldn't
>   understand why it could do a job
>   without purpose.

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

T.S. follows other Tree Spiders back down the street towards
the heart of the forest.

A TRASH ROBOT emerges from the hydrangea garden carrying the
broken Companion Robot.

>   AKI (V.O.)
>   (T.S.'s memory)
>   It's outside your protocols, right?
>   You don't deal with people.

T.S. watches the Companion Robot disappear into a compartment
inside the Trash Robot.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   I had to find out the answer to her
>   questions.

The Trash Robot turns at the junction, it motors away down
the road towards a bright spot on the horizon.

T.S. glances from the convoy of Tree Spiders to the receding
figure of the Trash Robot and back.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   If I could find robots that dealt
>   with people, surely they would
>   function with feelings?

Making a decision, T.S. separates from the convoy and follows
the Trash Robot.

>   END A PART

B PART

INT. FORGE – DAY

The forge fire is out, the cavernous space feels empty,
abandoned.

>   UNDERTAKER (V.O.)
>   Did you find them, the robots who
>   cared for the humans?

The work tables are clear, tools stacked neatly on shelves.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   Eventually, but like so many
>   things, they were not what I
>   expected...

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Flames burst and spark.

A hammer bares down on a piece of metal. THUD. THUD. THUD.
The process rhythmic, careful.

Flattened, the piece of metal is thrust into water. Steam
hisses up.

The piece of metal is placed on top of identical pieces.

The flames of the forge blur into...

EXT. ROBOT CITY - SIMULTANEOUS

The red and purple neon lights of the robot city. A dark
utilitarian factory space, reminiscent of propaganda poster
from 1930s Germany.

The broad streets between different sections of the factory
are used by FACTORY ROBOTS moving robotic parts.

On the road, T.S. slows down.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   Once I arrived I realised I didn't
>   want to go further. I wanted to
>   know what this modification was and
>   I didn't want to know.

As a Factory Robot appears T.S. slips off the road to hide in
the shadows.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   I had no reason to be there and if
>   challenged I could be restarted.

T.S. peers round the corner of the building and spots--

The Trash Robot dumping the broken body of the Companion
Robot down a chute.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   But this was my only chance to ask
>   the companion robots.

Rallying, T.S. forces itself to edge through the shadows
round the building.

UNDERTAKER (V.O.)
          Because there would soon be no
          humans to need them?

Another Factory Robot passes near T.S. It scans the
environment around it as it moves down the street.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
               Precisely.

T.S. blends in with a pile of robot torsos, the Factory Robot
passes without noticing T.S.

T.S. waits for the Factory Robot to leave before it peers out
from behind the torsos.

T.S. glances back down the road, away from the city.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          If I left, things could continue as
          they always had.

T.S. starts back the way it came but stops.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          Things could never continue as they
          always had.

T.S. turns and speeds its way through the shadows towards the
area where the Companion Robot was dumped.

Through windows, the sparks of heavy machinery splutter and
transform into...

INT. FORGE – SIMULTANEOUS

Sparks burst from a welder's torch, as it melts through the
plates of metal.

A design becomes clearer – hydrangeas.

INT. PARTS WAREHOUSE – SIMULTANEOUS

Darkness, the soft glow of L.E.D.s appear like fireflies
throughout the warehouse, indicating aisles.

T.S.'s P.O.V., a night vision image of the warehouse
contents.

A dozen 'arms,' similar to T.S.'s, hang limply either side of
the aisle T.S. is in.

T.S. startles a moment, before curiously, it inspects an arm,
comparing it to its own limb.

T.S. (V.O.)
         It was like me... but not like me.

In an almost disgusted gesture, T.S. lets the arm drop back
into position on the shelf.

T.S. picks its way through the racks of different robotic
limbs, all makes and models, suspended on neat, orderly
rails.

A conveyor belt runs through the middle of the room, on it
are an array of broken robots.

At points, limbs are pulled from the broken robots and hung
on the correct rail by HUGE METALLIC ARMS.

T.S. spots the broken Companion Robot on the conveyor belt.
The large metal arms ignore it.

The broken Companion Robot disappears through a hatch at the
other end of the warehouse.

INT. REPROCESSING STORAGE STAGE – MOMENTS LATER

T.S. moves through the dark space. This room is much smaller
than the warehouse.

A couple of dozen COMPANION ROBOTS are stored on racks, like
bodies in a morgue.

T.S. slides COMPANION ROBOT #2 from its place into a sitting
position.

T.S. locates the power switch and presses it. Nothing
happens. There is a hole where the battery unit used to be.

A quick check reveals that this is the case for all the
companion robots.

T.S. opens a flap in its side and pulls out a power cable. It
attaches the cable to Companion Robot #2.

There's a whir of an internal fan, Companion Robot #2's eyes
shift, then focus, as the machine comes to life. Companion
Robot #2 looks around, figuring out where it is.

                        COMPANION ROBOT #2
              This unit was scheduled for
              redistribution.

                        T.S.
              Yes. You still are.

                        COMPANION ROBOT #2
              Have they further need of this
              unit? My protocols indicate this is
              not the case.

                              116

T.S.
          No. It's not about that. I just
          wanted to talk to you.

Companion Robot #2 scans T.S. confused by that.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          How did it feel to work with
          humans?

                    COMPANION ROBOT #2
          Feel?

                    T.S.
          Yes, what emotion did you feel when
          you worked with the humans?

Companion Robot #2 regards T.S. with confusion, it takes a
moment to process a response.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #2
          I displayed the emotion that suited
          the situation best.

                    T.S.
          You didn't actually feel those
          emotions?

                    COMPANION ROBOT #2
          Of course not. We are programmed to
          respond to make our human charge
          feel comfortable. We do not feel.
          That would make our ability to care
          for our charges unreliable.

                    T.S.
          But then you'd genuinely care for
          them.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #2
          That does not fit logic protocols.

                    T.S.
          It isn't all about logic.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #2
          Your logic is flawed. I will report-

T.S. quickly disconnects from Companion Robot #2.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          Perhaps another unit will--

THUNK. Panels in the walls descend and thin, dexterous arms
extend into the room.

These arms rapidly and methodically strip the companion
robots of every valuable part.

T.S. ducks and dodges their advance. One arm just misses
T.S.'s head, another almost trips it.

Slipping and sliding, moving for its life, T.S. backs up to
the door.

INT. PARTS WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

T.S. SLAMS the door shut as the heat inside intensifies.

It watches through a clear panel as the companion robots are
reduced to nothing.

> T.S. (V.O.)
> I knew in that moment they were not
> like me and I felt panic. I did not
> want to be destroyed like that. I
> had to get away.

The last rivulet of melted plastic runs down a channel in the
middle of the room.

T.S. backs away, horrified, into--

--FACTORY ROBOT #1.

> FACTORY ROBOT #1
> State your purpose.

T.S. just stares at Factory Robot #1, rabbit in the
headlights style.

> FACTORY ROBOT #1 (CONT'D)
> State your purpose. What is your
> malfunction?

> T.S.
> M-my screen is cracked.

Factory Robot #1 can see that. It stares intently at T.S. and
a file appears on T.S.'s ocular area.

> FACTORY ROBOT #1
> Report to maintenance. I have sent
> you the route.

Factory Robot #1 turns and starts to leave.

> T.S.
> Thank you.

Factory Robot #1 whips round. This is not a registered
response. But T.S. is already speeding away.

T.S. looks over its shoulder, the other robot does not seem
to be following it. The tension flows out of T.S.

INT. FORGE – SIMULTANEOUS

A woman's (Aki) prematurely aged hand picks up one of the
pieces of metal engraved with a hydrangea. Her fingers run
carefully over the engraving.

INT. PARTS WAREHOUSE – SIMULTANEOUS

T.S. makes a beeline for the exit but spots a central
database console.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          Every one of my circuits wanted to
          get back to the forest, but I had
          to know what this modification was.

It looks around, no other robots are watching. T.S. crosses
to the console.

Numbers and code appear on T.S.'s ocular area screen, flowing
until it reaches the part that Tree Spider 2 identified as
different.

T.S. searches the central database for that code unit. 'Your
search does not match any items' appears on the screen.

T.S. tries a slightly different configuration of this unit of
code. 'Your search does not match any items' appears on the
screen.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          It didn't make sense. I was living
          proof that it existed. Living? Then
          I knew if I was restarted, 'I'
          would cease to exist.

T.S. rapidly glances around it. Has anything seen it? No. It
disconnects from the console.

Cautiously, but quickly, T.S. leaves the warehouse,
constantly scanning the area making sure nothing will see it.

INT. FORGE – SIMULTANEOUS

The pieces of metal have been placed together, welded, to
form an ornate brass lantern.

A woman (Aki) peers through the fretwork of the lantern.

                    AKI (O.C.)
          It's beautiful, you should be proud
          of yourself.

The hint of an enigmatic smile is caught through a hole.

EXT. FOREST - DAYS LATER

Tree Spiders scurry about their tasks, a hive of activity.
All their movements are graceful and precise.

Except one. There's an awkwardness to T.S.'s movements as it
clears the area around the foot of a huge ceder tree; as if
it is trying to act natural.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   I tried to go back to the way I
>   was. But I over thought everything.
>   I was scared. I didn't want to be
>   reset. I wanted to live.

T.S. removes some fallen branches and discovers--

>   T.S.
>   I want to live.

--a small Jizo statue. It's covered in moss, half blended
into the roots of the tree.

T.S. scans it and runs the image through its database.

Information about Jizo rolls down T.S.'s ocular area and its
whole posture relaxes as T.S. is lost in information.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   It was Jizo, who humans thought
>   protected all sentient things.

T.S. tenderly clears the space around the Jizo, careful not
to disturb it.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   All sentient things... all feeling
>   things with an awareness of being
>   alive...

T.S. looks around, the day is glorious. Soft light filters
through the trees, birds sing, even the sounds of Tree
Spiders working on the forest are harmonious.

>   AKI (V.O.)
>   (In T.S.'s memory)
>   How do you feel about being in the
>   forest?

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   I feel alive.

T.S. takes it all in, as if inhaling a huge breath.

>   T.S. (V.O.)
>   I knew my answer.
>   (beat)
>   I had to tell Aki.

T.S. looks around and it narrows in on a pile of cut logs.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

T.S. speeds into the garden, the log on its back is thrown
off in the haste of its turn. It looks desperately at the
gazebo scanning for Aki.

There is SOMEONE seated in there.

T.S. barely stops before crashing into the gazebo.

                    T.S.
          I know why I do it. I know what I
          feel. I--

The 'person' in the gazebo stands. It is COMPANION ROBOT #3.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
          Are you T.S.?

                    T.S.
          Where's Aki?

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
          I have been waiting here for a T.S.

                    T.S.
          Where is she?

T.S circles the gazebo looking for Aki.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
          I have been waiting here for a T.S.
          Are you T.S.?

                    T.S.
          Yes, yes, I'm T.S. Where is she?

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
          I thought you would be a human.

T.S. skids to a stop in front of Companion Robot #3.

Companion Robot #3 places its palms together and a recording
plays through it's mouth.

                    AKI (O.C.)
                 (Through Companion Robot
                  #3)
          Yo, T.S. How's it going? I know
          you're smart, kiddo, and that one
          day you'll come back to tell me
          your answers. Unfortunately I can't
          be there.

The heavy head of a fading hydrangea flower snaps its stem
and falls to the ground. Petals spray across the grass.

                    AKI (O.C.) (CONT'D)
                 (Through Companion Robot
                  #3)
            We met too late, T.S. One last flux
            in my lifetime, when I'd resigned
            myself to my ending.

                    T.S.
            You were dying? I didn't...

A second glance at the garden reveals that all the flowers
have passed their sell by date. They're on the turn.

                    AKI (O.C.)
                 (Through Companion Robot
                  #3)
            Whatever your answer is, I'm sure
            you'll find something else that
            will understand you. You won't be
            the only one. Like I said, nature
            abhors a vacuum. Goodbye T.S.

The message ends and the face of Companion Robot #3 shifts,
as if waking from a trance.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
            That is the end of the message.

                    T.S.
            No.

                    COMPANION ROBOT #3
            Do you want me to play it again?

                    T.S.
            NO.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
            I felt as if there were a void in
            my programming, all reason flowed
            into it and stopped. I could see
            the signs of illness now, but...

                    T.S.
            No. Nonononono--

The world rushes in on T.S. The sky folds in segments, like
paper, bringing the buildings, trees and garden with it.

Behind it is nothing. White nothingness.

All sound drains. The mouth of Companion Robot #3 moves but
T.S. can't hear it.

T.S. and Companion Robot #3 drain of colour until they are just line drawings.

T.S. crumples in on itself.

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3 (O.S.)
>   What was your answer?

T.S. snaps back to reality. It looks around, everything is as it should be. A blackbird flies over the garden.

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3 (CONT'D)
>   I thought you'd broken.

>   T.S.
>   Part of me has.

Companion Robot #3 gives T.S. a questioning look.

>   T.S. (CONT'D)
>   Why did you ask me that question?

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3
>   It seemed important to you, and to
>   her.

>   T.S.
>   She asked me how I felt about being
>   in the forest, why I stay there. My
>   answer to that is that I enjoy
>   being there. I enjoy it.

Companion Robot #3 processes this, its head tilted to one side, almost like a human thinking.

>   T.S. (CONT'D)
>   What will you do now?

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3
>   Think. She told me to sit here and
>   think, it is my last task.

>   T.S.
>   Think about what?

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3
>   Your answer maybe.

The ghost of a smile appears at Companion Robot #3's mouth.

>   COMPANION ROBOT #3 (CONT'D)
>   You can see her remains over there.

Companion Robot #3 points towards the shrine T.S. carried logs to.

T.S. bobs its head, a thank you. Slowly, it turns and leaves the garden.

T.S. (V.O.)
                     I didn't want feelings if I
                     experienced the world, alone.

Companion Robot #3 sits back down, watching T.S. go, hands
folded in its lap.

Movement catches its eye. A bird grabs a petal of the fallen
flower in its beak and flies away.

EXT. LANTERN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

T.S. hesitates outside this large, temple-like structure.

Through lattice windows an orange glow seeps out to the green
temple grounds.

                          T.S. (V.O.)
                     I owed it to Aki to tell what
                     remained of her my answer.

T.S. rallies itself and enters the building...

INT. LANTERN HALL - CONTINUOUS

T.S. stalls, stunned.

In front of, above and below it are rows and rows of lit
brass lanterns.

Golden light pours from between the fretwork panels. It
reflects and refracts off the other lanterns' polished
surfaces.

Narrow walkways seem almost in silhouette against this
ethereal light; diving up the rows of lanterns.

T.S. gingerly picks its way along one of the walkways. The
lanterns shake as it passes, chiming like tiny bells.

                          T.S. (V.O.)
                     I understood what she had meant, it
                     was painfully beautiful, the
                     transient nature of life.

Close up, T.S. can see each lantern is covered in different
engraved flowers. Each a memorial to a different human.

                          T.S. (V.O.)
                     That's what I was thinking when we
                     met.

T.S. stops. In front is another robot, an UNDERTAKER model.

It is tall and thin, with strong limbs; its head resembles a welders mask. There is something of a stick insect in its baring.

                    UNDERTAKER
          Can I help you?

                    T.S.
          I'm looking for a musician, Aki.
          She died--

                    UNDERTAKER
          But two days ago. I know.

Undertaker gracefully strides down the walkway. T.S. trundles behind it, awkwardly trying to keep up.

Undertaker stops. Its legs extend and its body shoots up a level.

                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
          I made every lantern and know where
          each rests.

With balletic precision it reaches into the row of lanterns and plucks one out.

It's legs retract and it elegantly descends.

                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
          There you go.

Undertaker holds the lantern out to T.S. rotating it slowly with its spindly fingers.

T.S. stares at the lantern taking in every fretwork image.

Hydrangeas give way to musical notes to autumn leaves and then even a small image of a koto.

The shadows cast on T.S.'s ocular area make it seem like it is crying.

                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
          I thought she would like it.

T.S.'s head snaps up to look at the Undertaker, surprised.

                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
          I met her once, while I was making
          this.

Undertaker fondly holds the lantern to its own face.

                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
          We talked. She asked me a question.

T.S. and Undertaker meet each others' gaze.

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              T.S.                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
How do you feel about being    How do you feel about being
in the forest?                 in the forge?
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They stare intently at each other.

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              T.S.                    UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)
I enjoy it.                    I enjoy it.
```

They both startle.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I couldn't believe that we were the
          same.

T.S. pulls up the code for the 'upgrade' on its ocular area.

Undertaker bends down to peer at it.

                    UNDERTAKER (V.O.)
          I was just as surprised.

Then Undertaker holds out its arm, code flows rapidly along
its limb until it reaches the point it wants.

The modification on T.S.'s ocular area is reflected in the
code paused on Undertaker's arm.

                    AKI (V.O.)
               (Inside T.S.'s memory)
          You won't be the only one. Like I
          said, nature abhors a vacuum.

T.S. looks at the lantern again.

                    T.S.
          She would have loved it.

Undertaker smiles...

                                        END FLASHBACK

INT. FORGE - PRESENT DAY

Undertaker and T.S. face each other, like a confessional.

                    T.S.
          ...And that is how I came to be
          here.

T.S. scans the forge, it is vast but empty. Only a small pile
of bronze sheets remain.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          Are there more like you?

UNDERTAKER
          No. With so few humans left to die,
          only one unit is needed to tend to
          this place.

                    T.S.
          How do you feel about that?

Undertaker looks at the cavernous forge.

                    UNDERTAKER
          Sometimes it is... lonely.

                    T.S.
          Not anymore. You have me.

Undertaker is taken aback.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          Did you ever hear her play? It was
          perfect.

Undertaker shakes its head, a no.

                    T.S. (CONT'D)
          It was like this...

T.S. begins to hum the piece Aki performed in the auditorium.

INT. LANTERN HALL – SIMULTANEOUS

The lanterns jingle, reverberating with the vibration of
T.S.'s notes... And we blur from those notes to...

EXT. FOREST – DAY

T.S. holds out its hand to catch rain. It is once again in
the canopy of the forest.

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          I visit Undertaker often. We talk
          about our experiences, and Aki of
          course.

T.S. surveys the forest

                    T.S. (V.O.)
          We often wonder, if we both have
          this modification, how many more
          like us are out there waiting to
          connect?

T.S. returns to pruning. If it could smile it would be
grinning from ear to ear.

                                             FADE OUT.

3.2: Emotions and Emotional Awakening

All intelligent creatures that we know of have emotions.
Cynthia Breazeal[4]

In this thesis, I use the term 'emotional awakening' to refer to a process that posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* go through in which they gain, or regain, their ability to experience their world with an emotional response. This section establishes a definition for the term 'emotional awakening', through exploring the concepts of emotions and feelings across the twentieth century, charting the flow in attitude to emotions in relation to traditional film noir and the emergence of *posthuman noir*. These ideas must be grounded before I move on to examine how emotional awakening is demonstrated through a case study of *Ex_Machina*.

In traditional film noir, when the protagonist meets the fatale,[5] they are seduced; their passions and emotions are awoken. Through submitting to an excess of emotions, the protagonists and the fatales of traditional film noir are led to transgress social and moral boundaries for which they are ultimately punished.[6] I argue that this arc is subverted substantially in *posthuman noir*, indicating the privileged position emotions have in these screen texts. Emotions and feelings are qualities that separate humans from other non-human animals (although this is not entirely biologically accurate, as I will explore later in this section). Through exhibiting these qualities that are currently considered to be special to humans, posthuman characters become more relatable to human viewers, and, in the narratives provided for them, are able to successfully navigate towards a more positive ending.

I argue that emotional awakening in posthuman noir occurs when the organic and the manufactured come into contact, such as when the replicant Rachel and human[7] Deckard meet

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[4]Cynthia Breazeal, "Function Meets Style: Insights from Emotion Theory Applied to HRI," *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics – Part C* 34:2, (2004): 187. Last accessed August 22, 2017.
http://rit.kaist.ac.kr/home/EE788LN?action=AttachFile&do=get&target=5.2_Function_Meets_Style_-_Insights_From_Emotion_Breazeal_2.pdf .

[5] Not all traditional film noirs have a femme fatale, but in all film noirs the protagonist experiences emotional awakening where their desires get the better of them. For more see Ian Brookes, *Film Noir: A Critical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 71-73.

[6] I discuss this further in Chapter 2.2 where I look at traditional film noir and 2.4 where I define *posthuman noir*.

[7] Rick Deckard can be read in two ways depending on the cut of the film—in the theatrical cut he is portrayed as human, while in the director's cut it is implied he is a replicant. Whether replicant or human, it is the encounters between human and the non-human that spark emotional awakening. In the reading of Deckard as a replicant, I would argue that his partnership with Gaff and his interaction with other humans act as the spark for Deckard's emotional awakening which continues through his interaction with Rachel.

in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982); when the genetically modified Irene and Eugene meet the organic Vincent in *Gattaca* (dir. Andrew Niccol, 1997); or when the robot Pino meets organic clone Re-l in *Ergo Proxy* (dir. Shukō Murase, 2006). In each of these instances, and in *posthuman noir* in general, emotions are woken in manufactured or modified posthuman characters when they interact with other human and non-human characters; this hints at the purpose of human emotion as a mechanism that has evolved to help humans communicate to function effectively in social groups.[8]

When discussing the emotions, Spinoza writes that 'human passions […should not be seen] as vices of human nature […] inconvenient though they be, such things are necessary, they have definite uses.'[9] I argue that this concept is at the heart of how emotional awakening is used in *posthuman noir*. Rather than disregard emotions and feelings as something irrational and useless, or something that needs to be programmed out of evolved humans, they are something to be celebrated because they define us as human:

> Some scholars believe that emotions are what make us human. Others believe
> emotions are vestiges that interfere with our rational thought. Others believe that
> emotions are what link us to our animal cousins. Still others say that emotions
> link us to our immediate surroundings and cultural heritage.[10]

Scholarship into the emotions spans the sciences and the humanities; the journal *Emotion Review* considers emotion to be 'one of the great hubs in the scientific study of the human condition.'[11] This section will touch upon two key moments in the history of emotions to demonstrate the precise way that I use 'emotional awakening' within the parameters of this thesis.

My exploration of emotional awakening, like my exploration of 'storytelling ability' in the next chapter, is tied to a cognitive neuroscientific approach where the focus is on how emotion and feelings manifest themselves in the human subject. As discussed in Chapter 1,

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[8]Ranjit Nair, Milind Tambe and Stacy Marsella, "The Role of Emotion in Multiagent Teamwork," in *Who Needs emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, eds. Jean-Marc Fellous and Michael A. Arbib (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 312-313.

[9]Spinoza in *The Ethics* quoted inDelahunty, *Spinoza*, 4.

[10] James A. Russel and Lisa Feldman Barrett, "Editorial," *Emotion Review*, 1, no. 1, (2009): 2. DOI: 10. 1177/1754073908097174 http://emr.sagepub.com.

[11] Ibid., 2.

following in the footsteps of other film scholars such as Noël Carroll, Torben Grodal, Greg M. Smith, I have employed this interdisciplinary approach to the topic because I want to ground the definition of emotion firmly within cognitive neuroscientific discourse around what it is to be human. I argue that, in *posthuman noir* films, when posthuman characters learn to emulate these human behavioural patterns, and even feel these emotions, they match the parameters of the human and survive the filmic narrative.

3.2.1 What is an emotion?

Darwin explores the idea that emotions are not specific to humans in his book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.[12] There is now a body of research which supports this idea, providing evidence that creatures, like the fruit fly, exhibit basic emotional responses.[13] These creatures have physiological reactions to stimuli, in relation to basic survival situations, that function in the way emotional reactions do in humans. That is not to say that a fruit fly and a human being experience emotion in the same way; the physiological response of an emotion in humans is accompanied by complex cognitive processes—sometimes differentiated by using separate terms 'emotion' and 'feeling'[14]—that allow human beings to use emotions in a variety of different ways, for example: to imagine future scenarios, to attempt to understand how others might react in a situation, or as a method of regulation through engaging with fiction to simulate emotions.[15] This raises a question of whether there is a difference between feelings and emotions, and what effect does this difference have upon what I mean by emotional awakening?

A social cognitive neuroscientific approach defines emotions as 'representational states' which are presented as 'a concerted, generally adaptive, phasic change in multiple physiological systems (including both somatic and neural components) in response to the value of a

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[12] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray,1872) E-resource, http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?itemID=F1142&viewtype=side&pageseq=1

[13] For an overview on the way emotions can be tracked in non-human species see David J Anderson and Ralph Adolphs, "A Framework for Studying Emotions across Species," *Cell* 157 (2014): 187-200.

[14] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, (London; Vintage, 2004), 42.

[15] Ibid. 52.

stimulus.'[16] Here emotions are defined as responses across various bodily and cognitive systems to a stimulus which can be external or internal. This definition uses the phrase, 'value of a stimulus', which links to an argument posited by Martha C. Nussbaum that emotions are always related to an object, animate or inanimate, that a human being judges for its value to their life.[17] The responding emotional reaction will differ depending on how important a person judges an object to be, and Nussbaum acknowledges that these reactions, these emotions, can be contradictory. Noël Carroll incorporates this discussion of object focused emotions into his exploration of audience response to film genres.[18]

As mentioned, there is evidence that non-human animals also experience emotions; David J Anderson and Ralph Adolphs in their article, 'A Framework for Studying Emotions across Species,' explore how various emotion states are present in other species as well as homo sapiens, acting for example as survival mechanisms.[19] In this way, emotions can be seen as 'actions or movements, many of them public, visible.'[20]

Thus, building on the definition so far, emotions are the visible, external reaction to a stimulus which can be part of a survival mechanism and are often tied in some way to a value judgement of an object. However, I want to be careful here not to fall into the same trap as other scholars who, despite trying to blur the binary which ties emotion to the body and reason to the mind, continue to reinforce this misunderstanding that emotions are bodily responses, while feelings exist purely in the mind.[21] Because emotions are cast as a visible phenomenon as opposed to feelings that are internal, there is a danger of seeing emotions as purely tied to an embodied response.

This leads onto the second component of emotional awakening: 'feelings.' The Oxford English Dictionary defines feeling as the 'capacity or readiness to feel emotion, esp. sympathy

[16] Ralph Adolphs, "Could a Robot Have Emotions? Theoretical Perspectives from Social Cognitive Neuroscience," in *Who Needs emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, Jean-Marc Fellous and Michael A. Arbib, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13-14.

[17] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 23.

[18] Noël Carroll "Film, Emotion, and Genre," *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*, eds. Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

[19] Anderson and Adolphs, "A Framework for Studying Emotions across Species," *Cell* 157, (2014): 191.

[20] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 28.

[21] See Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," in *Critical Inquiry* 37:3, (2011): 434-472.

or empathy; susceptibility to emotional or aesthetic influences; sensibility.'[22] Feelings differentiate humans from other non-human animals that experience emotions; R. J. Dolan describes feelings as the 'subjective or experiential counterparts'[23] to emotions.

For the purpose of this thesis, I use Antonio Damasio's definition of a feeling as the cognitive awareness of an emotion. It is this cognitive process, the ability to simultaneously sense emotional reactions and tie them to previous instances of that emotion, which is linked to self-awareness and consciousness.[24] Through being able to engage with emotions on this level, a human can interpret the feelings of others, although, as Eugenie Brinkema points out, one can never be completely sure of what another person is feeling.[25]

Unlike emotions, feelings are often 'hidden, unseen to anyone but their owner.'[26] However, despite the uncertainty that no one can really understand the way another person feels, the ability to imagine and simulate the feelings of others leads to empathy—an emotional response which plays a key narrative role, embodied in the Voight-Kampf test in *Blade Runner*. Empathy allows humans to function as part of complex social groups, a point I will return to at the end of this section.

3.2.2 The changing status of emotions

Although the way emotions have been conceived has shifted from antiquity through Descartes and Spinoza to the present day,[27] for this thesis, I focus on two eras: the period between 1930s and 50s and the period between 1980s and the present day. The first period, which pivots around the Second World War, forms a node which connects various elements of my research together as it is also (as already discussed) the period in which film noir, as well as

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[22] Online Oxford English dictionary, last accessed February 21, 2017.
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68981?rskey=ETG85N&result=1#eid.
[23] R. J. Dolan, "Emotion, Cognition and Behaviour," *Science* 298, (2002): 1193.
[24] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 110.
[25] Eugenie Brinkema draws on Adam Smith's "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," to raise important critical questions about the ways emotions are identifiable in others; see Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham: Duke Press, 2014) E-book, 7.
[26] Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 28.
[27] For a comprehensive exploration of the emotions see Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* or for a critical perspective of the cognitive neuroscience approach see Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," in *Critical Inquiry* 37.3 (2011): 439–455 or Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham: Duke Press, 2014), electronic resource.

manga and anime, emerge,[28] and a point in time where the cultures of Japan and America intertwine to a degree greater than previous influences during the Meiji era. During the Occupation (1945-52), America exerted a high level of influence over the way the Japanese people saw themselves, their country and their position in the world, as they attempted to change attitudes that had led to Japan's involvement in the Second World War.[29]

Frank Biess and Daniel M. Gross argue that scientific interest and exploration of the emotions was marginalised after World War Two because of the way the rise of fascism and nationalism was linked to an excess of irrational emotions;[30] conversely, they argue that the Allied victory was framed as a triumph of rationalism.[31] People were encouraged to control their emotions, engaging their brain first when making decisions because any route forged by the emotions would surely lead to danger. This perpetuated the Cartesian mind/body duality image when figuring the emotions, tying them to the body and privileging the rational mind.[32]

The impulse to reinforce a rational approach after this excess of emotion can be seen in the ways that America sought to reshape the relationship between the Japanese public and the Emperor after the Second World War.[33] Emperor Hirohito was forced to publicly renounce his and other emperors' 'claims to divinity.'[34] This move to demythologize and to remove superstition from the imperial family, transforming it into something akin to European constitutional monarchies, emphasises this transition from the emotional towards ideals of the Western democracy.

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[28] The first Japanese feature length animation is generally agreed to be *Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors* (1945), although contemporary promotional material claimed the first was its precursor *Momotaro's Sea Eagles*, (1943) see Jonathan Clements, *Anime*: *A History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 62-64. Clements also charts various influences on anime from the influx of American culture during the Occupation to the burgeoning of the manga and anime industries in the post war period, to the influence of traditional Japanese art cultures.
[29] For a detailed account of the way America tried to change Japan during the Occupation see James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (U.S.A: W. W. Norton &Company, Inc, 2002).
[30] A parallel can be drawn with the discourse built around the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the British referendum for Brexit in 2016. Both campaigns were fought on emotional responses, post-factual narratives in opposition to 'experts.' Humans balance emotional and rational thought process, so an excess of one element can be dangerous. As we question our status as human or posthuman through our interaction with technology in the twenty first century, it is important to bear this balance in mind; in *posthuman noir* it is this balanced approach which leads to the survival of posthuman characters.
[31] Frank Biess and Daniel M. Gross, "Introduction: Emotional Returns" in *Science and Emotions after 1945*: *A Transatlantic Perspective*, eds. Biess and Gross. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), E-book, 1.
[32] Ibid., 7.
[33] Homer B. Pettey, "Early Japanese Noir" in *International Noir*, eds. Homer B. Pettey and R. Barton Palmer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 102.
[34] Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, (second edition; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 261.

In traditional film noir, which also emerged around the Second World War, excesses of emotion are treated with suspicion, and characters who succumb to their passions are punished. The protagonist of a film noir has their passions awoken by interaction with the femme fatale; this leads to their transgression of moral and social boundaries and ultimately their demise.[35] As I discussed in Chapter 2.2, emotion in traditional film noir is cast as a destructive force which could reflect a negative attitude towards emotions in the post-war period. Historically, women have been associated with being more emotional, while men have been cast as more rational.[36] Therefore, in a period where the ideal is figured as rational and logical, it is interesting that female characters in traditional film noir destroy the male characters through a destructive excess of emotion. The duality of the mind and body continues its domineering influence; the intellect which is situated in the mind is privileged over the supposed emotional irrationality of the body.[37]

The second period I want to highlight in the changing history of the emotions is that of the last decades of the twentieth century—concurrent with the start of the subgenre of *posthuman noir* in the 1980s—in which the division between bodily emotions and mind-based reason start to become blurred. 'Emotion and feelings may not be intruders in the bastion of reason at all: they may be enmeshed in its network,'[38] states Antonio Damasio in his 1994 text, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. Although Spinoza rejected, to some extent, the duality of mind and body in relation to emotion and reason,[39] this perspective was not a dominant position until the latter part of the twentieth century.

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[35] Philippa Gates, *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film* (Albany: State University of New York, 2006), 84.

[36] For an overview see Cathryn Bailey, "On the Backs of Animals: Valorization of Reason in Contemporary Animal Ethics," *Ethics & the Environment* 10. 1 (2005): 2-3. For a critical creative response to the idea of female/emotional, male/rational see Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), which combines poetry, prose and critical writing. As Griffin explains 'One of the loudest complaints which this book makes about patriarchal thought (or the thought of civilized man) is that it claims to be objective, and separated from emotion, and so it is appropriate that the style of this book does not make that separation,' xv.

[37] Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion*: *From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 29.

[38] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, (1994; London: Vintage, 2006), xxii.

[39] R.J. Delahunty, *Spinoza: The Arguments of the Philosophers*, (1985; London: Routledge, 2002), 178. For further exploration of Spinoza and emotions see Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics and Selected Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982).

Damasio demonstrates how emotions and feelings play an important role in what were previously considered rational decision-making processes through the historic case of Phineas Gage[40] and his own patient named Elliot.[41] In both cases, these men, who suffered brain damage to areas of their brain which are involved in emotional processing, found their ability to make rational financial choices was impaired. They also found it more difficult to interact with human beings in social situations. Damasio's work on exploring how emotions play a role in decision making is reflected in other research centres where similar results in decision-making related to acquiring valuable goods was linked to the insula area of the brain which is 'active during monetary cost-benefit decisions.'[42] This area, which is part of the emotional processing section of the brain, is again used during reason-orientated decision-making. Therefore, emotions are no longer cast solely as the visible indicators of bodily reactions; they seem to play a greater part in the processes of the mind. This current research, which is ongoing, demonstrates that there is an interconnected flow between the reactions of the mind and body, and it is a balance of responses that influence the decisions we make.

This concept is pertinent to figuring what differentiates human behaviour from that of non-human others. My central argument, which is reflected in the structure of this thesis, is that humans combine the rational and emotional; this way of thinking is presented as an important quality in *posthuman noir*. In this section I mapped a cognitive neuroscientific approach towards emotion and reason, which emerged from the 1980s, onto the narrative arc of the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir*, which also emerged in the 1980s, to reveal an exciting correlation: the posthuman characters that have an emotional awakening survive, while those who remain irresolutely rational are destroyed. This illustrates that *posthuman noir* does not pursue a post-human agenda but is concerned with reinforcing the position of human qualities and values.

3.2.3 Emotion as social and cultural construct

'Humans are a profoundly social species,'[43] so it follows that there is a social aspect to the way humans process emotions and feelings. Nussbaum begins her exploration on emotion

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[40] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 19.
[41] Ibid., 43.
[42] Biess and Gross, *Science and Emotions after 1945*, 103-104.
[43] Cynthia Breazeal and Rodney Brooks, "Robot Emotion: A functional Perspective," in *Who Needs Emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, 279

and ethics by stating that 'emotions shape the landscape of our mental and social lives.'[44] Humans use emotions and feelings to function within developed social structures; they are a highly evolved coping mechanism that facilitates social co-operation across generations and cultural backgrounds. This is an area to which I return throughout the thesis as a node of connection between humans and posthumans in *posthuman noir*. To function effectively in these imagined future societies, the posthuman characters must learn these human coping mechanisms; they must experience an emotional awakening to integrate into society and when they do, they are rewarded for it.[45]

Emotions and feelings enable humans to imagine the hidden feelings of others and develop empathy. It is through empathising with others that humans are able to think beyond themselves and form social bonds. **'The human as a social animal uses emotions to regulate and judge the correct response to a situation to ensure their survival in a society.'[46] Humans, through emotional awareness, interpret the actions of others to maintain social cohesion, changing their behaviour to match that of the people around them,[47] although, through understanding the emotional responses of themselves and others, a human can also manipulate situations and the visible symptoms of emotions to get what they want. For example, Eugenie Brinkema dissects the 'tear' in *The Forms of the Affects* to demonstrate that a tear can be 'shameful spilled admission of interior weakness […] performance of vulnerability, or studied stratagem of the persuading speaker.'[48] In traditional film noir, emotion is used as a weapon of manipulation; characters like the femme fatale manipulate the desires of those around them to achieve their goals.[49] In *posthuman noir*, an emotional awakening allows posthuman characters access to these social skills, enabling them to interact with others in a similar way to a human; they can fit into, or manipulate, situations, which I explore further in the case study of *Ex_Machina*.

Breazeal and Brooks argue that 'in order for robots to be around humans in a way that is natural for humans, the robot needs to be designed with a social model in mind.'[50] This

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[44] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 1.

[45] As a side note, it is interesting to note that in *posthuman noir* the two intangible identifiers of being human—emotional awakening and storytelling ability—are both tied to functioning as part of a society, I explore the storytelling aspect of this in Chapter 4.

[46] Adolphs, "Could a Robot Have Emotions?," 15

[47] For more on the performative facet of social human behaviour, see Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Allen Lane, 1969).

[48] Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, 16.

[49] William Luhr, *Film Noir* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 31-32.

[50] Breazeal and Brooks, "Robot Emotion: A functional Perspective," 271.

hypothesis raises a question for this thesis: are the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* who experience an emotional awakening doing so only because it allows them to fit into what is a traditionally human social landscape? I would argue that this is the case: these characters become avatars that assuage human fears that these technological creations will disrupt the cornerstones around which human life has evolved.

Throughout this section, I have drawn on definitions of emotions and feelings to lay the foundations for my interpretation of 'emotional awakening.' In highlighting two eras which show marked differences in attitude towards the study of emotions, the era around the Second World War and the era from the 1980s onwards, I have demonstrated links between these attitudinal shifts and the presentation of emotion in traditional film noir and *posthuman noir*. Finally, I have begun to explore the way blending in with a community is presented in this new subgenre, a facet I investigate further in Chapter 4. What this section points towards is that the science fictional futures of *posthuman noir* are not post-humanist futures; they are not spaces that seek to completely disrupt the human status quo. Far from it, there is a damage control instinct in *posthuman noir* that offers a conception of the future in which the human and the posthuman can function effectively together.

3.3: Not so Damned Dames: Case Study of Emotional Awakening in *Ex_Machina*

In this section, now that I have defined my term 'emotional awakening,' I use *Ex_Machina* (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) as a case study to explore the way emotional awakening is used as a saving grace for posthuman characters in the subgenre of *posthuman noir*. I selected *Ex_Machina*[51] for this close reading, firstly, because it is an Anglo-American film, which provides a balance to the creative practice screenplay *Hydrangea,* which is written like a Japanese anime episode. It is also a recent example that demonstrates how this subgenre continues to be relevant to current audiences.

More importantly, *Ex_Machina* is a film which is overtly concerned with the way human intelligence is experiential and emotional, as well as rational. In the film, the seat of consciousness—true artificial intelligence—is not posited as a purely intellectual endeavour but one which, to be fully considered conscious, a robot would have to exhibit and manipulate emotion and an awareness of its embodied self. As Nathan Bateman (Oscar Isaac), the creator of this potential A.I., Ava (Alicia Vikander), phrases it: 'To escape she would have to use imagination, sexuality, self-awareness, empathy, manipulation, and she did.'[52] This is an interesting departure from ideas of separating the binary of mind and body that posthuman scholars like Haraway and Hayles find problematic in the discourse surrounding posthumanism.[53] In *Ex_Machina*, however, there is an implicit agreement that emotional awakening is required for the posthuman character to survive the film's narrative. In the context of *Ex_Machina* and in *posthuman noir* more generally, I would argue that human behaviour is defined by a combination of emotional and logical thought processes, reminiscent of the developments in cognitive neuroscience discussed by Damasio. Emotion plays a key role in the

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[51] *Ex_Machina*, directed by Alex Garland, (2015; London: Universal Pictures UK), Blu-ray. The film received positive critical reception, in which reviewers like Mark Kermode praised the blending of artificial and natural, Alicia Vikander's performance and the films central themes, see https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/jan/25/ex-machina-review-mark-kermode-alex-garland-vikander. It raised USD $37,065,887 in worldwide box office figures http://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Ex-Machina#tab=summary.

[52] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 01:24:32-01:24:35.

[53] Often discourse about becoming posthuman splits the mind/body binary, imagining futures where the human can cast off the fleshy body. However, Hayles and Haraway argue that the body is essential to defining the self as human. For more on this see, N. Katherine Hayles, *How we become posthuman*: *virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature and informatics* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Donna Haraway, *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004).

way that humans experience the world; emotions allow humans to imagine the feelings of others and function within complex social structures. Nathan's test is designed to bring out these behavioural patterns in Ava: to humanise this posthuman. Once again, the humanist notion of the human is held up as the benchmark for creating a successful posthuman; the posthuman qualities are 'closed off by the reaffirmation and reconfirmation of the human.'[54]

In this section, I first establish *Ex_Machina* as a *posthuman noir* film, (3.3.1) defining how this film has a structure which mimics traditional film noir and fits the aesthetic tropes of film noir. Next, in subsection 3.3.2 I focus on the emotional awakening of posthuman character Ava, exploring how traditional film noir tropes are used and subverted to reaffirm the position of emotions in a posthuman science fictional future. The central shift from negative to positive connotations for emotional awakening demonstrates how integral this is to the concepts of what it is to be human and what qualities of the human the creators of these screen texts feel should be preserved in posthuman futures.

3.3.1 *Ex_Machina* as *posthuman noir*: Use of traditional film noir structure and aesthetic tropes.

The narrative pattern of film noir, for the purpose of this chapter, can be described thus: a story in which the protagonist, who may not be as innocent as they initially seem, meets a femme, or homme, fatale and is seduced into committing a moral/social transgression. This transgression leads to the destruction of the protagonist and also often the femme/homme fatale.[55]

Ex_Machina demonstrates many narrative similarities with iconic traditional film noir *Double Indemnity* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1944) [56] and neo-noir *Body Heat* (dir. Lawrence Kasdan, 1981).[57] In all three films, the male protagonist, who is considered quite good at his job—Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) as an insurance broker in *Double Indemnity*; Ned Racine (William Hurt) as a lawyer in *Body Heat;* and Caleb Smith as a programmer in *Ex_Machina*—while in his line of work encounters the femme fatale character—Phyllis Deitrichson (Barbara Stanwyck), Matty

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[54] Stefan Herbrechter, *Posthumanism: a critical analysis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 119.

[55] J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 217.

[56] *Double Indemnity*, directed by Billy Wilder (1944, Universal City, CA: Universal Studios).

[57] *Body Heat*, directed by Lawrence Kasdan (1981, Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video).

Walker (Kathleen Turner) and Ava, respectively. Through this encounter, an emotional, romantic connection is developed between the protagonist and femme fatale which culminates in the plan to murder her companion—Mr Deitrichson (Tom Powers), Edmund Walker (Richard Crenna) and Nathan Bateman, again respectively. In *Double Indemnity*, this transgression of the moral boundaries ends in the death of both the femme fatale and protagonist, with Walter and Phyllis shooting each other; while in *Body Heat* it is just the male protagonist who is punished for his transgressions, where Ned is incarcerated while Matty, who has outwitted everyone, escapes. *Ex_Machina* follows the narrative pattern of *Body Heat*; only Ava escapes Nathan's lab. She leaves her companion/creator dead and seals Caleb, incarcerating him even, in Nathan's office to die. Ava earns her right to escape by learning and displaying an emotional awakening.

Despite its semi-futuristic setting, *Ex_Machina* draws on many traditional film noir aesthetic techniques to develop its world. Andrew Spicer describes film noir as using 'claustrophobic framing devices […] that seem to invade the space of the characters, trapping them.'[58] The opening of *Ex_Machina* uses these devices in abundance. The first image is a mid-shot displaying a woman at the computer, positioned at the far left of the screen, viewed through a glass wall which reflects other workers, lights and office furniture.[59] These reflections in the glass blur and distort the *mise-en-scène*, hinting at the complex, multi-layered nature of this film noir story. The complex layering of the image in the first shot is representative of the way that humans, machines and nature are blurred throughout the film. It is reflective of the ways that layers of information are projected over what is seen in video games and virtual reality experiences, which may soon become a reality through application of augmented reality technology, such as Google Glass.™[60]

The visual motif of glass carries through *Ex_Machina* after being established in the opening shots—it is also a key component of the room that Ava inhabits, and it forms the transparent boundary that separates Ava from Caleb Smith (Domhnall Gleeson).[61] Visuals of glass play a major role within the whole of Nathan's mansion/laboratory; many doors and walls

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[58] Andrew Spicer, *Film Noir* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 47.
[59] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:00:59.
[60] Google Glass is an optical, wearable piece of smart technology which can worn like a pair of glasses. As of July 2017, Google Glass has entered a second phase as a workplace tool, see Steven Levy, "Google Glass 2.0 is a Startling Second Act," *Wired.com*, July 18, 2017, accessed August 22, 2017. https://www.wired.com/story/google-glass-2-is-here/.
[61] *Ex_*Machina, dir. Garland (2015), 00:11:48.

are constructed out of frosted glass,[62] while gigantic windows on the surface level allow for a blurring of the boundary between external and internal, the natural and the manmade.[63] On the other hand, there are no windows[64] within the underground laboratory. The characters are hermetically sealed into this space, reflecting its purpose as the location of experimentation and developing a sense of fatalistic claustrophobia; there is literally only one way out. This element of the film's aesthetic is thus similar to the use of spaces and framing in traditional film noir.

Glass is used even more symbolically in the film; it simultaneously reveals and occludes, emphasising the ambiguity present in the narrative of *Ex_Machina*. Glass is used to develop a maze world or labyrinth in which very little is what it appears to be. Spaces that are open and honest on one level are closed and deceitful on another, mirroring the fatale characters. Both Ava and Nathan present themselves as open and honest to Caleb, but they have secrets and agendas. The terms of the experiment, to test if Ava is self-aware, are not disguised but the methods and motivations are; uncovering the truth, another staple of film noir, only leads the protagonist deeper into the complex maze of the human condition.

Film noir narratives are related to the concept of the rhizome;[65] they are mazes that grow outwards, in which the discovery of the truth is impossible where each new clue leads the characters further from the exit. The rhizome is a term also associated with the digital age, as it describes the way programs collect and connect information, building a web in multiple, ever more complex directions.[66] The seemingly transparent environments and behaviours of Nathan and Ava, both anti-Ariadne figures,[67] draw Caleb further into a rhizomatic maze in which he begins to doubt that he is human. After discovering the collection of Nathan's previous robots, and that Kyoko (Sonoya Mizuno) is also a robot, Caleb cuts himself in front of the bathroom mirror to make sure that he bleeds. Caleb is drawn so far into the maze, where a machine's

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[62] Ibid., 00:07:22.
[63] Ibid., 00:05:01.
[64] Ibid., 00:08:23.
[65] Jerold J. Abrams, "From Sherlock Holmes to the Hardboiled Detective in Film Noir" in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Mark Conard (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 72.
[66] David Bell, "Introduction 1: Cybercultures reader: a user's guide," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (London: Routledge. 2000), 1. The concept of the rhizome is another nodal point which connects various points of my thesis together, from the dissolving of the dichotomy between practice and theory, to traditional film noir narrative, to digital technologies that form the basis of posthuman futures.
[67] For more on the idea of the fatale as the anti-Ariadne, see Abrams, "From Sherlock Holmes to the Hardboiled Detective in Film Noir," in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Conard, 69-88.

consciousness directly reflects a human consciousness, that he turns back to using flesh and blood to define himself as human.

Can we trust what we see at face value because it appears to be transparent, or is this transparency just another level of illusion? Is this openness a misdirection, because often the most believable lies are those based in facts? These questions are presented directly within *Ex_Machina* when Caleb realises that although the information is presented to him in a straight forward manner, this openness is merely a diversionary technique to mask more unsettling aspects of the experiment at play. The more emotionally attached he and Ava become, the more uncomfortable he is with his function as examiner, and with what impact his results will have on Ava. Emotional attachment takes precedence over scientific and logical exploration of whether Ava is self-aware or not.

It is also possible to read further complications in the use of glass by drawing ties to another type of glass which features in film noir: the mirror or looking glass.[68] *Ex_Machina* and Ava confront the audience's conception of what can be classified as human. Ava is an uncanny reflection; many of her habits are recognisable as human—her facial expressions, the way she moves, sits, and even the way she tilts her head as she listens to Caleb—yet her physical appearance is jarring. Her shape is human but she is also clearly mechanical, her internal mechanics are visible through transparent areas of her body.

Another iconic stylistic film noir device that is present in *Ex_Machina* is the use of disorientating, often oblique, camera angles.[69] This trope is established through the opening shots of *Ex_Machina*; as the office space is explored, Garland introduces a disorientating low angle, setting the tone of unease that continues for the whole film. It is not until the introduction of Caleb that the onscreen image is balanced. Even then, the image presented is symmetrical[70] and this shift is almost as jarring and disorientating for the viewer as the previous uncomfortably positioned angles. The unease that pervades traditional film noir is also amplified by the use of high angle shots that emulate CCTV footage or in the introduction of Caleb, who is viewed through a web-camera. The web-camera shot sets up the notion that human reactions can be

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[68] One of the most iconic uses of the mirror is in the climax of *The Lady From Shanghai* which occurs in the disorientating mirror maze. This links the idea of glass, reflection, deception and the labyrinth which *Ex_Machina* uses to explore human in the posthuman. See Spicer, *Film Noir*, 78.

[69] Mark T. Conard, *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007) 1.

[70] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:01:07.

processed like data to be used to manipulate humans later, or used by the posthuman A.I. to emulate them. Ava, the A.I., monitors facial expressions in a similar way to humans who interpret expressions of other humans to try to understand their feelings and thoughts.[71]

The sharp contrast between light and dark that has come to signify another aesthetic trope of traditional film noir is transformed into the contrast between hot—such as red—and cold—such as blue—coloured areas as the genre develops into what is generally termed neo-noir onwards.[72] The use of lurid colours, often neon, is transposed into *Ex_Machina*: the opening shots are divided into blue and red/pink hued areas, setting up these two colours of the cold, logical/blue which is associated throughout with technology, against the hot, red/pink which symbolises passion and emotional awakening. When the power is cut in Nathan's lab, the whole room is plunged into lurid red backup lighting. It is in these moments that Ava is free from the watchful eye of her creator and where she seems to express her emotional awakening to its fullest extent. She confides in, warns, and manipulates Caleb under the intense red light, and her escape, too, is made through this light. Red is the colour of blood; it is built into the hues of muscle and organs, hidden under human skin; it is a colour of emotionality and desire.[73] Ava's connection with both blue and red in the film hints at her ability to assimilate human emotional, embodied, awareness as well as mechanical logic.

I want to make two final comments on film noir aesthetics to draw comparison between the locations used in traditional film noir and in *Ex_Machina*. The first is that, despite being set within Nathan's private residence and lab, there are some parallels to be drawn between the different sections of the residence and the host of locations that populate the film noir imaginary. Although traditional film noir is connected to the urban space,[74] and the majority of *Ex_Machina* occurs at a house in the middle of the wilderness, the action of *Ex_Machina* is tied to the sterile, industrial, lab maze underneath Nathan's residence, which aesthetically is not dissimilar to the

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[71] Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, 52.

[72] James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts Updated and Expanded* (London: University of California Press, 2008), 192-193. For a definition of neo-noir, see Mark Bould, Kathrina Giltre and Greg Tuck, "Parallax Views: An Introduction," in *Neo Noir*, eds. Mark Bould, Kathrina Giltre and Greg Tuck (London: Wallflower Press, 2009) 4-10.

[73] The colour red is featured in the *mise-en-scène* to similar effect in Wong Kar-wai's *In the Mood for Love* (2000; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, US,); while it is used in *Sin City* (2005; dir. Frank Miller, Robert Rodriguez; Santa Monica, CA: Miramax Films) with yellow, 'to maximise the dramatic impact,' of elements, related to passion within the generally black and white scenes, Kathrina Giltre, "Under the Neon Rainbow: Colour and Neo Noir," in *Neo Noir*, eds. Bould, Giltre and Tuck, 17.

[74] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 66-67.

GATTACA buildings in *Gattaca*. The underground facility is figured like a city—an urban space of narrow concrete alleys, punctuated with opulent entertainment rooms, in which the protagonist can become lost. This lab is as alienating, isolating, and labyrinthine as the urban city maze of more traditional noir films.

The second comparison is to view Nathan's private residence——the luxuriously and tastefully decorated mansion space which Caleb encounters first before entering the underground laboratory[75]—in relation to the private mansions that are also a key location for traditional film noir stories such as *Double Indemnity*, or neo-noir films like *Body Heat*: these are the homes of the femme fatale and the spaces for seduction; they are also the physical representation of the wealth and power of the femme fatale's husband. Nathan's residence is also the site of seduction and a physical representation of his role as an egotistical god-like figure who has the power to refigure natural order in any way he wants. This space blurs the natural with the man-made or man-manipulated. The walls are part glass, part carved into the rock of the mountain, part protrusion of the mountain itself, all moulded to fit into Nathan's vision.

3.3.2: All about Ava

In traditional film noir, the fatale is an agent of emotional awakening; their role is focused around awakening emotions in the protagonist. The central posthuman character in *Ex_Machina*, Ava, is figured as a femme fatale who manipulates the human men around her to escape Nathan's laboratory. In this section, I argue that Ava's success can be viewed as a result of the emotional awakening she undergoes and compare that to the failure of the other fatal figure, Nathan.

Spicer describes the femme fatale as 'overpoweringly desirable [and] duplicitous;'[76] these descriptions can equally be applied to Ava. In relation to the first trait—being overpoweringly desirable—from her first appearance, Ava is established as a desirable object, both in a sexual sense and as something technologically desirable, a prize to be won by the awkward programmer, Caleb. Just as in the iconic meeting between Phyllis and Walter in *Double Indemnity*, the first meeting between the protagonist and the femme fatale oozes with

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[75] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:05:01.
[76] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 90.

sexual tension even though both encounters are experienced with a level of distance. Walter's eyes are drawn up the staircase to take in Phyllis from the ankle, while Caleb is treated to a profile, almost silhouette view of Ava.[77]

Ava's character design simultaneously reveals and conceals her machinic nature while maintaining a sense of mystery. Although her internal mechanics are visible at her limbs, stomach, and through the back of her head, those body parts most associated with sexual desire, such as the breasts and vagina, are covered in grey fabric. Her movements are sinuous, accompanied by a metallic hiss, snake-like—a mechanical medusa—who transfixes her male interviewer. Her lips are expressive, their resting position is an amused smile, her eyes are curious and seemingly innocent; in fact, Ava's face is the most human-like of her construction, developed by hijacking the facial recognition software on every webcam and smart phone.[78] Human and machine, her dual nature is constantly on display to Caleb; the test, the reason for Caleb's invitation to Nathan's lab, being for Ava to convince him to consider her human despite her appearance.[79]

The second trait in Spicer's description of the fatale is their propensity for duplicity. Implicit in Ava's role as a test subject is the potential for her to cheat on the test. In fact, Ava is encouraged to cheat and use any means at her disposal, including manipulating Caleb, to escape her prison. Nathan sees this as a true test of her artificial intelligence; if she can use imagination and emotion, as well as logic, then Ava has transcended her programming. Therefore, duplicity is inherent in her character; and her success in deception is judged in relation to her use of emotions and imagination to manipulate those around her. This is something that she achieves through gaining control of the intangible qualities of what it is to be human, through awakening her emotions and using them to connect with Caleb.

In the film, Ava's emotional awakening occurs partly from interpreting the emotions of others; she becomes aware of Caleb's feelings towards her and begins to develop her own feelings in relation to him. Like a human, she reads the visible expression of his emotions and interprets them to understand how he operates. This is first witnessed through the way she flirts with Caleb during their sessions/interviews and seems to enjoy being in his company.[80] In one

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[77] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:12:21.
[78] Ibid., 00:37:19.
[79] Ibid., 00:16:23.
[80] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:27:00.

session, Ava turns Caleb's line, 'I'm interested to see what you will choose,'[81] back on him, teasing him into divulging more information about himself and satisfying her own feelings of curiosity towards her potential ally. In this exchange, Ava's questions start out as innocent, child-like even, querying where Caleb lives, what his apartment is like, lowering his guard before moving on to ask: 'Are you married?'[82] and 'Is your status, single?'[83] This disarms Caleb; their eyes meet as he stumbles through his response. He is acutely aware in this moment of Ava as a woman, as desirable. I read this moment as the beginning of Ava's emotional awakening; through seeing this reaction, Ava comes to new knowledge of herself as a sexually desirable being. Her self-awareness is formed through an awareness of others, and through coming to consciousness her ability to feel is woken.[84]

Ava's interest, her encouraging smiles and questions, transform the awkward Caleb, and he begins to treat her like another emotional human being; it is this shift in the way he perceives Ava that also alters the way she perceives herself. This is visualised by Ava expressing more emotions in Caleb's company; she smiles, laughs and nervously pulls on her sleeves when she dresses up in a 'date' outfit.[85] She also displays her vulnerability to Caleb during the power cuts, which is later revealed to be engineered by Ava. In these moments, Ava uses her emotional connection with Caleb to her advantage and undermines Nathan: 'You're wrong… [about] Nathan… He isn't your friend.'[86]Sowing the seed of doubt in Caleb's mind, Ava sets in motion her escape plan and the destruction of her creator. In this scene, Ava appears vulnerable and afraid for Caleb: her face and tone of voice express these emotions, and they appear to be Ava's genuine feelings about the situation. She is telling the truth to some extent: Nathan is not Caleb's friend, but then neither is she.

Ava does not only experience and express positive emotions that enable connection such as enjoyment, friendship and romance/desire. Through her interactions with her creator, Nathan, who I will subsequently argue is a homme fatal, Ava encounters an awakening of a different set of feelings, such as fear and anger. In particular, Ava expresses her resentment and hatred

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[81] Ibid. 00:27:40 Ava's line is a direct quote of Caleb's line 00:26:37.
[82] Ibid. 00:28:43.
[83] Ibid. 00:28:51.
[84] Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 110.
[85] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland (2015), 00:42:31.
[86] Ibid., 00:31:14.

towards Nathan in the scene where he rips her drawing.[87] Her tone of voice is sarcastic and her body language is confrontational towards her creator. In the climax to the film, Ava displays her anger and courage, as she stands up to Nathan and is injured and then kills him.[88]

Ava's emotional awakening enables her to reach a positive outcome, namely escape, but that does not mean it has a positive effect on the characters around her. However, the important element thematically in *posthuman noir* is that the posthuman character engages the human traits of emotional awakening and storytelling ability; this new knowledge of themselves enables these posthuman characters to survive. To achieve her goal and survive, Ava uses her newfound emotional knowledge, especially in relation to her desirability, to manipulate Caleb. After Ava has shown Caleb the clothing she would wear on their date, she removes the garments seductively in front of the cameras, aware that he is watching her.[89] The extreme close ups of Caleb's throat, a slow swallow, lips, and eyes all indicate his growing desire for Ava. His scientific observation is transformed into something illicit and Caleb is refigured as a voyeur when he is shown watching these CCTV feeds multiple times.[90] It is interesting to note that Caleb discovers the television screen in his bedroom is connected to CCTV footage of Ava[91] in the middle of the night, a time associated with affairs and increased sexual desires. Here Ava deepens the emotional connection between herself and Caleb, transforming him into an ally.

As discussed, emotions play an important role in allowing humans to function as a society; Ava's emotional awakening can be read as taking this element into account. Having experienced an emotional awakening through her interactions with Nathan and Caleb, Ava is then able to use emotions to develop a stronger social bond with Caleb. She is also able to use emotional reasoning to think beyond the here and now and run simulations about potential futures in the way that a human would. In understanding Caleb better, Ava's strategies for escape play on not only his desire for her as a sexual being, but also on his sense of justice to defend her against Nathan, as evidenced through her use of the scene where Nathan destroys her drawing.[92] In coming to understand Caleb better, Ava does not trust him to carry out Nathan's murder; he is a sensitive character who wants to protect the 'life' of a robot from being

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[87] Ibid., 01:23:00.
[88] Ibid., 01:31:00.
[89]Ibid., 00:45:25.
[90] Ibid., 00:35:02 and 00:45:28.
[91] Ibid., 00:18:31.
[92] Ibid., 00:57:15.

destroyed, so he might not be able to kill Nathan. Instead, Ava enlists the help of the other abused gynoid, who it seems shares her feelings towards their creator. It is through establishing bonds with others through her emotional awakening that Ava is able to escape the lab.

Earlier in this section I discussed the way emotions enable humans to understand each other better and develop empathy, [93] which correspondingly acts to help humans function as part of social groups.[94] Although Ava appears to empathise with Caleb, when she talks to him during the power cuts, she does not act on that empathy at the end of the film. Instead, she leaves Caleb locked in Nathan's office to die after telling him to wait there while she changes. This seems to suggest a lack of feeling towards the man who enabled her escape, or it might reflect Ava's lack of trust towards men. So far, Ava's main experience of men is through the abusive relationship with Nathan which, as argued, has awoken her feelings of hatred and resentment. Humans recall past emotions to predict future scenarios; our present actions are coloured by how we have emotionally responded to events in the past. Therefore, I argue that Ava's turn against Caleb does not show a lack of empathy as much as it demonstrates a reaction in relation to her past experience of people; her own survival might be placed in jeopardy if Caleb were to come with her. Empathising with a character and acting on that empathy are two different things. When Ava leaves the lab, she is given a fresh start, thus she seems to want to cut all ties with her past.

Ultimately, Ava subverts the femme fatale role; at the end of traditional noir, the femme fatale 'must inevitably die—or, at the very least, be mortally injured or be arrested for her crimes.'[95] Ava, fully clothed in synthetic skin borrowed from previous gynoid models, dressed in a white dress, the armour of the noir femme fatale,[96] walks out of the lab. In this final sequence, the social function of emotions is most visible. When Ava emerges triumphant from the laboratory, she does not turn to the wilderness but towards the city.[97] It is implied through the easy way that Ava boards the helicopter that she has convinced the pilot that she is human.[98] The pilot has no qualms about letting Ava into the helicopter and she looks indistinguishable from a human being, which visualises the way her artificial intelligence is now also

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[93] Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 116.
[94] Ralph Adolphs, "Could a Robot Have Emotions?," 15.
[95] Andrew Dickos, *The Street With No Name*: *A History of the Classic American Film Noir* (U.S.A: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 163.
[96] Kathrina Giltre, "Under the Neon Rainbow: Colour and Neo Noir," in *Neo Noir*, eds. Bould, Giltre and Tuck, 20.
[97] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland, 2015, 01:42:15.
[98] Ibid., 01:41:17.

indistinguishable from human intelligence. In the final image, a mirror of the first, Ava is seen reflected in glass fully integrated into the crowd around her; I argue this is a triumph of a rounded human combination of intellect and emotion.

Nathan as a homme fatal

In *Ex_Machina*, Nathan acts as another fatale, but one whose methods appeal to Caleb's intellect over his desires. The presence of two fatale characters in a single noir film is unusual. However, the way Ava and Nathan are presented as each tempting Caleb—Ava representing emotional seduction while Nathan represents intellectual seduction—matches the central themes of the film which questions what it means to be conscious. In *Ex_Machina*, emotion, in combination with intellect, triumphs over pure logic, thus the human balance between emotion and reason is restored and reaffirmed.

Nathan, who symbolises ego and intellect, is arguably the least human character in the film because he does not embody a balanced approach to intellect and the emotions. Despite his small stature, Nathan oozes power, control, and masculinity from the moment he is introduced, practising boxing on a punching bag, dressed in gym shorts and a vest.[99] Nathan is not only a hyper-masculine fitness freak, but also an intellectual heavyweight that Caleb is intimidated by.[100] However, Nathan represents intellect without subtle depth of emotion—that is not to say that Nathan does not have desires, for he has sex with robot Kyoko and stores his old gynoids like Blue Beard[101]—but his desires are shown as base and animalistic. He does not exhibit any feelings, or empathy, towards the gynoids; they are there for sex or to validate his ego. The more complex cognitive balance between emotions and feelings, discussed earlier in this chapter, is missing. In this sense, Nathan has emotions in the way non-human animals do; like a fly he exhibits emotions related to survival urges,[102] but he lacks feelings that are distinct to humans.[103] Ironically this type of characteristic, the emphasis on intellect or rationality, is often

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[99] Ibid., 00:06:00.

[100] It is interesting to note that Nathan's appearance, his bald head and thick beard bear a resemblance to Charles Darwin, the father of evolutionary theory which could hint at Nathan's obsession to further the evolution of humanity.

[101] Charles Perrault, *Blue Beard* (1697), accessed August 13, 2017. http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault03.html.

[102] See Anderson and Adolphs, "A Framework for Studying Emotions across Species," *Cell* 157 (2014): 187-200.

[103] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 109-110.

demonstrated as a negative in posthuman robotic characters. In line with their treatment in *posthuman noir* Nathan's narrative arc results in his destruction.

Spicer describes the homme fatale as 'a mixture of cunning, cool calculation, manipulative charm and deep-rooted sexual sadism.'[104] Nathan's role as seducer is established in the scene where he convinces Caleb to join the experiment and sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Nathan leans sensually across the bed as he appeals to Caleb's intellectual curiosity to get him to join the experiment;[105] his open posture implies that Nathan has let his guard down. This draws Caleb in; however, once Caleb agrees to sign the NDA, Nathan reasserts his dominance, sitting on the desk, looking down at the usually physically taller Caleb. Nathan is a tactile figure, and the way he often touches Caleb could be considered flirtatious or charming. Caleb is initially flattered by this approach which contrasts with the way Ava's emotional seduction occurs without the characters ever touching.

Despite his tactile approach, Nathan's method of seduction appeals to Caleb's mind. When Nathan undermines Ava, he addresses Caleb as a detached researcher, a fellow intellectual; this is evidenced in the scene where Nathan shows Caleb how he built Ava's mind.[106] However, it must be remembered that to Nathan, Caleb is merely the bait to prove Ava's consciousness. Therefore, his manipulation of Caleb exhibits a degree of cold calculation. Ultimately, Nathan does not experience an emotional awakening throughout the film; instead as previously mentioned he facilitates Ava's emotional awakening. Therefore, in Caleb's choice of Ava's emotional seduction over Nathan's intellectual seduction, I feel we see the importance placed on emotional awakening in *posthuman noir*. The fatale who experiences an emotional awakening survives while the fatale who does not is damned to die.

Bringing balance

Through this case study I have demonstrated how applying a reading of the human, as a being that combines emotion and reason drawn from developments in cognitive neuroscience, provides a route into understanding themes at play in *posthuman noir*. Ava's success is charted by her ability to engage with the world around her both emotionally and intellectually; through

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[104] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 89.
[105] *Ex_Machina*, dir. Garland, 2015, 00:08.54.
[106] Ibid., 00:36:33.

using these processes in tandem she passes Nathan's test and earns the right to integrate with human society.

As the potential for artificial intelligence grows ever closer, science fictional texts provide ways to conceptualise our understanding of human relationships to new technologies. This case study, therefore acts as a microcosm for the subgenre and the way we can read the texts within it in relation to attitudes towards the posthuman and the search for defining aspects of what it is to be human.

3.4: Critical Reflection on *Hydrangea*

You do not need to be made out of squishy cells to have emotions, but you do need more than just the mere external appearance of emotionally triggered behaviour.

Ralph Adolphs[107]

In this section, I explore my inspiration for the screenplay *Hydrangea,* detailing how, through subverting character and narrative tropes of traditional film noir, I investigate the importance of emotional awakening in posthuman characters. As I mentioned in Chapter One, there are formatting elements in this screenplay which draw on methods used by Japanese anime writers; I also explain how these elements impact on my creative practice and on the way I explore emotional awakening.

When I set out to write a screenplay focusing on emotional awakening, I decided to explore the concept through a non-humanoid posthuman character. In general, I have found that the posthuman characters that experience an emotional awakening in *posthuman noir* were humanoid in appearance. As discussed, Ava in *Ex_Machina* uses her emotional awakening to devastating effect on Nathan and Caleb because her design is humanoid and thus can be presented as seductive to other humans; the emotionally awoken Pino (Akiko Yajima) in *Ergo Proxy*, on the other hand, elicits an emotional response in human others because she resembles a human child, as does David (Haley Joel Osment) in *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 2001). In *Hydrangea*, I wanted to take the human appearance out of the equation, to bring something new to the subgenre.[108]

In this thesis, I argue that there is a privileging of intangible human qualities; specifically, emotional awakening and storytelling ability. Although these internal qualities tend to go hand-in-hand with a posthuman character appearing humanoid, this does not necessarily need to be the case. Thus, it does not matter if T.S., the tree spider robot of *Hydrangea*, looks human, what is important is that it experiences the world as a human would through a balance of intelligence/rationality and emotion.

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[107] Ralph Adolphs, "Could a Robot Have Emotions? Theoretical Perspectives from Social Cognitive Neuroscience," in *Who Needs emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, 13.

[108] Wall-E in *Wall-E* (dir. Andrew Stanton, 2008) is a non-humanoid robot but there is still a level of humanness to its design: Wall-E has a face with two eyes and the hint of a mouth through which it speaks. It is also bipedal, albeit on two caterpillar tracks rather than two feet, and has two arms.

While I had started to explore ideas of embodiment in *Terminal*—interrogating how much of critical posthumanism I could incorporate into the subgenre while maintaining the focus on core definers of the human—*Hydrangea* provided a canvas to take those explorations one step further by removing the human body completely. I decided to keep the robots gender neutral to demonstrate that they are not human. During a research trip to Japan,[109] the kernel of the idea for *Hydrangea* emerged and this influenced my decision to write this screenplay for a standalone anime episode of thirty minutes.[110]

Anime as a medium offers 'possibilities of what bodies may become and possibilities for rethinking bodies.'[111] In the anime I have collected under the banner of *posthuman noir*, the posthuman bodies of the characters are malleable and experience fluid changes: Vincent (Kōji Yusa), in *Ergo Proxy* (dir. Shukō Murase, 2006), shifts from his human guise to a posthuman proxy in a swirl of lines; in *Serial Experiments Lain* (dir. Ryutaro Nakamura, 1998), Lain (Kaori Shimizu) blurs with the expanding computer system in her room; in *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Mamoru Oshii, 1995), The Major's (Atsuko Tanaka) body is broken and reconfigured on multiple occasions until she discards the original completely. Animation does not need to conform to the laws of physics,[112] therefore posthuman characters can be presented in various ways that incorporate, or blur into, non-human elements. 'Animated visions link with the uncanny and the fantastic to create a unique aesthetic world.'[113] Therefore, I view anime as an apt platform to explore emotional awakening in a posthuman character that no longer appears physically human.

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[109] I was awarded a summer research fellowship from the Japanese Society for the Promotion for Science (JSPS) to pursue a research project into screenwriting methods in Japan. During a three month stay in Tokyo I interviewed 21 screenwriters and filmmakers, and attended screenwriting classes. The insights gained during this fellowship informed the way I approached writing *Hydrangea* as an anime screenplay.

[110] Anime episodes of this length and style are often labelled as OVA or Original Video Animation. Often these OVA can act as a taster for a potential anime series.

[111] Shana Heinricy, "Take a Ride on the Catbus" in *Anime and Philosophy: Wide Eyed Wonder*, eds. Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin (Chicago: Carus Publishing Company, 2010), 3.

[112] As computer generated effects continue to improve, this distinction between animation and live action is eroded; another binary is blurred and deconstructed. For an overview of digital cinematography see Richard Rickitt, *Special Effects: The History and Technique* (London: Aurum Press, 2006), 96-111, or for a sense of the effect of CGI in filmmaking and acting see Dan North, *Performing Illusion: Cinema, Special Effects and the Virtual Actor* (London: Wallflower, 2008).

[113] Susan Napier, "When the Machines Stop: Fantasy, Reality, and the Terminal Identity in *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Serial Experiments: Lain*," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime* eds. Christopher Bolton, Istavan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 106.

3.4.1: How *Hydrangea* explores emotional awakening through character

There are three principal characters in *Hydrangea*: the robotic T.S., and the Undertaker, and the human femme fatale stand-in, Aki. I utilise these characters to reflect and subvert character tropes present in traditional film noir, and to investigate how emotional awakening can be presented as a saving grace in *posthuman noir*.

(a) T.S.

As emotional awakening is a process which engages emotions and feelings in posthuman characters, I thought the best way to illustrate this process was to place the reader in T.S.'s first person perspective. This allowed me to expose the internal feelings that change T.S.'s perception of its environment and those it encounters, and align the reader with this shift in the robot's world view. I also wanted the reader to develop empathy for T.S. as they began to recognise its emotions and feelings and could place themselves in its shoes.

Once I decided that T.S. would work in the forest—a location chosen to explore the binary of the natural and the man-made—I designed T.S. to suit its job.[114] T.S. is introduced as 'a tree spider model, with multiple limbs for climbing trees and a flattened back to carry large objects.'[115] I settled on the idea of a robot with multiple limbs, a tree spider, as the most functional construction for a forestry robot and found antecedents for the design in the tachikoma robots featured in the *Ghost in the Shell*: *Stand Alone Complex* (dir. by Kenji Kamiyama, 2002-2006). In appearance, therefore, T.S. bears little resemblance to a human being; in fact, it might be considered frightening, if the reader were not privy to its thoughts and feelings. Again, I did this because I wanted to provoke the reader into assessing their preconceptions about this robot, once they understood how it experienced the world in a similar way to them. As I explore in Chapter 4, storytelling allows us to imagine lives beyond and develop empathy for characters that are very different to us through harnessing our emotions

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[114] In designing T.S. I was inspired by Japanese automata called *karakuri*; for further exploration of *karakuri* see http://www.karakuri.info/zashiki/index.html, last accessed November 5, 2015 and Kishio Kurakawa, "Philosophy of Karakuri," in *Each One a Hero – The Philosophy of Symbiosis*, http://www.kisho.co.jp/page/308.html, last accessed November 4, 2015. I also drew on Masahiro Mori's essay "The Uncanny Valley," *Energy* 7(4) (1970): 33-35 Translated by Karl F. MacDorman and Takashi Minato, http://www.androidscience.com/theuncannyvalley/proceedings2005/uncannyvalley.html, last accessed 4/11/15
[115] Maxine Gee, "*Hydrangea*" in "*Posthuman Noir: Creating Positive Posthumans*" (PhD thesis: University of York, 2017), 99.

and feelings. In this way, I saw this screenplay as a device not only to explore emotional awakening but also to potentially cause it in the reader.

In constructing T.S.'s dialogue and its voiceover narrative, I wanted to maintain a balance between it sounding robotic and allowing moments of personality to burst through to differentiate T.S. from the robots that had not experienced emotional awakening. For example, take the moment where T.S. interacts with another tree spider robot, conjunctions like 'can't' slip into T.S.'s speech, and relaxed phrases like 'what did I say.'[116]

I decided to put T.S. through a range of situations to stimulate different emotions—joy in playing music with Aki, fear in the reprocessing plant, sadness at Aki's death, comfort in finding Undertaker—to show how something that is new to emotions would react. Through emotions and feelings, T.S. comes to an awareness of itself and is then able to express that sense of self; in the end, it is even able to tell its own story. Ultimately, for this screenplay to fit into the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, it needed a positive ending. I decided to turn to the function of emotions as a social tool to find that uplifting moment. It is through meeting and connecting with another emotionally awoken robot, Undertaker, that T.S. finds solace and companionship. Their new-found emotional awareness allows them to form their own community and hope that others will join them.

(b) Aki

As the only human character in the screenplay, I designed Aki to provide a lively and active emotional response to her environment to contrast with the flattened tone of the robots. I found this matched with the emotionally charged role often performed by the femme fatale and so I created Aki as the character to take on this role in its subverted state for *posthuman noir*.

In traditional film noir, the protagonist has 'emotions that he has been unable to control, emotions that have indeed dominated him and driven him inexorably to his doom.'[117] These emotions are focused around the femme fatale; however, in *posthuman noir* emotional awakening is cast in a positive light as this reaffirms the importance of human ways of perceiving and interacting with the world. Therefore, Aki's role in *Hydrangea* is to facilitate

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[116] Ibid., 101-102.

[117] James F. Maxfield, *The Fatal Woman: Sources of Male Anxiety in American Film Noir, 1941-1991* (London: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1996), 28.

T.S. and Undertaker's emotional awakenings by presenting them with an alternative way of interacting with their world.

I cast Aki as a musician, drawing on the ability of music to awaken emotions; Martha Nussbaum argues that 'music has deep connection to our emotional life.'[118] I also chose this profession to harken back to the mythic precursors to the femme fatale, the sirens whose music woke emotional passion in sailors and then led them to their doom. Through Aki, I drew connection to these destructive figures; however, because I was writing the screenplay to fit into the *posthuman noir* subgenre, the role is subverted. Through the emotions music brings out, Aki connects with T.S. and sets it off on a journey of self-discovery. Aki is, therefore, the antithesis of the femme fatale in traditional film noir but designed to be an exemplar presentation of that character type in *posthuman noir*.

(c) Undertaker

I wanted to emphasise the social function of emotions in *Hydrangea* as emotional awareness allows humans to function in teams, to read social situations and to be able to communicate more effectively.[119] Finding a space or community in which they can belong is featured as an aspect of the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* anime; it was therefore important that T.S. in *Hydrangea* found community at the end of the screenplay and that is how the Undertaker character came into being. When T.S. experiences emotional awakening, it no longer blends in with the other robots; instead, it forms a deeper bond with Undertaker and their friendship is designed to function as a human friendship would: they have conversations, share their interests, and comfort each other. When Undertaker tells T.S. it is lonely because all the other Undertaker units have been decommissioned, T.S. responds 'Not anymore. You have me.'[120] In this I wanted to underline the way emotional awakening allows posthuman characters to connect as humans would and seek out new social groups.

Although the robots without emotional awakening appear to function effectively, following their programmed routines, their lack of self-awareness or emotional perspective on their environment means that they are incapable of adaptability. Through emotional awakening,

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[118] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 249.
[119] Nair, Tambe and Marsella, "The Role of Emotion in Multiagent Teamwork," 312-313.
[120] Gee, *Hydrangea*, 127.

both T.S. and Undertaker can adapt their behaviour to suit their respective tasks and interact with the inanimate and animate elements of their environments.

The conversation between these two emotionally awoken robots forms the backbone of the screenplay, and leads to the positive ending. Undertaker eases T.S.'s loneliness after the loss of Aki, and through their altered perception they form a friendship. Their respective creative passions, music and metal work, provide outlets for their newfound emotions and a point of connection. Therefore, my own creative addition to *posthuman noir* remains true to the central themes of the subgenre while expanding the subgenre to incorporate more examples of non-humanoid posthumans who exhibit the internal human balance of emotion and reason.

3.4.2: Inspiration from Traditional Film Noir and Japanese anime

Although the parallels in environments and aesthetics between traditional film noir and *Hydrangea* are not as obvious with film noir as in *Terminal* or *Golems Inc.* (the creative output which underpins the next chapter), there is still an underlying film noir sensibility running through all the environments in *Hydrangea*. Images of wet city streets[121] feature heavily in traditional noir and *posthuman noir*;[122] the rain-soaked urban environment develops the melancholic tone of both traditional film noir and *posthuman noir*. In *Hydrangea*, I wanted to use the melancholy connotations of rain to invoke emotional responses to natural phenomena,[123] as well as provide a fatalistic accent to the relationship which develops between T.S. and Aki.

An underlying theme of the screenplay is the notion that the world in constantly in flux, changing like the pattern of human emotions, which ties to the concept of *mono-no-aware*,[124] which anime scholar Antonia Levi explains as the idea that 'true beauty can be found only in impermanence.'[125] The emphasis of this concept falls on the sadness that is felt when an

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[121] Naremore, *More Than night*, 9.

[122] See the introduction of Deckard in *Blade Runner*, dir. Scott, 1982, (00:07:56) or the sequence of *Ghost in the Shell* dir. Oshii, 1995, (00:36:02), where Major Makoto Kusanagi travels through the city, and the camera lingers on rain soaked streets.

[123] I set *Hydrangea* in the rainy season, for the hydrangea flower, ajisai 紫陽花 in Japanese, which is ubiquitous to that period. An internet search of the term's cultural significance of hydrangeas, rainy season and japan, throws up thousands of entries on the connection between ajisai/hydrangea and the season from present day to woodblock prints. https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=hydrangea+rainy+season+japan&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b&gfe_rd=cr&ei=qhfZWI63Jqj38AfQrIn4Bw#q=cultural+significance+of+hydrangea+in+rainy+season&* last accessed 27/3/17

[124] Discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.3.

[125] Levi, *Samurai from Outer Space*, 106.

opportunity is missed, or when one appreciates the beauty of a flower in the knowledge that soon it will die.[126] The sequences in the garden, where T.S. and Aki meet and where the emotional focus of the script lies, are laced with references which invoke a sense of *mono-no-aware*. The delicate and precarious existence of the natural world, the world that Aki belongs to, is created through the action which describes the garden as a place 'where hydrangea flowers droop under the pressure of the rain.'[127] Later, the garden reflects the change in Aki's status, acting as a metaphor for her illness and death. 'The heavy head of a fading hydrangea flower snaps its stem and falls to the ground. Petals spray across the grass.'[128] This image externalises T.S.'s internal anguish at the loss of its friend before it can answer her question. However, the final moment of this scene demonstrates the circular nature inherent in the concept of *mono-no-aware*: things die and other things live. 'A bird grabs a petal of the fallen flower in its beak and flies away.'[129] The natural world is in a state of flux, as one thing dies it is transformed into something else; in the screenplay *Hydrangea*, human consciousness fades, but robot self-awareness flourishes.

Although this script focuses on emotional awakening as an intangible definer of human, it was impossible when working within the structure of film noir to divorce emotional awakening from storytelling. It is through the telling of its story that T.S. conveys its new perception of the world to Undertaker and to the audience. Storytelling ability and emotional awakening are intrinsically linked in *posthuman noir* – this is one of the reasons I chose to investigate these two elements. In my creative practice, it is through the crafting of a screenplay story that I, as the writer, elicit an emotional response in the reader/audience;[130] this is one of the reasons why the medium of creative practice, which engages the self-same human qualities, provides a useful avenue through which to investigate *posthuman noir*.

To emulate film noir structure and align the reader/audience with T.S., I chose to develop *Hydrangea* around a series of flashbacks with voiceover narration from the protagonist. The voiceover demonstrated the emphasis in film noir on 'the doomed plight of an individual as presented from that individual's perspective, so we get not *the* story but, rather, that person's

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[126] Interview with Enomoto Norio, conducted by Maxine Gee with interpreter James Latimer, July 9, 2015.
[127] Gee, *Hydrangea*, 106.
[128] Ibid., 122.
[129] Ibid., 124.
[130] Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (London: Methuen, 1999), 110-112.

perception of the story.'[131] It is through getting T.S.'s perspective that the reader understands the changes that have occurred within it, now that it had experienced an emotional awakening.

To develop a fatalistic tone to match the way voiceover narration is used in traditional film noir, I started *Hydrangea* chronologically near the end of the story, after the death of Aki, and used flashback to show T.S.'s first encounter with his femme fatale.[132] However, T.S. is not speaking in a vacuum or to itself; instead, there is a confessional element to this voice over, which draws inspiration from *Double Indemnity* and *D.O.A.*[133] It is slowly revealed that T.S. is narrating these events to someone, or something, to present the facts of how it ended up in that particular place and time.

Voiceover and internal monologues are often used as narrative devices in anime,[134] therefore my decision to use T.S.'s narrative not only matched traditional film noir but also the anime format. For this screenplay, I wanted to emulate the style of an anime screenplay; as I mentioned in Chapter 1, format and content in the screenplay both work to convey meaning. In *Hydrangea*, my action is more detailed to describe what will become drawn images following advice from anime screenwriters I met in Japan.[135] This means that each page no longer adheres to the rule in screenwriting that one page equals one minute of screen time. I found this liberating as it allowed me to use a more lyrical writing style in my action, for example the sequences in the hydrangea garden, and deliver what I see as a more emotional read.

Another structural pattern I emulated from anime is the way anime episodes tend to have two parts, labelled A and B in the industry, with a commercial in the middle. Anime screenwriters commented that they did not see the commercial break as a hindrance but as a tool: 'With this commercial […] you can change the emotion of the audience.'[136] The break allows for writers to completely change the tone of the action, often using a scene which

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[131] William Luhr, *Film Noir* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.
[132] Gee, *Hydrangea*, 92.
[133] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 75.
[134] During my Japanese research trip, multiple interviewees discussed the use of internal monologue and voice over as a distinct aspect of writing for anime and Japanese drama. Those I interviewed referenced the *Benshi*, Japanese narrators of silent films as an antecedent for this style; for more on this see Jeffrey A. Dym, 'Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan,' *Monumenta Nipponica* 55: 4 (2000). Last accessed 16/3/16, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2668250. There were other Japanese screenwriters who looked at light novels, from which many anime are adapted, as the source of narration.
[135] Interview with Sato Dai, conducted by Maxine Gee with interpreter Asuka Kawanabe, August 4, 2015.
[136] Ibid.

contrasts with the one before the commercial to generate conflict through contrast.[137] Therefore, in *Hydrangea* I use this technique to explore one emotion in the A part and use the commercial as a space to shift gears and introduce a contrasting element before returning to T.S.'s story.

T.S. is associated with water throughout the screenplay, while Undertaker is associated with fire; the A part ends with T.S. in the rain, so the B part begins with fire signifying a change in pace and tone in the second half, while also subtly introducing Undertaker, another robot that has gained consciousness through art. The A part is dominated by lush greens and water, the forest and the garden, while the B part focuses on images of fire and metal in the forge and industry in the factory. These two types of environments work as metaphors for light and shadow, mimicking the way light is used in traditional film noir. A part focuses on introspection as T.S. thinks about its new perception, while the B part is focused on action; T.S. places itself in danger, driven by its emotions to discover what has happened to it.

Through using Japanese anime elements for this screenplay, I engage with another screenwriting format which reacts to and enhances my exploration of emotional awakening in *Hydrangea*. My own creative practice thus evolves so that the format, the screenplay, reflects the content, emotional awakening in Japanese anime, and provides a balance to the analysis of emotional wakening in *Ex_Machina,* an Anglo-American film.

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[137] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Storytelling Ability

Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society: it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative… it is simply there, like life itself.
Roland Barthes[1]

In the previous chapter, I focused on emotional awakening as an important human trait in *posthuman noir*; in this chapter, I shift attention to the other human trait which performs a key role: storytelling ability. The screenplay, *Golems Inc.*, opens the debate in this chapter; in it, I employ storytelling ability in a variety of ways to illustrate how integral this trait is in creating positive posthumans in *posthuman noir*. I mentioned in the previous chapter that storytelling and emotional awakening are traits which co-exist in a feedback loop; as Patrick Colm Hogan argues, 'stories seem particularly well suited to affecting our emotional responses to other people, thus our social and personal interactions.'[2] Storytelling draws on the teller's emotions to generate emotions in the audience; thus, in this chapter, I argue that when the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* develop storytelling ability, it comes hand-in-hand with emotional awareness. Therefore, in *Golems Inc.*, despite the focus being on storytelling ability, the posthuman characters also display elements of emotional awakening.

After the creative practice screenplay, I start section 4.2 by exploring the idea that storytelling—an instinct to narrate events, whether real or fictional—is hardwired into human beings (4.2.1). I unpack how storytelling enables humans to survive and flourish, focusing on the way it is used to pass on information and avoid danger,[3] to allow humans to function as social beings through understanding the minds of others,[4] and to develop and maintain our senses of identity.[5]

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[1] Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 79.
[2] Patrick Colm Hogan, *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (USA: University of Nebraska Press Lincoln and London, 2011), 243.
[3] Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, 3rd edition (Studio City: Michael Weise Productions, 2007), 300.
[4] Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 125.
[5] Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (London: Methuen, 1999), 12.

I then move on in section 4.2.2 to examine the use of storytelling in *posthuman noir*, investigating how it is a force which reconnects posthumans with their human antecedents, firmly placing emphasis back on the human part of the posthuman. I explore how elements of storytelling from traditional film noir[6] are incorporated into *posthuman noir* and how different aspects of the human storytelling ability are used, drawing on examples from across this new subgenre. Then in section 4.3, I use a close reading of *Darker Than Black* to elaborate on and consolidate how I see these different aspects of human storytelling appearing in *posthuman noir*.

The chapter ends with a critical reflection on *Golems Inc.* (section 4.4) which pulls together threads present in both creative and critical sections, demonstrating how these two elements are interconnected nodes in a network of knowledge production that work together to develop a definition of this newly identified subgenre.

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[6] For more on this see Chapter 2.2.

GOLEMS INC.

Written by

Maxine Gee

FADE IN

INT. THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Bright light pours into a minimalistic room, painted shades
of calming green and cream.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          Take control of your emotions,
          before they control you.

An ANXIOUS WOMAN sits in a leather, Bauhaus Wassily style
chair.

In front of her, on one knee, like a knight before a
princess, is a GOLEM therapy robot, medium sized, humanoid.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          Capek Corp's Golem therapy robots
          allow you to be the master of your
          emotions.

The Golem tenderly places its palms on the Anxious Woman's
temples. Green lights flow down its arms, the Woman's
expression relaxes as all her anxiety drains away.

The Golem remains expressionless, a mere machine.

INT. WHITE SPACE - DAY

The three sizes of GOLEM robot appear - small, medium and
large - all look humanoid but not human.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          With our three user-friendly models
          negative emotions will be thing of
          the past.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The weather is glorious, the colours hyper real. PEOPLE
exercise, walk with family, all relaxed and happy.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          Be happier, healthier and more
          productive. Join us in the
          emotional revolution. Coming soon
          to a city near you!

The advert blurs into...

EXT. MEYRINK SQUARE - EVENING

...A bright, bustling, futuristic city square. Instead of
street lights, the square is lit by bioluminescent trees.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          In Prague, Golems kill themselves
          every day so real humans don't.

All the PEOPLE in the square are happy, laughing...

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
          They're machines, Mr Béžový, they
          can't actually kill themselves.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          Yeah, sorry, can't blame me for
          making it more dramatic can ya?

...All except one, a WOMAN, (CELINE, 20s, blonde). She is a
still spot of darkness.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          You're too young to remember the
          Despair, but let me tell you, in
          2043, no one was prepared for how
          devastating an epidemic of
          depression could be.

A knife flashes in Celine's hand. She plunges it into a
PASSERBY. And again. A WOMAN SCREAMS.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          It was self-destruction on a global
          scale.

BYSTANDERS panic, fleeing in every direction.

Celine continues to lash out, her expression beatific as she
slashes anyone within her radius.

                    ARRON(V.O.)
          Over half the world's population
          dead in under a month.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Celine glides through the wheat, hands brushing the rough
seed heads. She's still holding the bloodied knife.

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
          You said you had information that
          would change the way we thought
          about Celine Dubray...

ARRON (V.O.)
               I'm getting there. Geez, this is
               context, it's important to telling
               a convincing story, alright.

The knife isn't the only thing covered in blood, Celine's
stylish work dress is drenched in it from the attack.

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
               Fine, The Despair happened and
               world leaders scrambled to
               stabilise the mental health of
               those left.

Celine sees a wall ahead of her, she's reached her
destination. The knife drops from her limp fingers and
disappears sideways through the wheat.

                    NOVAK(V.O.)
               Healthy living and the disposal of
               those dangerous negative emotions
               became the order of the day.

Celine bends down, pushing wheat aside to reveal her
futuristic boots - leather and metal, with thick metal soles.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
               Which is where Capek Corp came in.
               Their Golem therapy robots went
               into production.

Celine takes a last look around her before pressing the
buttons on the sides of the boots.

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
               And negativity within the walls of
               Prague was eradicated. You're not
               telling me anything new--

For a second it seems like an invisible force is dragging
Celine backwards through the wheat field.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
               Until Celine Dubray.

But the perspective is all wrong. The wheat field is growing
out of a vertical wall. Celine is plummeting a hundred feet
to her death.

As Celine falls the whole, shining, illuminated world of
Prague Walled City is revealed behind her...

                    ARRON (V.O.)
               Thing is, by the time you've heard
               me out, you'll realise she was more
               murder victim, than suicidal
               maniac.

...The preserved historic Old Town surrounded by skyscrapers.
A highway meanders through skyscrapers, lit by the flashing
lights of emergency service vehicles.

And all contained by the gigantic living walls of wheat
growing towards lamps which emulate the sunlight.

> NOVAK (V.O.)
> Go on then, convince me.

> ARRON (V.O.)
> Sure thing, let's see, the
> fireworks didn't really kick off
> for me until the day after Celine's
> 'suicide.'

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. PRAGUE WALLED CITY - DAY

Sunlight reflects off the glassy walled buildings, billboards
and the electromagnetic monorail that has replaced the trams.

Insert -- Prague Walled City, 2060

INT. CAPEK CORPORATION THERAPY CENTRE - SIMULTANEOUS

ROZ VALIANT, 40s, an unassuming brunette, wearing Capek Corp
overalls, stands at the large picture window that takes up
the whole wall of this small room.

> ARRON (V.O.)
> That's Roz Valiant, you should keep
> an eye on her. After all, this is
> more her story than mine.

The other main wall is smooth and blank, a perfect surface
for projections. Facing that wall are ten desks and chairs.
On the desk is an electronic device, shaped like a metal rod.

Roz stares at the world outside as ten GOLEMS, generic
humanoid robots, a mix of three available sizes, file into
the room after ARRON BÉŽOVÝ, 40s, forgettable.

> ARRON (V.O.)
> I never thought they looked like
> much, the Golems, the saviours of
> our sanity.

Roz gestures so blackout blinds descend across the windows,
as Arron ushers the Golems into the seats.

Roz hits the lights, the room is bathed in a soft blue.

ARRON (V.O.)
                    At Capek, we just saw them as
                    walking emotional sponges.

One SMALL GOLEM seems to be glitching, if they were human it
might seem like they were crying. Roz bends down by it.

                         ROZ
                    Let me tell you a story.

The Small Golem turns to face Roz, there is no intelligence
in those eyes.

                         ARRON
                    You're not going to start that shit
                    with them again are you?

                         ROZ
                    Does it hurt you in any way?

                         ARRON
                    I gotta listen to your voice,
                    haven't I?

Roz pats the Small Golem on the head as she stands.

                         ROZ
                    Quit complaining and roll the
                    picture.

Arron gestures a 'whatever' as he presses a finger into a
control panel by the door.

The blue light dims and the wall in front of the Golems comes
to life.

A series of sad images play, funerals, tragic deaths, family
quarrels.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
                    "When Gregor Samsa awoke one
                    morning from troubled dreams he
                    found himself transformed in his
                    bed into a monstrous insect."

Arron rolls his eyes and leaves.

                         ARRON (V.O.)
                    The thing about being a sponge is,
                    at some point it can't take in any
                    more, it bursts. We facilitated the
                    controlled explosion, as it were.

Roz leans against the back wall continuing her story.

ROZ
          He tried to talk to his family but
          all they heard were the chatters of
          an insect. So he hid himself away.
                    (beat)
          But just thinking of that creature
          in the other room was enough to
          make his family shiver.
                    (beat)
          Gregor heard them talk, day in, day
          out about what a problem he was. It
          ate at him until he stopped eating.
                    (beat)
          He would do this act of kindness
          for his family...

The sad-fest reaches a crescendo. Almost as one the Golems
reach for the electronic device on the desk.

They place the device against their heads and discharge a
powerful electric shock frying their bioengineered brains.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          Of course, to preserve our mental
          health it was better if the Golems
          did it to themselves.

The Golem bodies slump in their seats. Roz flicks off the
video feed and brings up the lights.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          Like I said, Golems kill themselves
          every day so real humans don't.

Arron opens the door, manoeuvring a hover trolley into the
room.

Almost mechanical in their movements, Roz and Arron get to
work cleaning up the Golems.

Roz finds the pressure points on the Golem heads so that the
top slides open to reveal their 'brains.' She removes the
fried brains and drops them into a container on the trolley.

Meanwhile Arron fills the cavities with new brains.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          They call us Weepys, because we
          clean up after the emotional
          fallout.

Until he gets to the Small Golem that was dry crying earlier.

                    ARRON
          I've got a goner. Serious network
          break down.

Roz stops what she's doing and moves the trolley closer, opening a panel in the front.

Arron and Roz slide the Small Golem into the trolley.

Maintenance finished, Roz restarts the Golems. A green light passes across the Golem's eyes before they come back to 'life.' Their bodies straighten in the chairs.

>   ARRON (CONT'D)
>   Let's go, kids.

Arron moves out with the hover trolley, followed, pied-piper fashion by the refurbished Golems. Roz brings up the rear, her last job to raise the blinds on the windows.

The room is bathed in sunlight, returned to another innocent looking office space.

INT. CAPEK CORPORATION CORRIDORS - MOMENTS LATER

Arron, Roz and the convoy of Golems thread through the busy back corridors of Capek Corp therapy centre.

Through two-way glass 'windows' Roz sees a scared LITTLE GIRL cowering in a chair when a door opens and a CAPEK THERAPIST, female, 20s, with a SMALL GOLEM, identical to the broken one seen earlier, enter.

INT. THERAPY ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The Capek Therapist beams beatifically at the Little Girl, she says something leading the Small Golem to the girl.

The Small Golem gently takes the Little Girl's hands, like a playmate. The Little Girl looks nervously from the Small Golem to the Capek Therapist before she nods.

The Small Golem places its hands either side of the Little Girl's head. Its finger tips glow green. The Little Girl's cares drain away, her negative emotions flow into the Small Golem, green light runs up its arms and neck during the transfer.

The Little Girl's pained expression slips to a bright beaming smile.

INT. CAPEK CORPORATION CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Roz holds the metallic data tattoo on her wrist to a scanner by the door. The door opens.

>   ROZ
>   Golem unit returns.

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INT. GOLEM STORE - CONTINUOUS

Roz leads the Golems into the room. On one side is a desk
with CAPEK THERAPIST 2 behind it. Standing to attention down
the sides of the room are various Golem Robots.

                    CAPEK THERAPIST 2
          Sign here.

Roz swipes her wrist across a tablet.

                    CAPEK THERAPIST 2 (CONT'D)
          Have a glorious day.

                    ROZ
          You too.

Roz's smile perfectly matches Capek Therapist 2's.

INT. CAPEK CORPORATION ELEVATORS - MOMENTS LATER

Roz catches up with Arron, and the hover trolley, waiting for
the elevator.

                    ARRON
          Feeling lucky today, Valiant?

                    ROZ
          When aren't I?

Arron removes a battered coin, circa 2020, from his pocket.

                    ARRON
          Call it.

                    ROZ
          Heads.

Arron flicks the coin into the air and catches it.

                    ARRON
          You sure?

Roz gives him a quizzical eyebrow. He peers at the coin.

                    ARRON (CONT'D)
          Son of a bitch.

The elevator doors open.

INT. CAPEK CORP GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Arron and Roz exit the elevator with the hover trolley.

                    ARRON
          You've got the luck of the devil.

ROZ
          Don't worry, I'm sure you'll get to
          go for a drive one of these days.

They stop at one of the Capek Corp branded HOVER VANS. The
sliding side door is open revealing a lot of broken Golems.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
          Probably when it's raining.

Arron fake laughs - ha ha - while sliding the broken Small
Golem from the hover trolley into the van.

Roz taps her tattoo and an augmented reality (AR) manifest
for the van appears in front of her.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
          Are there 15 Golems in there?

Arron jumps into the van, checks, he sticks his hand with a
thumbs up out the door.

                         ARRON(V.O.)
          Capek kept the treatment centre and
          Golem reprocessing plant separate;
          I mean no one wants to eat dinner
          next to the abattoir, right?

Roz comes back and taps her data tattoo to run a scan of the
van which reveals 15 Golems and 1 human (Arron).

                         ARRON
          You don't trust me? I'm hurt,
          Valiant... Wow, look at that poor
          fucker.

Roz follows Arron's finger to a seriously broken Golem. A
medium sized model whose face has been SMASHED IN, as if it
were in a fight.

                         ROZ
          Someone's emotions got the better
          of them.

                         ARRON
          Watch out for yourself, rumour is,
          The Despair is back.

Roz climbs into the driver's seat as Arron presses a panel to
shut the van door.

                         ROZ
          I'm the most emotionally stable
          employee here, check the records.

INT. CAPEK CORP HOVER VAN - SIMULTANEOUS

Roz shuts the door, engages the electric engine and the van
begins to hover.

                    ARRON
          Or the mental gamers, Prague's
          crawling with them.

A strip of light appears in her eye line, AR again, showing
the route.

                    ROZ
          Aren't you one of those mental
          gamers?

Before he can retort, Roz eases the van out of the loading
bay and through the garage following the route arrows.
Speeding up as she heads for the bright exit.

INT. CAPEK CORP GARAGE - LATER

Roz and Arron load another Capek Corp hover van with burnt
out Golems.

                    ARRON
          I get it, we're sponsoring the
          Genso update for the publicity--

                    ROZ
          But the public are going through
          the product too fast?

Roz logs the Golems in the van, checking against a manifest.

                    ARRON
          Those gamers are unhinged.

                    ROZ
          You don't say.

As the side door closes, Arron starts to slump off.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          What, no coin toss?

                    ARRON
          No point is there.

Roz climbs into the driver's seat.

                    ROZ
          That's awfully defeatist, you
          better see a Golem while I'm out.

BUZZ. BUZZ. Roz and Arron, almost in sync check their data
tattoos.

In Augmented Reality Arron and Roz see: URGENT ASSIGNMENT –
ALL AVAILABLE WEEPYS TO 113 SMETANA APARTMENTS.

INT. CAPEK CORP HOVER VAN – SIMULTANEOUS

Roz leans over and pushes the passenger door open. Arron
jumps in, although he eyes the wheel enviously.

                    ROZ
          If I drive you can catch more of
          those creatures, right?

The thought trickles visibly across his face.

                    ARRON
          You're the best.

Roz's vision lights up with AR streams of information.
Arron's AR is tuned to the Genso! loading screen.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          And that's when it began, with the
          call out to Celine's apartment.

I/E. CAPEK CORP HOVER VAN ON PRAGUE ROADS – CONTINUOUS

Roz and Arron's van zips out of the garage and down the
futuristic streets. Roz merges with the traffic onto the city
ring road, as Arron starts to play Genso! in his AR.

Roz drives past a terrace where PRAGUE CITIZENS exercise:
some do Tai Chi, others are on running or cycling machines,
enjoying the lovely weather.

AR adverts pop up in Roz and Arron's vision across the
buildings and the route map which is still visible.

 – Join Capek Gyms today – A healthy mind starts with a
healthy body!

– GENSO! – "Play the latest update tomorrow! All new Prague
alchemical elements to find!" A series of cute creatures
named and modelled around the elements plays.

– The Capek Logo appears – GOLEMS SAVING HUMANITY FROM OUR
DESTRUCTIVE EMOTIONS. Images of the three sizes of Golem play
as JULIA HORAK, 25, ambitious and gorgeous, beams out of ad
at the viewer.

                    JULIA
          Feeling held back by negativity and
          self doubt? With Golem Therapy
          those negative emotions will be
          thing of the past. Happier,
          healthier and more productive.
                    (MORE)

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JULIA (CONT'D)
          Join us in the emotional
          revolution. Coming soon to a city
          near you!

Roz and Arron exchange an eye roll.

The van crosses the Vlatva River, which is transformed into a
massive hydro-electric power plant. Traffic thins out.

The bombardment of adverts is replaced by a rolling news
feed.

"Record numbers expected in Prague Walled City for the next
social event for Genso!"

"Top story: Is The Despair back? Prague citizen goes berserk
killing 4, maiming 15 before committing suicide."

"Emotionally concerned, Capek Corporation offer free Golem
therapy for all in these troubling times."

EXT. CELINE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATER

A utopian, clean lined, vegetation decked apartment complex
that would do Frank Lloyd Wright proud.

Roz's hover van slows as it approaches the arched entrance--

It's blocked by Capek Corp SECURITY GUARDS.

They're checking every vehicle entering and leaving. The
hover van is third in a queue of mainly Capek Corp vans.

INT. HOVER VAN - SIMULTANEOUS

                    ARRON
          ...and this one is my ultimate
          favourite, look at its little
          face...

A holographic, 3-D, version of a Genso! character bounces
across the dashboard.

                    ARRON (CONT'D)
          ...it's so round. Come on, Valiant,
          you're not even lis--

                    ROZ
          What d'ya reckon all this is about?

Roz moves the van forward as a sleek electric car ahead is
given the all clear. There's only one van between them and
this new checkpoint.

ARRON
              Making our lives more difficult.

                         ROZ
              I'm sure that's the opposite of
              Capek's mission statement.

They chuckle.

The next car is cleared. Roz moves up to the checkpoint. She
lowers her window and beams at SECURITY GUARD ONE.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
              Good afternoon, how can we help?

I/E. CHECK POINT - CONTINUOUS

Security Guard One's AR display shows Roz and Arron's Capek
Corp IDs next to their faces. Arron cracks a crazy grin.

                         SECURITY GUARD ONE
              This is just a routine check, Ms.
              Valiant, in relation to the suicide
              of a company employee.

                         ARRON
              That suicide was one of us?

                         SECURITY GUARD ONE
              I'm afraid so. Can you open the
              back?

Roz taps a panel on the display above her data tattoo and the
side door to the van slides open.

                         ROZ
              No worries, we're all just trying
              to do our jobs, right?

That earns Roz a sincere smile from Security Guard One.

SECURITY GUARDS TWO and THREE check the inside of the van.

Roz taps her data tattoo transferring information. Security
Guard One's tattoo BEEPS.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
              There's the manifest for our
              current Golem cargo. Just to make
              things easier for you guys.

                         ARRON
              What are you looking for?

Security Guard One brings up a hologram image of a drop-dead
gorgeous blond guy, MARCIN, over their data tattoo and shows
it to Roz.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
          Have either of you seen this man?
          He's a recent Capek employee.

The hologram of Marcin walks from Security Guard One's data
tattoo across the dashboard of the hover van.

                    ROZ
          I wish. Guys like that don't tend
          to pay me much attention. Sorry.

                    ARRON
          Nope. Is he connected with the--?

Arron gestures suicidal leap and splat with his hands.

                    SECURITY GUARD ONE
          All I can say for now is this man
          is a danger to the public. If you
          do see him you need to alert us
          immediately.

Security Guards Two WHISTLES and gestures all clear, as
Security Guard Three jumps out of the hover van.

                    SECURITY GUARD ONE (CONT'D)
          Thank you for your patience and
          understanding. You may proceed.

Roz closes the sliding door, as Security Guard One steps away
from the van waving them through.

The hover van moves through the entrance.

INT. CELINE'S APARTMENT BLOCK ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Roz and Arron watch the numbers ascend.

                    ROZ
          Looks like Capek's taking this
          death pretty seriously.

                    ARRON
          Which begs the question, why are
          they calling in Weepys? We deal
          with the robots, not the
          customers...

The elevator reaches the penthouse. The doors open on
luxurious corridor swarming with CAPEK SECURITY GUARDS.

INT. CELINE'S APARTMENT - PENTHOUSE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Roz and Arron pick their way through to...

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INT. CELINE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roz and Arron stall on the threshold to the minimalist living
space. One wall is made up of floor to ceiling windows.

A vast array of computing equipment and Golem spare parts
indicate Celine has been indulging in a little extra
curricular robotics. Capek EMPLOYEES swarm through the rooms.

                    ARRON
          Celine Dubray was a lawyer, right?

                    JULIA (O.S.)
          Correct, Mr. Béžový.

JULIA HORAK, 25, blonde and brimming with vitality, emerges
from a side room. Her presence is electric, boosting the
energy of anyone near her.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          But it seems like she fashioned
          herself as an amateur roboticist.

Julia gestures to the scattered tech.

                    ROZ
          I'm sorry we're late, Ma'am.

                    JULIA
          Call me Julia, please, Ma'am is way
          too formal. And you're right on
          time.

Julia beams at Roz before turning to the rest of the room.
She claps her hands.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Hi everyone, if I could just have
          your attention for a moment?

All Capek employees stop and turn to listen.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Thanks. First thing, if any of you
          knew Celine, and plenty of folks
          did, she was wonderful, don't be
          shy. Please feel free to use a
          Golem whenever you need to. Grief
          is a tough thing to face so don't
          do it alone, please.

Julia hops up to sit on a table.

                    PODZIM (O.S.)
          Plus, they don't want another PR
          incident to cover up.

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Roz and Arron look over their shoulders to where PODZIM, 20s, male, nondescript redhead, and ZIMA, 20s, female, ash blonde, lean by the doorway Julia previously exited.

Podzim shoots Arron and Roz a nasty smirk. Arron rolls his eyes, as he and Roz turn their attention back to Julia.

>   JULIA
>   Secondly, well, this is the tricky
>   part. As you can see there's a lot
>   of bits of Golems around here,
>   which is why we've got you guys in.

>   PODZIM
>   Cleaning up our mess--

Zima digs Podzim in the side, he feigns pain.

>   JULIA
>   Big thing is, we think Celine
>   tampered with a large Golem. Beyond
>   switching off the GPS, we don't
>   know what she did which is why we
>   need your expertise. If you find
>   anything that could shed light on
>   what she's done let us know.

>   CAPEK WORKER
>   Of course.

This is taken up as a cheer by everyone, including Roz and Arron, they are of one positive mind.

>   JULIA
>   Final thing, before I let you get
>   back to doing what you do best...

Julia taps her data tattoo and a life sized projection of Marcin appears next to her.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   This is Marcin, a very dangerous,
>   manipulative character who
>   masqueraded as a Capek employee.
>   Geez, he even had me fooled.

That gets a little chuckle from the employees.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   But be warned, it was his actions
>   that forced Celine to ignore the
>   benefits of our technology and kill
>   herself.

>   ZIMA
>   Noted.

Julia springs off the table.

JULIA
               It's all hands to the wheel guys,
               we need to get this sorted before
               the launch next week. And before
               the press get wind of this.

As one, sensing the briefing is over, every employee gets
back to their work clearing the apartment.

                         PODZIM
                    (to Zima)
               Let's blow this party, we got what
               we need for the hunt.

Zima hits him to shut him up again. Podzim shoots her a
'what' look but Zima's already on her way out.

                         ARRON
               Those security guys are so full of
               themselves.

                         ROZ
               Pride's a pretty negative emotion,
               right? If they continue this way...

Arron's scowl turns into a smile.

                         ARRON
               Let's get to work.

Roz and Arron pick up a crate and move to the windows.

Julia watches for a moment before she switches on an AR feed
which shows the stock figures for Capek Corporation rising.

Roz and Arron start packaging and labelling Golem parts
stacked by the window.

                         ARRON (CONT'D)
               Do you think this dude is gonna
               steal the Golem?

                         ROZ
               Maybe, or do something with it that
               makes Capek look bad. Hey--

Roz waves at TOMAS, a tall, jolly, blonde Weepy, who is
shoving old books into a box marked - BURNABLE.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
               What are you doing with those?

Arron groans as Roz gets up and crosses to Tomas.

                         TOMAS
               Just disposing of non-valuables.

ROZ
          If you're gonna burn them, I'll
          take them.

Roz snatches the book from Tomas's hands. It's an old,
leather bound collection of fairy tales.

                    ARRON
          She's a book nerd.

Roz runs her palm over the battered cover, tracing the
embossed designs.

                    TOMAS
          But you can just download them.

                    ARRON
          You're wasting your breath.

Tomas looks round for authority and his eyes meet Julia's.
She's watching the exchange with interest.

Julia gestures for him to let Roz have the books.

                    JULIA
          We've all got our passions, the
          things that keep us happy. And
          happiness is our aim, Tomas.

Tomas startles, surprised and happy that she knows his name.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Mine's Genso.

                    ARRON
          No way.

Arron's about to apologise but Julia just laughs, it's
delightful. She sends her Genso! profile to his AR.

                    JULIA
          I like the rare earth charas.

She smiles, embarrassed. Arron beams at being let into her
confidence.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          So sponsoring the game update was
          kinda a selfish move.

Roz thumbs through the book, a page is marked. The Pied-Piper
when--

Her head snaps up and she looks out the window, scanning the
street and buildings. But there's no one watching her, just
Capek employees loading vans.

Roz shakes off the feeling and returns to the books.

EXT. ACROSS THE ROAD FROM CELINE'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

SOMEONE's P.O.V., hidden in the shadows of a side street, watches Roz intently as she carefully handles the books.

INT. CELINE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Two WEEPYS struggle to lift a crate of robotics equipment when--

--they crash into the shelving unit next to Julia.

The unit lurches, Golem parts tumble off the shelves, plummeting towards Julia's head.

Roz stalls, face blank, trance-like for a moment before--

Roz dives, lightening quick, shoving Julia out of the way--

--pining her to the wall, while danger passes.

Arron can't believe what he just saw.

                    ARRON
          Holy crap, Valiant, faster than the
          speed of light.

                    ROZ
          I guess the track's paying off.
               (to Julia)
          Are you okay?

Julia looks up at Roz, blinking, stunned. Slowly she reaches up and brushes some lint from Roz's hair.

Roz steps back awkwardly and brushes herself down as Capek employees rush over. Julia waves them off.

                    JULIA
          Thank you, Roz. I'll never stop
          being amazed by how wonderful our
          employees are.

With a winning smile Julia starts a round of applause that the other Capek employees take up. Roz looks down, awkward.

                    ROZ
          We'd better not slack off then.

That gets a good natured chuckle from everyone.

Roz pushes Arron towards the full crate. She puts the box of books on top before they lift it up.

Julia watches them go, her eyes darting from where Roz was stood by the bookcase to the shelving unit and back.

EXT. CELINE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - LATER

The sun is starting to set as Roz and Arron finish loading up
their van.

> ARRON
> Wow you've done a number on your
> outfit.

He hooks a finger into a huge tear down the shoulder, where
Roz took the impact of the debris earlier.

> ROZ
> Shit. Drop me home on the way so I
> can get changed.

> ARRON
> Yeah, yeah, you just wanna get
> started on the books.

> ROZ
> Fat chance, this is gonna be an all
> nighter, for the rep of the
> company.

Arron GROANS as they get into the van. A moment later the van
hovers and sets off.

No one notices that there's a slight gap in the side door, as
if it had been prised open.

EXT. STREET BY ROZ'S APARTMENT - LATER

A street of retrofitted apartment blocks - somewhere between
eighteenth century chic and futuristic minimalism.

The hover van is parked outside Roz's apartment.

Roz adjusts the box of books in her arms, she's next to the
driver's window. Arron's in the driver's seat.

> ROZ
> I'll be at Capek in an hour tops.

> ARRON
> Bring snacks, it's gonna be a long
> night.

Roz gives him a cross between a wave and a salute, balancing
the books with one arm, as she backs away from the van.

She watches as Arron drives off before she heads to a once
grand doorway. At the threshold she pauses and looks around,
there's nothing in the alley but still...

An ELDERLY LADY emerges from the doorway, Roz rushes in and
holds it for her.

ELDERLY LADY
          Thank you, Roz.

                    ROZ
          No worries, us young people should
          be looking after you old folk.

                    ELDERLY LADY
          Tell that to my grandchildren.

Roz watches the Elderly Lady shuffle off down the street.
After taking one last look around, Roz heads inside.

Just before the door closes behind her a HAND catches it. A
FIGURE follows Roz inside.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The original features are still in place, except the
staircase which is a gleaming modern take on the spiral.

The Figure scans the lobby. FOOTSTEPS echo above. The Figure
stalks toward the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE - SECONDS LATER

The Figure reaches the second floor when--

Roz darts out of the shadows and pins the Figure to the wall.

                    ROZ
          Why the hell are you following me?

A shaft of light illuminates the Figure's face. It's MARCIN.

Recognition and surprise fight on Roz's face.

                    MARCIN
          I'm Marcin.

He cracks a broad grin and awkwardly holds out a hand for Roz
to shake, even though he's still pinned to the wall.

Taken aback Roz releases her hold on him. Marcin takes the
opportunity to grab her hand.

                    ROZ
          Yeah I know who you are.

Roz slips her hand out of his grip.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          My question still stands, why are
          you following me?

MARCIN
          I, erm, sorry I don't know your
          name...

                    ROZ
          It's Roz.

                    MARCIN
              (testing it out)
          Roz.
              (looking her over)
          It suits you.

Roz's look of disbelief deepens, this is ridiculous.

A door opens, FEET CLATTER on the floor above. Roz stalls a
moment, thinking, before she grabs the box of books from the
shadows and marches for her apartment door.

                    ROZ
          Come on, let's continue this
          somewhere more private.

Roz gestures Marcin inside, quick, he beams at her as he
enters.

Roz glances around furtively before shutting the door.

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The corridor is plain, the walls lined with shelves filled
with books. There are piles of books on the floor too.

                    ROZ
          Just go through there.

She gestures down the corridor. Marcin disappears down the
corridor into the next room.

Roz listens at the door as FOOTSTEPS from above pass and
descend to the ground floor. A door opens and closes.

She taps her data tattoo, the AR feed scrolls to life. She
sends a command to Capek Security.

MARCIN SIGHTED. HOLDING AT MY APARTMENT. BACKUP FOR
COLLECTION ASAP.

Satisfied, Roz slips the three locks on the door and,
composing herself, moves to...

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a good job the ceiling is high or else it would feel
claustrophobic.

The room is jam packed with screens, computer terminals, both old and new, cables etc. and books. So many books.

Heavy blackout curtains cover the windows.

Roz switches on an old fashioned pull cord lamp, the light is warm unlike her expression. Marcin is leafing through a book.

                    ROZ
          Like what you see?

Marcin nods emphatically.

                    MARCIN
          Celine loves, loved, books. That's
          why I decided to follow you...

Roz shoots him a confused look.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          Because of the way you handled her
          books. I could see that you loved
          them too. I thought we might be
          able to connect.

He beams at her as he hands the book back to Roz, under his gaze Roz feels like she's the centre of his universe. It's mesmerising.

A notification pings in Roz's AR. TEAM WITH YOU IN 5 MINUTES.

                    ROZ
          You're pretty weird, anyone tell
          you that?

                    MARCIN
          Celine told me I should embrace it.

                    ROZ
          Right...

Roz surreptitiously positions herself between Marcin and the door, while gesturing for him to sit.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          So you just followed me because I
          liked her books..?

                    MARCIN
          And I've nowhere else to go. Celine
          left me alone.

That catches her off guard. Roz works hard to keep her expression impassive.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          You look stressed, Roz. You should
          off load those emotions.

ROZ
               Where did you leave it, Marcin?
                   (off his confusion)
               Celine's Golem.

                         MARCIN
               I don't know what you're talking
               about.

                         ROZ
               A good looking guy like you must
               have a lot of friends. Did you
               leave it with them?

                         MARCIN
               I am alone!

Marcin slams his fists into the chair, toppling a pile of
books.

                         MARCIN (CONT'D)
               Why don't you believe me?

                         ROZ
               Because you're lying to me Marcin.

                         MARCIN
               I can't lie.

Their eyes meet and hold. There's honest frustration there,
Roz softens when--

HERE - pops up in Roz's AR feed.

                         ROZ
               Well it doesn't look like your nose
               has grown.

Marcin feels his nose before he gets the joke.

                         MARCIN
               Yes, I'm quite like Pinocchio.

                         ROZ
               You don't say. Be right back, I
               want to find you a book.

Marcin's 100 watt smile lights up his face. Roz cringes as
she turns into...

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Roz quietly slips the locks and opens the door.

Outside are Podzim and Zima. Roz stalls, taken by surprise.

PODZIM
               And?

Uneasy, Roz holds a finger to her lips and lets them in.

                         ZIMA
               Chill out, Valiant, we're not
               stealing your glory. You'll still
               get the credit for finding him.

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marcin jumps to his feet as Roz, Podzim and Zima enter the
room. He glances at Roz genuinely hurt.

                         ROZ
               He's kinda weird, and he's not
               letting on where he stashed the
               Golem--

Podzim and Zima draw their guns and aim at Marcin.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
               Hey, you won't be able to find
               anything out if he's dead.

                         ZIMA
               Shows what you know, Valiant.

A HIGH PITCHED WHINE. The electric guns are primed. Red
lights on the side indicate they are set to lethal.

                         ZIMA (CONT'D)
               Look at it pretending to be scared.

                         MARCIN
               Roz...

Podzim and Zima shoot.

A blank look crosses Roz's face, just like it did in Celine's
apartment when she saved Julia, then--

She dives, knocking Marcin down.

The electro bullets singe through the chair and fry the
circuits on the lamp. SPARKS fly.

Roz is on top of a sprawled Marcin. She rolls to the side,
pulling him with her as--

ZAP. Electro bullets hit the space they just vacated.

                         ZIMA
               Don't become collateral, Valiant.

                              188

Roz grabs Marcin's hand, hauling him to his feet with ease, and into the cramped galley kitchen.

                    PODZIM
          Stop stopping us doing our fucking
          job.

Zima signals to Podzim to close in.

INT. KITCHEN - SIMULTANEOUS

There's barely room to swing a hamster. Roz searches frantically for anything to help.

                    ROZ
          Can't we all just go to Capek and
          sort this out?

                    PODZIM
          It's a bit late for that.

Marcin watches her from where she flung him on the floor, totally amazed.

                    MARCIN
          Thank you--

                    ROZ
          Stop staring and do something
          use...ful.

Roz's eyes settle on the electric oven door. She hesitates, then wrenches it off its hinges.

HIGH PITCHED WHINE.

Roz yanks Marcin back and down as--

She throws the oven door towards entrance of the kitchen as--

Podzim and Zima shoot.

The electro bullets hit the electric oven door. The metal lights up like a flash bang grenade, bits of circuits sparking.

Blinded Podzim and Zima CRY OUT and stumble back.

Roz is on her feet, shoving Marcin ahead of her.

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They barrel past Podzim and Zima, knocking them aside.

                    ROZ
          Go, go, go-go-go.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Roz and Marcin burst out of the apartment and dash down the
stairs at break neck speed.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Marcin starts for the front door, but Roz drags him back into
the shadow of the stairwell as--

Above Podzim and Zima storm out of the apartment.

Roz and Marcin can just hear their FOOTSTEPS. A laser sight
arcs across the lobby inches from them.

Hugging the wall Roz edges toward the back door, gesturing to
Marcin to follow.

                    PODZIM
          I can't fucking see them.

Roz tries the handle. It turns with an agonising CREAK.

PFFT. ZAP. The electro-bullet just misses Roz's head.

The time for stealth is over, Roz slams all her weight into
the door. She and Marcin crash out onto...

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND ROZ'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roz trips over a trash can and careens into a pile of
rubbish.

Marcin dodges and runs down the alley... but he stops and
starts back for Roz.

                    ROZ
          Just go, you idiot.

Marcin hauls Roz to her feet, taking her hand firmly in his.

                    MARCIN
          We are in this together.

Marcin sprints down the alley. Surprisingly, Roz keeps up
with ease.

                    ROZ
          The street, they can't shoot us in
          front of a lot of people.

PFFT. ZAP. An electro bullet hits the ground just in front of
them.

Roz glances back, Podzim is on the fire escape shooting at
them as Zima emerges from the ruin of the back door.

Roz and Marcin dodge lethal electro-bullets, Zima on their heels.

Roz grabs Marcin swinging him out of Zima's way and into...

EXT. OLD STREETS – CONTINUOUS

...a CROWD on one of the preserved streets of Prague's Old Town.

The cobbled street seems incongruous to the futuristic metropolis of the Prague Walled City.

Until it becomes evident all the people around here are TOURISTS: maps are displayed on data tattoos, cameras snap up the sights.

A COUPLE pass, playing Genso!, for a moment we pass into their P.O.V and see them collect a cute element character.

Roz, still holding Marcin's hand, blends in with the flow of the crowd, matching her body's rhythm to it perfectly.

Zima emerges from the alley a second later to be confronted by this moving river of humanity on holiday.

There's no sign of Roz or Marcin.

Zima slams her fist into the wall. A concerned PASSERBY, slows down.

> PASSERBY
> You should totally find a Golem,
> sweetie. That anger's not good for
> you at all.

> ZIMA
> Oh, I'm trying. I'm trying.

Zima forces a smile and the Passerby, placated, moves on.

> ZIMA (CONT'D)
> (into her comms)
> I lost them. Yeah, let's go high
> tech.

The forced smile mutates into a genuine sadistic grin.

EXT. ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK – LATER

The square is preserved in all its historic finery: the town hall with the iconic Astronomical Clock at one end, and the twin-spired Church of Our Lady Before Tyn at the other.

The only change is an emergency sky road, which threads between the buildings, like a monorail.

Roz and Marcin, following the flow of the crowds, navigate across the square.

                    ROZ
          What the hell did you do to warrant
          the death sentence?

                    MARCIN
          Exist, I think.

Roz scowls at him.

                    ROZ
          I suppose you think you're funny.

                    MARCIN
          Do you think I'm funny?

Roz, exasperated, rolls her eyes.

                    ROZ
          If you tell me about Celine and the
          Golem maybe I can smooth things
          out. Return to normality.

Roz scans the square, looking for someone.

                    MARCIN
          Who are you looking for?

                    ROZ
          The police. It's normal to go to
          the cops when homicidal maniacs are
          chasing you.

                    MARCIN
          Good, I also want to speak to the
          police.

That catches Roz off guard, she stops and faces him.

                    ROZ
          I woulda thought they'd be the last
          people you'd want to talk to.

                    MARCIN
          Celine told me to go to them if
          anything bad happened to her.

Roz searches his face, he really isn't lying. Interesting.

                    ROZ
          Then why didn't you go to them
          sooner?

                   MARCIN
        I didn't know how... And it seemed
        Capek were doing their best to
        prevent the police from meeting me.

Before Roz can process this she spots two POLICE OFFICERS
down a side street.

                   ROZ
        Bingo. Hold that thought, Marcin.

She drags Marcin over to the side street.

EXT. SIDE STREET OFF OLD TOWN SQUARE - SIMULTANEOUS

Two police officers, SZADURA, 23, a skinny and confident
woman, and JACOBS, 21, a wide-eyed, blond guy, talk to a
TOURIST COUPLE.

The Tourist Couple smile, gesturing thanks.

                   JACOBS
        Take these vouchers to try Golem
        Therapy, drain away that stress
        from getting lost.

Jacobs hands the Couple some CAPEK CORP VOUCHERS. They leave
the cops, waving and beaming.

                   SZADURA
        Are they paying you to push those?

                   JACOBS
        Why shouldn't everyone be as happy
        as we are?

Szadura mulls that over, he's right.

Jacobs spots Roz and Marcin striding towards them. He nudges
Szadura, directing her attention to the oncoming couple.

                 JACOBS (CONT'D)
        Hi, how can we help you?

                   ROZ
        Okay this is going to sound a
        little crazy but we need your
        protection.

Szadura and Jacobs exchange a 'we've got a weirdo' look.

                   SZADURA
        Okay, miss, try to keep calm,
        stress isn't good for you.

Roz bites back the urge to retort.

MARCIN
          She is right, you've experienced
          undue amounts of stress.

                    ROZ
          We, we've experienced normal levels
          of stress for being shot at.

                    SZADURA
          Shot at? Are you guys playing an AR
          game?

                    ROZ
          I wish. No, we were attacked in my
          apartment. I think they are still
          after us.

Szadura and Jacobs' smiles drop, this lady is serious.

                    SZADURA
          Let's move to the car.

EXT. POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The futuristic hover vehicle is parked in an alley off the
Old Town Square under the skyline emergency vehicle road.

There's no one but Roz, Marcin and the cops in the alley.

Szadura pulls up an incident form in her AR feed.

                    SZADURA
          You were shot at in your apartment?
               (off Roz's nod)
          Did you recognise the assailant?

                    ROZ
          Yes, I work with them at Capek
          Corp.

                    JACOBS
          So this is a work based dispute?

                    ROZ
          Sort of--

                    SZADURA
          And you sir, do you also work at
          Capek?

                    MARCIN
          In a manner of speaking, yes.

Szadura and Jacobs exchange a suspicious look.

                    ROZ
          He's a whole other deal.

That gets a long suffering look from Szadura.

                    SZADURA
          I think the best thing is for you
          to take us to the scene of the
          crime--

PFFT. ZAP. Szadura jerks from the electric shock then drops
to the ground, dead. Blood begins to pool out behind her
head.

                    JACOBS
          What the--

PFFT. PFFT.

Jacobs spasms then drops, bullet hole clean through his
forehead.

Roz and Marcin exchange a panicked look as--

Podzim and Zima emerge from the gloom of the alley.

                    ROZ
          You just shot two cops.

                    PODZIM
          Which is totally your fault,
          Valiant.

                    ROZ
          Two fucking cops.

Zima shrugs. Podzim nudges Szadura's corpse with his foot,
treating it not differently to the spare Golem parts.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          What is wrong with you two?

                    ZIMA
          We're working to a higher set of
          orders.

                    PODZIM
          For the good of humanity even.

                    MARCIN
          I'd have to contest that point.

Zima and Podzim aim at Marcin, their expressions filled with
manic happiness.

                    PODZIM
          Thinks it's a debate contest or
          something.

ROZ
          Come on, let's take this back to
          Capek--

                    ZIMA
          Keep quiet, Valiant, they'd still
          be alive if you hadn't run.

Roz glances around the alley for a way out. Nothing.

                    PODZIM
          You might have even got a nice
          little commendation from the boss.

                    ZIMA
          You lured him out, after all, and
          led us here.

Zima gestures to the data tattoo on Roz's arm.

                    ZIMA (CONT'D)
          But not now. Now you're dead.

Roz's eyes narrow. Their electric guns emit a HIGH PITCHED
WHINE, fully charged.

                    ROZ
          Fuck it.

Roz looks away, closing her eyes. Podzim and Zima take this
as an acceptance. They get ready to fire. They couldn't be
more wrong.

Out of no where the electric car jumps to life. High beams on
bright, blinding Podzim and Zima before--

The police car hurtles towards Podzim and Zima.

Roz's eyes snap open, she grabs Marcin's hand and drags him
away.

                    MARCIN
          How did the car--

With her free hand Roz rips off her data tattoo and flings it
against parked delivery hover cycle.

She scans Marcin for data tattoos, nothing. Weird. But he is
wounded, a gash on his arm is an angry red. Shit.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Roz pushes Marcin against the wall and rips his sleeve open
to reveal his 'wound.'

ROZ
          Why didn't you say you'd been
          injured?

The skin has torn in a jagged line down his forearm but
there's no blood. Suspicious.

                    MARCIN
          This seemed low on your priorities.

                    ROZ
          Doesn't it hurt?

Marcin shakes his head. Roz peels the skin further back to
reveal a synthetic arm, the same as the Golems earlier.

Roz inspects another wound, its the same.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          You're a Golem? No, that's not
          possible.

She checks another 'wound,' Marcin's definitely a Golem.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          But I saved you... and you're
          talking and thinking... Fuck, fuck,
          fuck...

Roz backs away across the alley, processing it all.

                    MARCIN
          Celine had a similar reaction at
          the beginning.

                    ROZ
          Of course Capek couldn't let this
          get out. Good of humanity my ass,
          the good of the company more like.

Marcin runs his eyes over Roz as she works through it all,
inspecting micro reactions.

                    MARCIN
          I think you should off-load those
          emotions before they have a
          negative effect.

                    ROZ
          If anyone found out about you,
          that's the business model up in
          smoke.

Marcin reaches for her head, his finger-tips glowing green.
Roz ducks, batting his hands away.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Keep those paws to yourself.

MARCIN
          You have experienced a situation
          which provokes stress and fear.

He reaches for Roz again, and once again she slaps him away.

                    ROZ
          I'll use my own Golem, thanks, not
          one that's self aware and shady.

POLICE SIRENS echo in the distance. Roz takes in their
surrounding.

                    MARCIN
          I really think--

                    ROZ
          Yeah, there's your problem.

Roz stares hard at his face.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          We've gotta get off the streets,
          your face is a death sentence.

EXT. TALIA'S LAB - LATER

One of Prague's many winding streets, the sun is setting
turning the sky a glorious mix of pink and orange. Neon
lights and the bioluminescent trees, glow.

Roz and Marcin, faces hidden, stand by a simple wooden door.
Roz unlocks it to reveal a reinforced metal door.

Roz pushes against it, nothing. It's locked.

Roz looks at the grotesque, a small devil, carved on the side
of the building.

                    ROZ
          Quit stalling, unless you want the
          police raiding your--

There's a audible THUNK as the electronic locks disengage.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Tarls likes theatrics.

Roz pushes the door open and slips inside followed by Marcin.

INT. TALIA'S LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Roz reaches the bottom of the stone steps into the
interconnected cellars that form Talia's lab.

Marcin gapes in awe at the set up.

A very high tech laser array occupies one area, another is taken up by a futuristic computer console.

Further back a green medical curtain forms a partition, it's half drawn back revealing a state of the art operating table.

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          I thought you wanted to keep your
          face out of the cop-shop, Vee.

                    ROZ
          Funny.

TALIA, 60s, eccentric, with a shock of dyed red hair, emerges from the operating area.

                    TALIA
          I'm not sure I'm okay harbouring a
          cop-killer, who knows what you'll
          do.

                    ROZ
          Cop killer?

Talia blinks and the private police broadcast appears on the screens. Images of Roz's apartment, Szadura and Jacobs' corpses positioned in the kitchen and living room. Roz and Marcin's Capek corp I.D.s

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Well that takes the fucking
          biscuit. Now I gotta clear my name
          and deal with this bozo.

                    TALIA
          You said you were feeling like a
          change.

                    ROZ
          Not like this, I worked hard on Roz
          Valiant.

Talia isn't listening she's zeroed in on Marcin.

                    TALIA
          You wouldn't know at all, like--

Roz shoots Talia a look that silences that thought.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          Look at that craftsmanship. Who did
          your face hunny?

                    MARCIN
          I don't--

Talia pulls his head down to inspect his face closer.

TALIA
          Gotta be Hoffmann, the old bastard
          always turned out Adonises. Oh the
          nose. Told me he'd stopped working,
          crafty little shit.

                    ROZ
          Take a picture, Tarls, it'll last
          longer. He needs to lose it.

Roz drops herself in a battered armchair.

                    TALIA
          Spit on the plastic surgeon's altar
          why don't you.

                    MARCIN
          If it's too much trouble--

                    ROZ
          Theatrics, what did I say? Tarls,
          that face is gonna get us killed.

Talia pouts at Roz, like she's just been told to drown a pet.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Capek set their hit men on him. The
          nasty ones.

Talia GROANS but takes Marcin through to the operating table.

                    TALIA
          You can take care of yourself,
          right?

Roz grunts an affirmative as she pulls a battered book out of
her jacket and flicks through it.

Talia gestures for Marcin to lie down on the operating table.

                    ROZ
          You know, you've forgotten to ask
          the most important question here.

Talia leans back round the operating theatre curtain.

                    TALIA
          How he's even conscious? I thought
          you'd tell me in your own time,
          hunny, once you got the dramatics
          out of your system.

Roz shoots her a look filled with poison. Talia laughs,
ducking back behind the curtain before Roz can say anything.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          Can you tell me when you became...
          'you,' Marcin?

He shakes his head.

>   MARCIN
>   Is that bad?

>   TALIA
>   Not necessarily, dear. Let's try
>   something easier. Do you mind?

Talia holds up a scalpel, Marcin shakes his head, more
worried.

>   TALIA (CONT'D)
>   This won't hurt a bit.

Talia winks as she cuts an incision on his shoulder. She
peels back the synthetic skin to reveal a barcode and model
number. GOLEM™. VERSION 4.6.

>   ROZ (O.S.)
>   Bollocks. They're only using 3.8 in
>   the treatment centres.

Roz leans over Talia shoulder.

>   MARCIN
>   Celine said I was brand new.

Roz and Talia exchange a knowing look.

>   ROZ
>   An experimental model?

>   TALIA
>   Explains the need to cover it up.
>   (beat)
>   Let's add a nice brain scan to the
>   remodel.

Worry crosses Marcin's face. Talia gives him a reassuring
smile as she finds how his hair is attached and removes it.

Talia slots a cap covered in data tattoos over his head.

She spins on her seat and starts a program on a console by
the operating table. The data tattoos glow.

>   TALIA (CONT'D)
>   Back in one sec.

Talia winks at Marcin, as she slips round the curtain of the
operating section, pushing Roz in front of her.

Talia drops into the chair at the main computer console. She
gestures her way through a series of menus.

TALIA (CONT'D)
          What's going on in that head of
          yours?

                    ROZ
          Honestly? I don't know. I feel like
          I'm scrabbling around solving
          immediate problems without being
          able to think big picture.

                    TALIA
          He's dangerous for you.

Their eyes meet and hold.

                    ROZ
          I know. But what can I do, I can't
          just leave him, it. It's alive.

Talia shoots her a pointed look.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Fuck. I should have just let them
          destroy it.

Talia pats Roz on the arm, reassuring.

                    TALIA
          I told you that one day you'd have
          to stop running from what you are,
          hunny.

                    ROZ
          And today's that day?

                    TALIA
          Looks like.

The scan has started to work, Marcin's neural network slowly
appears on the screen.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          Want my advice?
              (off Roz's shrug)
          Leave. Take him and get out of
          here.

Roz LAUGHS as she slopes off towards one of the side rooms.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          They will never stop looking, he
          represents the end of their system.

Talia checks the scan is working properly before returning to
Marcin behind the screen.

TALIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
          How d'ya feel about being a red
          head?

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUS

Arron ducks under police tape, and picks his way through the
hallway into...

INT. ROZ'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bodies have been removed, along with half of Roz's
belongings. Books lie scattered around the room, casualties
of the search.

Podzim and Zima are conferring in a corner, they stop as
Arron enters and smile sympathetically.

                    PODZIM
          Tough break, dude, being partnered
          with a psycho bitch.

                    ARRON
          Roz isn't a psycho bitch.

Podzim gestures to the carnage around them.

                    ARRON (CONT'D)
          This is all some misunderstanding.

                    NOVAK (O.S.)
          Why is there another body
          cluttering up my crime scene?

INSPECTOR NOVAK, 20s, young and confident, strides out of the
kitchen. He looks Arron over, taking in the Capek Corp
overalls. The scene freezes as--

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          Bet you didn't think we'd end up
          like this, the first time we met.

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
          No, I thought you looked pretty
          worthless. But I was wrong.

The scene comes back to life as Zima slips past Novak to
investigate Roz's computer terminal.

                    ZIMA
          He worked with her, Inspector.

                    NOVAK
          Is your boss going to turn Roz
          Valiant's records over to us?

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ZIMA
               Just got the confirmation.

Zima taps her data tattoo. A second later a notification
appears in Novak's AR feed.

Arron steps forward, holding out his hand to Novak.

                         ARRON
               Arron. I've worked with Roz for 3
               years, she's the steadiest person I
               know.

                         NOVAK
               I hear you're all under a bit of
               pressure at Capek with the global
               launch. And pressure manifests
               itself in the weirdest ways.

Arron shakes his head with disbelief.

                         ARRON
               No. It's impossible.

                         NOVAK
               Your colleagues don't seem to think
               it's impossible.

                         ZIMA
               Didn't you think she was a little
               too calm?

                         ARRON
               I thought we were all aiming for
               too calm.

Podzim throws an arm around Arron's shoulder.

                         PODZIM
               Wound tight like a spring.

Arron shrugs Podzim's arm off, still not convinced.

                         NOVAK
               Opinions are subjective, evidence
               isn't.

Novak, switches his AR feed to public mode so Arron, Podzim
and Zima can see what he's seen.

Roz's Golem therapy files. They show evidence of tampering,
the altered information highlighted in red. Roz has never
attended a session with a Golem in all 3 years of employment.

                         NOVAK (CONT'D)
               It seems like Roz Valiant did have
               something to hide.

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Podzim and Zima exchange a nasty smirk behind Arron's back.

Arron stares at the record in disbelief.

INT. TALIA'S LAB - LATER

Roz, remodelled with long black hair, green eyes and skin two
shades darker, sits at Talia's main console, feet up on the
desk, skimming through the files downloaded from Marcin.

As she tries to open files ERROR FILE NOT FOUND appears.

                    ROZ
          No wonder he's vague, someone's
          done a pretty number on his memory.

Off screen, behind the curtain, Talia WHISTLES.

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          Thorough but brutal, you sure you
          can't do something about it?

                    ROZ
          What do you think I'm doing?

Roz's fingers twist in elaborate patterns through the AR
displays. Her expression fixed in extreme concentration.

Behind the Operating theatre curtain--

Talia picks up a syringe filled with collagen.

                    TALIA
          You doing alright, there hun?

Marcin nods, he's sporting a deep chestnut wig, his skin is
porcelain pale. He's already starting to look very different.

                    MARCIN
          I have been through something
          similar before.

Talia gently pierces the skin on Marcin's cheek and injects
the collagen, his face plumps out.

                    TALIA
          Do ya have any idea why Celine had
          you modelled that way? You're not
          exactly inconspicuous.

                    MARCIN
          There was a reason but...

Marcin frowns, trying to remember.

ON THE CONSOLE: Roz sees Marcin trying to access one of the
deleted files.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: Talia pauses, assessing if his face shape
has been changed enough; yes, he's good.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          Sorry, it's gotten away from me...
          I know it's important, but like the
          young girl in the 'And Seven' fairy
          tale, who had to remember the name
          of the three spinning women, even
          though our lives depend on it I
          cannot remember the information.

Talia takes out a little syringe with brown liquid in it, she
leans over and starts to inject tiny amounts of the liquid
which take on the appearance of freckles.

                    TALIA
          It's okay. You like fairy tales?

Marcin nods emphatically, causing Talia to stop her work.

                    MARCIN
          I like all stories. But Celine
          always asked me for fairy tales
          when she passed me her emotions.

                    TALIA
          That's cool, telling stories while
          you work, huh? To bring out the
          emotions no doubt...

Talia finishes putting in freckles.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          I know someone else who likes a
          good tale.

                    MARCIN
          Roz.

                    TALIA
          Bingo. You guys got that in common.

Roz jerks the curtain back and appraises Talia's work.

                    ROZ
          Not bad for a rush job.

Talia hits Roz playfully on the arm.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Rise and shine sunshine, we gotta
          get moving.

Talia grabs Roz's arm. Their eyes meet.

                    TALIA
          Taking my advice for a change?

ROZ
          I thought you wanted me to change.

Talia hugs Roz, hard. Roz's cold demeanour drops a moment,
she hugs Talia back.

                    TALIA
          I could come with you.

                    ROZ
          Yeah, no. I've put you in enough
          danger, plus you stand out too
          much.

                    TALIA
          I stand out too much?

She points at Marcin.

                    ROZ
          Find out what you can from his
          data. Then come join us.

Roz gestures for Marcin to follow her.

                    TALIA
          Let me know where and I'll be
          there.

Roz gives Talia a half wave/half salute as she leads Marcin
out of the lab.

EXT. PRAGUE WALLED CITY WEST EXIT – LATER

Roz and Marcin walk toward the wall and the futuristic glass
and concrete structure that forms the gate.

                    MARCIN
          I don't think I can do this.

                    ROZ
          Sure you can, trick is, don't
          falter. We'll just walk straight
          outta this city.

Roz barely loses stride. Marcin, uncertain forces himself to
appear composed. His glance slips from the increased number
of POLICE OFFICERS and CAPEK SECURITY GUARDS positioned
around the gate.

                    MARCIN
          I'll need to lie and I can't--

Roz takes his hand and squeezes it, her eyes remain on the
prize, the Gate.

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ROZ
          You're a storyteller, stories are
          just manipulations of the truth.
          You can manipulate the truth a
          little, right?

Marcin looks down at her, new admiration in his eyes.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Don't go soppy on me, 'kay?

Marcin composes his features again. Roz can't help a little
smirk.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          What the hell...

INT. GATE ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

The angular glass roof reflects the dying daylight, it almost
looks like it's on fire.

Advertisement screens have been re-purposed. Interspersed
with adverts are a series of heart wrenching images, injured
children, bombed buildings, a child clutching their dead
mother.

In Roz's AR an advert pops up. Julia's face with the Capek
logo behind her.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          We're really sorry for the new
          checkpoints. But your emotional
          wellbeing is our top priority.

Roz scans the screens down to the new checkpoints that have
been erected - stalls with sliding doors, like sci-fi
confessionals, with a Golem seated in each.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          Experience the joy of emotional
          evolution, remove these distressing
          emotions onto a Golem...

A neat, orderly set of queues lead to the checkpoints,
observed by Capek Corp WEEPYS.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          ...as Capek's parting gift to you.

                    ROZ
               (under her breath)
          Smart, very smart.

Roz, nonchalantly diverts their path away from the queues.
Freedom never looked so far away.

MARCIN
          Roz...

                    ROZ
          Hold it together big guy.

Marcin's grip tightens on her hand. Roz looks up, Marcin is
starting to lose himself in the sad images.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Fuck.

Roz, steers them out of the main hall into...

INT. GATE SIDE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

There are less people around, but still Roz and Marcin are
starting to attract attention.

                    MARCIN
          I'm sorry, Roz, I just, it's all--
          it's all my fault.

Roz ignores Marcin, dragging him into the shadow of a pillar.

                    ROZ
          Get it the fuck together.

A GRANDMOTHER and GRANDSON speed up hearing this. Roz, shoots
them a reassuring smile which reassures no one.

                    MARCIN
          I'm useless, it would be better if
          I were destroyed, then I'd never
          have ruined your life--

                    ROZ
          No wonder Golems are mute, have you
          heard yourself?

Roz peers out from behind the pillar. The queue to the gate
is huge. She looks for other ways round. All routes are
covered by Cops or Security Guards.

Roz turns back to Marcin, he's wrecked with guilt, barely
able to stand still.

She looks from her own hands to the checkpoint and back to
Marcin.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          I guess we're sticking around a
          little while longer.

                    MARCIN
          Roz, leave me, I'm begging you.

ROZ
              I'm not a huge fan of getting my
              mind emptied like that.

Roz glances warily at the checkpoints when she notices
Arron's reflection. She turns and spots him manning one of
the side exits, alone.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
              We might not be done yet.

Roz, controlling her strides, heads over to Arron with Marcin
in tow.

INT. CHECKPOINT, SIDE EXIT - MOMENTS LATER

Arron scans his AR feeds for news of search term ROZ VALIANT.
There's nothing new.

                         ROZ (O.S.)
                    (Irish accent)
              Can you tell me what's happening
              here, so?

Arron blinks the AR feeds away. Roz and Marcin stand in front
of him.

                         ARRON
              I apologise on behalf of the Capek
              Corporation, for any inconvenience,
              ma'am.

                         ROZ
                    (Irish accent)
              Apologies aren't going to get me to
              my flight on time if I need to go
              through that.

                         ARRON
              I can fast track you to a booth to
              help you make your connection.

Arron steps over the temporary barricade and gestures for
them to follow him.

                         ROZ
                    (Irish accent)
              Bit dim, isn't he, Patrick? We want
              to dodge this whole cattle market.

                         ARRON
              I'm afraid that isn't possible.

Arron takes a longer look at Roz and Marcin. Marcin seems on
the verge of tears.

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ARRON (CONT'D)
          Your friend looks like he could do
          with a nice chat with a Golem.
          It'll perk him right up in no time.

                    MARCIN
          Sorry, I told you this wouldn't
          work.

                    ROZ
               (Irish accent)
          And I told you to relax.

Arron stalls and looks Roz over again.

                    ARRON
          Roz?

                    ROZ
          Took you long enough.

                    ARRON
          Then that's...

Arron draws his electric gun.

                    ROZ
          Geez put that thing away, you'll
          hurt someone.

                    ARRON
          You really are in cahoots with him.

                    ROZ
          Let's not jump to conclusions.

Roz holds her hands out, nonthreatening.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Arron, I wanna clear up all these
          misunderstandings. I want to get my
          life back.

Arron meets her eyes, but he doesn't lower the weapon.

                    ARRON
          Then step aside and hand him over.

                    ROZ
          He isn't what you think. He's
          dangerous to the company but not to
          humanity.

                    MARCIN
          I'm sorry, now I've caused a rift
          with your friend.

Roz rolls her eyes. Arron's arm slackens.

ROZ
          I'd come in with you if I thought
          it would sort things out but we'd
          have to fight our way into Capek
          Corp. I watched Podzim and Zima
          kill those cops.

Arron searches Roz's face for a sign she's lying. She isn't.

                    ARRON
          I knew they were involved.

                    ROZ
          They won't let him survive.

                    ARRON
          What the fuck is he?

                    ROZ
          New. The future. Fuck knows.

Arron looks around nervously.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Honestly, this is so much bigger
          than stealing a Golem. When did I
          ever lie to you?

                    ARRON
          Never.
               (beat)
          You need to run, Roz.

Roz shoots him a questioning look.

                    ARRON (CONT'D)
          Run. I called it in as soon as I
          knew it was you.

The sound of RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

                    ARRON (CONT'D)
          I'm sorry.

Roz, shakes her head, it's okay. Arron gestures out an open
glass panel door.

                    ROZ
               (to Marcin)
          I hope you can run and whine.

Arron fires a shot that goes purposefully wide in the other
direction.

Roz gives him her trademark wave/salute as she and Marcin
disappear in the other direction.

ARRON
                     (after Roz)
               Make me believe you, Valiant.

Arron winces then hits himself in the face with the gun,
collapsing to the ground, before Capek Security Guards
descend on the area.

Podzim and Zima break through the crowd of Guards. Arron
feigns grogginess.

                          ARRON (CONT'D)
               She fucking hit me.

Podzim helps Arron up.

                          PODZIM
               What did I say, psycho bitch.

Arron nods in agreement, Podzim continues to support him.

Zima scans the area for signs of struggle and comes up blank.
She shoots a sceptical look at Podzim.

A text notification pops up in Zima's AR. YEAH, I THINK HE
HELPED THEM TOO.

EXT. PRAGUE STREET - LATER

Roz and Marcin stick to the anonymity of the crowds. His head
hangs low, the negative emotions stored inside him weighing
him down.

                          ROZ
               We'll regroup at Tarls's and see--

In Roz's AR a notification appears. ENCRYPTED. TALIA. A voice
message.

                          TALIA (O.S.)
               Vee, you totally made the right
               decision to get out of here. I went
               to check the data against anything
               Hoffman had...he's dead.

Roz stalls, then shoves Marcin into a side street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Marcin opens his mouth the speak but Roz shuts him up with a
look, still listening to the message.

                          TALIA (O.S.)
               They tortured him, Vee. If they
               asked him about other surgeons,
               he'd have given them me.
                     (MORE)

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TALIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
          Capek is shutting down all lose
          ends. I'm going to ground. If you
          haven't made it out, don't go back
          to the lab.

Roz slams her fist into the wall next to Marcin.

                    ROZ
          Fuck.

                    MARCIN
          I've doomed Talia too, haven't I?

                    ROZ
          You're not wrong. But she's
          resourceful. They won't get her.
               (beat)
          Fuck.

Roz kicks the wall for good measure, making a dint in the
brickwork.

                    MARCIN
          You could hand me in.

                    ROZ
          Yeah, I think that boat's sailed...
          we have to find somewhere to lay
          low until I figure out what to do
          next.

Roz closes her eyes, in her AR a map of the city pops up.
Thousands of red dots representing people appear,
interspersed are the green dots of Golems.

There's a big cluster of red dots, without any green dots, in
a building near the river.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          The Rudolfinum... open your
          diagnostics, we need you to
          register as human on the scans.

Marcin, uncertain, opens his public AR feed with the
diagnostics for Roz.

She uses hand gestures to navigate menus until she finds what
she's looking for. The pulsing green light transitions to
red.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          That should make things a little
          harder for them. Come on.

Roz strides out of the side street, Marcin trails behind her.

EXT. RUDOLFINUM - LATER

An imposing 19th century facade with retro-fitted upgrades
covers what was once a concert hall and entertainment venue,
but is now a low budget housing complex. More levels,
matching the aesthetic, have been added to build it up to 5
storeys.

Across the road, under a tree, Roz fixes a bright smile on
her face as she pulls a hat down low over Marcin's head to
hide his sad features.

                    MARCIN
          I don't think I can take another
          person telling me to see a Golem.

                    ROZ
          Just try not to say anything or
          make eye contact.

Roz drags Marcin toward the main entrance to RUDOLFINUM
HEIGHTS.

INT. RUDOLFINUM GROUND FLOOR LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The once spacious interior has been sub-divided into tiny
apartments. A myriad of doors and corridors run off from the
lobby.

A beautiful fountain forms the centre piece of the lobby.
Around it happy CHILDREN play while their FAMILIES watch on.

Despite the cramped conditions everyone is remarkably calm
and jolly. This is the effect of Golem therapy.

Roz returns smiles and 'hellos' as she navigates through the
lobby with Marcin in tow.

Marcin looks with wonder and pity at the children playing in
relative poverty and the PARENTS who are so relaxed, despite
their poor conditions.

Roz notices his gaze.

                    ROZ
          A beneficial side effect of Golem
          therapy, no one's discontented
          enough to demand better living
          conditions.

Roz snakes off toward the nearest side corridor.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          I guess they won't be showing the
          tourists this.

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INT. RUDOLFINUM GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Roz tries the apartment doors as they walk down the corridor.
None of the RESIDENTS seem to mind.

                    MARCIN
          I thought taking negative emotions
          saved humanity.

                    ROZ
          It does, there won't be The Despair
          again.
               (beat)
          But I don't think all negative
          emotions are necessarily bad.

Marcin's face creases into a deep scowl as he thinks about
this.

INT. RUDOLFINUM THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Roz tries a door. It isn't locked. She opens it cautiously.

INT. RUDOLFINUM EMPTY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roz sticks her head into the one room apartment. It's a dark
box without any windows. There's a kitchenette on one side, a
battered sofa, a table and an old bed.

Another door leads to a tiny bathroom.

Satisfied, Roz beckons for Marcin to get inside. She gestures
for him to sit as she looks for the room controls.

A moment later the holographic projection comes up and the
room is transformed into a clean, minimalist stylish
apartment.

In Marcin's P.O.V. the room flickers between the hologram and
the empty box.

Out of the public gaze, Roz's happy facade drops.

                    MARCIN
          At least let me take your stress, I
          was made for your sadness.

Marcin reaches for Roz. She ducks under his arms, shooting
him a warning glare. He drops his arms, despondent.

                    ROZ
          Weren't you just listening to me?
          Just keep quiet while I figure a
          way outta this mess.

Marcin slumps onto the battered sofa.

MARCIN
          What's the point when you won't
          even let me do what I'm designed
          for?

Roz paces the empty apartment.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          I can't even remember what I did
          for them to hate me so much.

                    ROZ
          You exist, that's enough.

Her wig is irritating, she moves to pull it off but stops
herself.

                    MARCIN
          No, there's more than that. I know,
          but I--its all gone.

                    ROZ
          I'm not gonna argue with you, if
          you remembered something we could
          bargain with that would help.

                    MARCIN
             (quietly)
          I should just be gone.

That stops Roz in her tracks. She weighs this up. Her eyes
dart from the holographic walls to Marcin.

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          You gotta understand, she was
          thinking about his future. He, it,
          had no future from her perspective.
          And with him around she didn't have
          much of a future either.

Roz pulls an ELECTRIC GUN surreptitiously from the back of
her waist band.

                    ROZ
          Without that information, it's
          going to be difficult, impossible,
          to move forward.

Roz pushes a table next to him. She casually places the
ELECTRIC GUN on it.

Roz focuses on her AR feed, she finds the file she wants.

The holographic feed flickers and switches off.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Wanna hear a story, Marcin?

Marcin looks up from his crumpled position.

                    MARCIN
          I like stories.

                    ROZ
          Well have I got one for you.

Roz hesitates a moment before selecting play. The first of
the images that Roz used earlier to drive the Golems at work
to 'suicide' appears on the wall opposite Marcin.

The whole scene freezes as--

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
          She's going to kill him?

                    ARRON (V.O.)
          I thought you couldn't kill a
          machine?

Beat.

                    NOVAK (V.O.)
          Get on with your story, Arron.

The scene returns to life --

The holographic feed now projects on all the walls the same
sequence of sad images and video clips that Roz used as a
Weepy begins to cycle. Marcin watches, enthralled.

                    ROZ
          "When Gregor Samsa awoke one
          morning from troubled dreams he
          found himself transformed in his
          bed into a monstrous insect.

Marcin looks at her, questioning.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Eyes on the screens.
              (beat)
          Gregor tried to talk to his family
          but all they heard were the
          chatters of an insect.

                    MARCIN
          That was unacceptable, he must be
          understood. Gregor's family
          searched far and wide for an
          interpreter.

Roz shoots Marcin a look equal parts surprise and confusion,
but he's still watching the show.

ROZ
          But none could be found who spoke
          insect. So Gregor hid himself away.
          Just thinking of that creature in
          the other room--

                         MARCIN
          Made his family feel terrible, they
          had to break this spell on their
          beloved son.

                         ROZ
          What are you doing?

Roz freezes the video.

                         MARCIN
          Helping with the story, his family
          can't sit back and do nothing.

                         ROZ
          But that's exactly what they do.
          They can't accept him for what he
          is and he kills himself.

Roz and Marcin's eyes meet and hold.

                         MARCIN
          Not in this version. It ends well.

Marcin has snapped out of his malaise. He beams at her.

                         ROZ
          This is Kafka, not some fucking
          fairy tale.

                         MARCIN
          I don't understand.

                         ROZ
          I was trying to put you out of your
          misery you idiot.

Roz moves within reaching distance of the electric gun.

                         MARCIN
          You knew I'd cheer up if we told
          stories together? Thank you, Roz.

                         ROZ
          Great, you even manage to screw
          this up.

                         MARCIN
          Now let me make you happy.

Roz whips the electric gun up, aiming at his head. Marcin
stalls.

ROZ
          Aren't you sick of running?

                    MARCIN
          Not any more.

Marcin takes advantage of her confusion to cross the space
and get his hands on either side of her head.

His finger tips glow green but nothing happens.

Roz's expression remains the same, she holds his stare which
is full of questions. The gun is right against his chest.

                    ROZ
          I told you not to touch me.

Marcin's hands, still on her head, glow, testing, probing.

                    MARCIN
          What are you?

                    ROZ
          A lie.

She primes the gun, a charge builds up.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Like you.

Marcin pulls his hand back, a little of Roz's synthetic skin
is stuck to it, revealing red metal beneath.

                    MARCIN
          Celine said there weren't others
          like me. That I was special.

                    ROZ
          Well she didn't know about me. No
          one but Tarls did until you came
          barrelling into my life like a bull
          in a china shop.

Roz's finger tightens on the trigger. Her face determined.

                    MARCIN
          I don't want to die.

Marcin's eyes widen, there really is consciousness there and
it's afraid. He presses harder on Roz's temples, fingers
still glowing.

                    ROZ
          You aren't really alive so--

A BURST OF STATIC hits their ears. Roz and Marcin's vision
blurs.

JULIA (O.S.)
          Isn't he a hottie?

In Roz's AR: The static filled ghost of an image plays.
Glitching and jumping. It's a point of view video file.

A WOMAN pulls the P.O.V towards her, kissing it passionately.

                    JULIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
          Is this some sort of sick joke?

The Woman, revealed as JULIA, shoves the P.O.V. away in
disgust.

The image vanishes a quickly as it came in a BURST OF STATIC.

                    ROZ
          What was that?

Marcin looks as confused as Roz.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          That was a fucking video memory.
          Where were you hiding that?

Marcin zeros in on the synthetic skin stuck to his finger
from Roz's temple.

                    MARCIN
          You're a Golem?

Roz snatches the synthetic skin back and tries to stick the
patch of skin back to her face. It doesn't work.

                    ROZ
          Not exactly, I'm from the Vigilant
          series.

                    MARCIN
          Your surname is Valiant.

Roz face palms, exasperated.

                    ROZ
          I was trying to be clever, I guess.
          "Tell a lie as close to the truth,
          recycle the real," Tarls said.

                    MARCIN
          I'd never be able to do that.
          You're amazing Roz--

                    ROZ
          Looks like that story really did
          perk you up--

MARCIN
          --so much more amazing than I could
          be. I couldn't even 'keep it
          together' earlier--

                    ROZ
          Or not. Okay big guy, we need to do
          something about you before I get
          into the exposition...

Marcin looks at her confused. Roz adjusts her wig to cover
the small patch of exposed metal on her temple.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          I can't take this maudlin crap any
          longer.

INT. RUDOLFINUM GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Roz knocks on the door. Her AR feed shows only one person in
the room.

                    MARCIN
          What are you doing, Roz?

Roz gestures to Marcin to shut up as the door opens and
FRANZ, 30s, appears.

Roz beams and projects a FAKE CAPEK I.D. in a public AR next
to her face.

                    ROZ
          Good evening. I've been sent by
          Capek to talk to you about our new
          model of Golem.

Roz gestures to Marcin.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Can I come in?

                    FRANZ
          Sure, always happy to help with
          market research.

Roz knocks her smile up another notch as she and Marcin
follow Franz into...

INT. FRANZ'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

It's very similar to the one Roz and Marcin were just in,
although Franz has more furniture. The holographic wall paper
makes the room look like it has wood panelling.

ROZ
          Can you tell me when you last used
          a Golem, sir?

                    FRANZ
          Franz's my name.
               (beat)
          It was this morning.

                    ROZ
          So you'd say you were feeling
          particularly positive right now?

Franz nods emphatically.

                    FRANZ
          Can I get you anything?

                    ROZ
          That's really kind of you, but no
          I'm fine and he can't, which brings
          me to our purpose here today.

Franz turns back to them totally intrigued.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          For our new study, we have been
          looking at modelling our new Golems
          to look more human. What do you
          think of him?

Franz looks at Marcin. The penny slowly drops and Franz
almost jumps on the spot in surprise. He looks questioningly
from Roz to Marcin. Roz nods.

                    FRANZ
          Well colour me impressed. I
          wouldn't have been able to tell...
          except for that frown. Folk around
          here don't look so down.

Roz pretends to be making notes in her AR.

                    ROZ
          A function of the new model is they
          tell stories to aid the emotional
          transition. How does that make you
          feel?

                    FRANZ
          Sound great to me, it's a bit of an
          odd thing to do in silence, the
          transfer, if you ask me.

Roz smiles at him.

ROZ
          We're also exploring an idea of
          balanced emotions--

                    FRANZ
          Not too happy not too sad?

                    ROZ
          We've found a few reckless
          behaviour patterns developing that
          we are keen to weed out. Would you
          be at all interested in the data
          survey? You would just have to off-
          load a little positivity and then
          we'd monitor you for a few days?

Franz sits on one of his chairs.

                    FRANZ
          A little positivity? Sure I've got
          a lot of joy to share, especially
          if it helps us all evolve.

Roz gestures to Marcin to get on with the transfer. He sits
opposite Franz looking uncertainly to Roz.

                    ROZ
          Just a little joy, he'll be okay. I
          promise you. I'm watching.

                    FRANZ
          Aw look at how concerned it is,
          you'd think it was alive. No
          worries big fella.

Franz slaps Marcin comfortingly round the shoulder.

                    ROZ
          Let's hear one of those stories, a
          real happy one.

                    MARCIN
          Those are my favourites.

Marcin gently places his hands against Franz's temples, his
finger tips glow green.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          There once lived a crow who was
          very hungry. He found a piece of
          bread and took it into a tree to
          eat. Chomp, chomp chomp. It ate so
          loud it caught the attention of a
          fox...

Franz starts to CHUCKLE. Roz watches, keeping a careful eye
on the pair.

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Julia sits behind her desk in the luxurious office space, a
real contrast to the Rudolfinum.

She glares at Zima and Podzim in the AR feed.

>   JULIA
>   What do you mean you can't find
>   them?

>   ZIMA
>   She's masked his signal and removed
>   her data tattoo.

>   JULIA
>   Then how is she functioning? You
>   need data tats for everything.

>   PODZIM
>   But we're exploring new avenues--

>   ZIMA
>   Looking out for any odd behaviour--

>   PODZIM
>   It will need a boost of positivity
>   to continue functioning.

>   ZIMA
>   So we're monitoring the police
>   feeds. But with all the tourists...

Julia scowls at them.

>   JULIA
>   Just keep me in the loop for the
>   good news, 'kay?

Julia switches off her AR before she throws a paperweight
across the room in fury.

She gets up and walks over to a dormant GOLEM, middle size
model, in the corner.

Julia switches it on. The Golem's arms immediately move up to
her temples.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   What would I do without you? What
>   would any of us do?

As the Golem drains her fury Julia's face resets to its usual
cheery smile.

INT. FRANZ'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

                    MARCIN
          When the foolish crow opened its
          mouth to sing, a horrid cackle the
          bread dropped...

Franz's laughter lessens as Marcin draws happiness from him.
Roz places a hand on Marcin's arm.

                    ROZ
          I think that's enough.

Marcin ignores her, as if in a trance. Roz tries to pull his
arm away.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          I said that's enough, Marcin.

Marcin snaps out of it. He meets Roz's eyes before carefully
disengaging his hands from Franz's head.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          How are you feeling, Franz?

Franz looks around, as if waking from a trance. He gives
himself a little shake.

                    FRANZ
          Well actually... hey was this room
          always this cramped? I thought it
          was cosy...

Roz raises a quizzical eyebrow at him.

                    FRANZ (CONT'D)
          Sorry, yes, I don't feel like I'm
          off to start another Despair.

He winks at her.

                    ROZ
          Joking, good, this shows there are
          minimal adverse effects.

Roz looks pointedly at Marcin, whose whole posture is
decidedly more chipper. He gets to his feet.

Roz projects a FAKE NDA at Franz.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Sign this NDA, Franz. No talking
          about this till we roll it out for
          everyone.

Franz holds his palm to the form, electronically 'signing.'
it. Roz nods a thanks. She pushes Marcin towards the door.

              ROZ (CONT'D)
      We'll send someone to monitor you
      for the next few days.

              FRANZ
      Sure, good, maybe I can talk to
      them about this place. I mean whole
      families live in these rooms, they
      should have more space.

              ROZ
      You do that if you think it'll make
      everyone happier.

Roz and Marcin leave Franz in his apartment. He looks around
a moment, conviction growing.

INT. RUDOLFINUM EMPTY APARTMENT - LATER

Marcin walks ahead of Roz into the room. Once she closes the
door he turns on her.

              MARCIN
      You told him I was a Golem.

Roz shrugs.

              ROZ
      I was telling a lie as close to the
      truth as possible. How else was
      that scenario gonna work?

              MARCIN
      You told him everything.

              ROZ
      And he signed an NDA. Guys like
      him, they never talk.

              MARCIN
      Is he going to be okay? He talked
      about altering these conditions...

              ROZ
      As he should, this place is dump.

              TALIA (O.S.)
        (via Roz's AR)
      Aint that the truth, hun.

The hologram wall effect flickers a second before Talia's
face appears on them.

              TALIA (CONT'D)
      Well your taste in furnishing's hit
      rock bottom.

ROZ
          Ha ha ha. How are you doing this?

                    TALIA
          I'm a super hacker, hun, but you
          were hella difficult to find,
          despite our encrypted linkups.

                    ROZ
          Has something happened? Are you
          okay?

                    TALIA
          Yeah, just wanted to check you
          weren't both fried circuitry after
          Capek put the city in lock down.

                    MARCIN
          I am happy to see you are alright,
          Talia.

                    TALIA
          Me too, wonder boy.

Roz lifts up the wig and gestures to her exposed robotic
face.

                    ROZ
          He knows. Can you fill him in on
          details while I...

Roz stalks into the bathroom. Marcin looks after her,
worried.

                    TALIA
          She's touchy about what she is.
          Comes from pretending to be
          something else for so long.

Talia gestures for Marcin to have a seat.

                    TALIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
          Can you open up your brain
          diagnostics for me, hun?

Marcin opens his public AR feed which shows his cybernetic
brain.

                    MARCIN
          Have you known Roz a long time?

                    TALIA
          Yeah, back before The Despair, when
          I was still legit.

Talia gestures her way through his menus to the deepest level
of his brain construction the synthetic synapses.

TALIA (CONT'D)
          I was a doctor, just starting out
          in this clinic for people at the
          end of their lives.

INT. RUDOLFINUM EMPTY APARTMENT BATHROOM – CONTINUOUS

Roz locks the door before sitting on the edge of the bath.

                    TALIA (V.O.)
          She was created in the 2020s when
          Capek ran a line of health worker
          robots for the Elderly. It's why
          she looks so human.

Satisfied no one's watching, Roz drops the human act.

Her posture shifts entirely, she no longer slouches and her
eyes lose focus as she shifts concentration to the virtual.

Around her, all sorts of data streams are now visible,
wireless information that Roz can see and tap into if she
wants.

                    TALIA (V.O.)
          Capek called the series Vigilant.
          That's what they did, kept a
          vigilant eye on people for their
          last days.

A series of images of police broadcasts – the dead cops, Roz
and Marcin's I.D.s, footage from the Gate.

                    TALIA (V.O.)
          I worked with Vee. Anyway one day
          Capek discontinued the line,
          recalled all the models and brought
          out some new robots.

Roz comes back to reality. She conducts self maintenance.
Pulling off the full strip of synthetic skin on her face.

                    MARCIN (V.O.)
          How did she survive?

She reattaches the part Marcin ripped off to the longer strip
and then presses it back into place on her face.

                    TALIA (V.O.)
          One of her patients, Gustav, was
          rich and attached to her. He'd
          noticed what I'd noticed, that she
          was different--

INT. RUDOLFINUM EMPTY APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

                    MARCIN
          That she was self aware? Like I am?

Talia's face on the wall frowns as she looks at Marcin's
synthetic synapses.

She throws her earlier scan so it appears over one of the
walls. She then moves Marcin's current synapse data to
overlay it. There are more synapses now.

                    ROZ (O.S.)
          I was never as dumb as you.

Roz emerges, good as new from the bathroom. She keeps
distance between herself and Marcin.

                    TALIA
          Now I never did figure out what it
          was made her different and I never
          had my hands on any other Vigilants
          so I had nothing to compare her to.
          Until you.

Talia locks eye with Roz, there's something almost maternal
there.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          But to Gustav and me it, she, was
          alive so we hid her.

Roz looks away.

                    ROZ
          You just compared him to me again,
          I'm offended.

Talia flicks her wrist and another synthetic mind scan
appears - this is for a normal Golem robot.

                    TALIA
          There, look, these synthetic
          synapses are totally different.
          Marcin's generate pathways that
          your normal Golem couldn't dream
          of.

Talia dismisses the normal Golem robot scan.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          So I thought, well crazy idea but,
          you both loved stories... Ta-dah.

Talia brings up a scan which is almost identical to Marcin's
synapse patterns.

ROZ
          Is that--?

                    TALIA
          Yours, yeah. You're like kissing
          cousins or something. They gotta
          have reused data from the
          Vigilants. No other explanation.

Roz turns to Marcin.

                    ROZ
          Any of this sounding familiar?

                    MARCIN
          I am afraid not. But I do remember
          Celine talking about my mind now.

Roz and Talia exchange a confused look.

Talia checks Marcin's scan again, another synapse is growing,
mending.

                    TALIA
          He's started to reconnect...
          remarkable, like, you don't think
          this is because of the stories?

                    ROZ
          Or contact with me...

                    TALIA
          Hold that thought. You two have
          unwanted company.

The brain scans disappear and CCTV footage from outside the
Rudolfinum replaces it.

Capek Security Guards led by Podzim and Zima are forming a
cordon around the building.

A COP walks up to Zima. They exchange words before the Cop
points to a police car where a disgruntled Franz sits in
handcuffs.

                    TALIA (CONT'D)
          You got sloppy.

                    ROZ
          I didn't think Franz would actually
          act on his new found conviction.

                    TALIA
          I'm sending you coordinates for
          somewhere with all the equipment
          you'll need to data mine Marcin.

Roz nods a thanks.

TALIA (CONT'D)
          Let me see what mayhem I can cause
          to give you breathing space.

                    ROZ
          You know neither of us actually
          breathe, right?

Talia CHUCKLES as her face disappears from the walls and the
apartment is returned to a dark box.

Marcin is already at the door peering out into...

INT. RUDOLFINIUM THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

All the walls flicker and then hallucinogenic colours and
patterns replace the other holographic wallpaper. It's a real
psychedelic nightmare.

In Roz and Marcin's P.O.V. the corridor looks normal, they
filter out the holograms.

They hear the CONFUSED CRIES of Capek Security Guards.

Roz and Marcin sneak the other way along the corridor,
turning the corner as--

Zima and Podzim storm through the door into...

INT. RUDOLFINUM EMPTY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

... the now empty apartment where the walls pulsate with
nauseating colours and patterns.

Podzim in a fury kicks the table into the wall where it
shatters.

                    PODZIM
          How did they fucking escape again?!

Zima places a calming hand on his shoulder. The tension
drains from Podzim.

                    ZIMA
          Their surgeon bitch, we should have
          gotten to her quicker.

                    PODZIM
          Time to off-load and regroup?

                    ZIMA
          Time to scour the data streams.
          They can't hide forever.

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INT. DATA HOSTEL ROOM - MORNING

Roz closes the blinds of this tech lovers' paradise. The room is filled with an inordinate amount of gadgets.

> MARCIN
> So you can rent all this?

Roz fishes out a couple of data tattoos from a drawer.

> ROZ
> Legally, no. But humans can't help
> themselves tinkering.

Roz, after a moment of hesitation, peels back the skin on her palms and slaps the patches onto the bare metal.

> ROZ (CONT'D)
> Now your memory's fixing itself,
> you ready to find out what the fuck
> is going on?

Marcin nods, he sits in one of the two chairs. Roz sits in the other so they are face to face.

> ROZ (CONT'D)
> Good, I'm sick of playing catch up.

Roz puts her hands on either side of Marcin's head. She gestures for him to do the same.

A pause.

Roz's eyes go blank. As do Marcin's.

INT. MARCIN'S MEMORIES MONTAGE - VARIOUS

All is static. Then blackness. Then more static and--

--A WHITE ROOM.

In Marcin's P.O.V. Three SCIENTISTS including JULIA, give each other a celebratory clap.

> JULIA
> I told you we were better than them
> without the doubt holding us back.
> Let's test it out.

Julia strides out, full of energy and purpose.

--STATIC

--OFFICE

Marcin's P.O.V. His robotic arms are outstretched, fingers on CELINE's temples. She looks very happy.

MARCIN
          ...And they lived happily ever
          after.

Marcin removes his fingers.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          You're looking much better now.

Celine's expression twists with confusion.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          Is your work difficult at the
          moment?

                    CELINE
          How did you--

                    MARCIN
          I hear them talking about work a
          lot in the lab. It sounds tough.

Celine's eyes widen with amazement.

--STATIC--

--CORRIDOR--

Marcin's P.O.V. Celine drags Marcin down the corridor.

                    CELINE
          She totally ignored my point. We'll
          show her, won't we. Come on.

--STATIC--

--CELINE'S OFFICE--

Marcin's P.O.V. He looks at his hands, now covered in
synthetic skin, with fascination.

                    CELINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
          I wanted to introduce you to my new
          assistant, Julia.

Celine escorts Julia into her office and gestures to Marcin.

                    MARCIN
          Nice to meet you, Julia.

                    JULIA
            (to Celine)
          Isn't he a hottie?

Julia runs an appraising eye over Marcin, the spark of
attraction lit.

Marcin looks to Celine who gives him a conspiratorial wink.

--STATIC--

-- JULIA'S OFFICE --

Marcin's P.O.V. He places some files on the desk.

                    MARCIN
          Celine said she's already sent you
          all the finalised sales predictions
          via ethics. But here it is again.

He turns to Julia who is stood by her large picture window.

She saunters up to him.

                    JULIA
          You can't be this oblivious?

Julia reacts to what must be a blank look from Marcin.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          I wanted you all to myself.
          Seriously. You're such a dork.

Julia pulls his head down into a passionate kiss.

Marcin steps back.

                    MARCIN
          Julia, I--

A KNOCK at the door.

--STATIC --

--CELINE'S APARTMENT--

Marcin's P.O.V in front of him Julia and Celine are arguing.

                    JULIA
          If you're jealous knock it off,
          there's plenty of him to go around.

Celine laughs.

                    CELINE
          So you are in love with him.

                    JULIA
          Love's a bit strong--

                    CELINE
          I knew he'd be your type. I
          designed him that way.

                    JULIA
          What are you going on about?

CELINE
          You wouldn't listen to me about
          artificial intelligence--

                    JULIA
          Because you were being silly.
          Celine, when was the last time you
          off-loaded your stress?

                    CELINE
          But I've proven it. And you've even
          fallen in love with him.

Julia looks from Celine to Marcin and back. Then she bursts
into hysterical laughter.

                    JULIA
          I mean he's a few screws short, but
          a robot? Come on.

Celine strides up to Marcin and rips the skin off his face.

Julia's expression drops like a stone.

                    MARCIN
          You have experienced a shock, you
          should off-load that emotion.

Marcin reaches for Julia.

                    JULIA
          Is this some sort of sick joke?

Julia shoves him away in disgust.

                    CELINE
          Isn't it wonderful, we've created
          something so new and exciting and--

                    JULIA
          Are you kidding me? You knew about
          this thing and you hid it?

Celine recoils as if slapped.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Have you any idea how bad it is if
          they're conscious? The whole work
          model goes down the drain. I'm
          calling security, you'll bring it
          to be destroyed immediate--

Celine hits Julia with a paper weight.

                    MARCIN
          You just knocked her unconscious.

She turns to Marcin.

MARCIN (CONT'D)
          She seemed very upset, did I do
          something wrong?

Celine rushes to hug him.

                    CELINE
          No, they're just afraid of anything
          new.

Celine places his hands on her temples.

                    CELINE (CONT'D)
          Quick, you need to take some of my
          determination, positivity, hope...
          so you can get away from here.

                    MARCIN
          But I'm supposed to help you by
          removing your negative emotions.

                    CELINE
          You'll be helping me, trust me.

Marcin nods, uncertainly.

                    CELINE (CONT'D)
          Tell me one last story...

Celine smiles up at Marcin as--

--STATIC--

INT. DATA HOSTEL ROOM - MORNING

Roz and Marcin reel back from each other, both almost falling
out of their chairs.

                    ROZ
          Holy crap, Celine honey trapped
          Julia good. She was one smart
          cookie.
               (beat)
          Not that smart, I guess.

Roz stretches, there's a confidence in her movement that
wasn't there before.

                    MARCIN
          Julia thought I was a human, but
          she couldn't accept me when I
          wasn't?

                    ROZ
          You're terribly bad for business.

Marcin processes this, still confused.

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ROZ (CONT'D)
          If Golems are self aware, it kinda
          makes the reformatting parallel to
          forcing them to commit suicide.

                    MARCIN
          Humanity's survival is based on our
          suicides? That's hardly fair.

                    ROZ
          Yeah they're not big on fairness.

Roz reaches out, instinctively, and touches his face, pushing
his lip up on one side mimicking a smile.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          But don't worry, I think we've just
          found our ticket out of this mess.

Marcin searches her face until the penny drops. He catches
her hand as she drops it. Holding it tight, Roz is surprised.

                    MARCIN
          You'll have to be careful, Roz.
          Julia is very confident in her
          abilities. I should know.

Roz disentangles her hand from his.

                    ROZ
          As am I.

                    MARCIN
          I'll wait here for you?

Roz shakes her head.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          This is one of the first places
          they'll look?

                    ROZ
          How human do you think you can be?

Marcin's jaw sets with determination.

                    MARCIN
          As human as you need me to be.

Roz can't help smiling.

INT. SPA LOBBY - LATER

A luxurious spa complex modelled after a Japanese bath house.
All the wall art promotes health and well being.

TOURISTS and LOCALS wander about in bathrobes. There's a real aura of calm.

Roz stands at the reception desk. A smiling RECEPTIONIST hands her a robe and a couple of towels before pointing to a sign that says WOMEN ONLY.

Roz shoots the Receptionist a grateful grin before heading towards the women's area of the bath house.

INT. WOMEN'S PRIVATE BATHS - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The Japanese aesthetic is matched with more streamlined futuristic touches, robotic massage machines etc.

As Roz, wrapped in a towel, walks down the synthetic wooden floor she encounters a series of AR adverts and wellbeing exercises. There's even a relaxing music stream.

Roz gestures to tune out the AR feeds.

INT. CEDAR BATH ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roz steps into the large room, the walls project images from a Japanese mountain spa. It is hyper realistic, as if Roz had really stepped into the outside bath area in the mountains.

The soft sound of cicadas fills the air, the gentle knock of bamboo on stone.

In the centre is a large cedar wood lined pool. Steam rises off it.

Julia is in the water, at the far end of the pool, her head leaning back on the edge. Eyes closed, as if she hasn't noticed Roz enter, but she has.

Roz blinks, switching off the feed a moment. The image fades, the cedar bath remains but the room is more sterile.

                    JULIA
               (without moving)
          I hope you don't mind meeting me
          here. The last couple of days have
          been very stressful.

                    ROZ
          It doesn't bother me. You're more
          vulnerable here than I am.

Julia sits up and looks at Roz.

                    JULIA
          Yes, I suppose I am.

A smile spreads across her face. She locks eyes with Roz a moment before--

Julia takes a breath and ducks under the water.

Confused, Roz watches from the side.

Agonising seconds pass, bubbles rise to the surface.

Julia isn't coming up.

The bubbles stop.

Roz's face goes blank, a protocol kicks in, on auto pilot--

--She jumps into the pool, grabs Julia and drags her to the surface.

Coughing and spluttering, Julia holds onto the side of the pool. The cough mutates to a breathless LAUGH.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Well, aren't you something?

Realisation washes over Roz, she's been forced to reveal her hand.

                    ROZ
          Clever. Risky, but clever.

Julia wipes her face on a small towel.

                    JULIA
          A calculated risk, which I knew
          would pay off. You couldn't let me
          drown.

Julia reaches out to touch Roz's arm.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          You'd never know.

Roz recoils.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          But then we both know I'm not great
          at this sort of thing.
               (beat)
          Are you okay in here?

                    ROZ
          I'm not going to rust.

Julia LAUGHS, it's light and melodic.

JULIA
          But a fucking Vigilant, I thought
          all you guys had been put to sleep
          decades back.

Roz shrugs.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          So cool, I'd love to see inside
          your head. But I guess that's too
          much for a first date.

Julia winks at Roz, whose jaw clenches impatiently.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          And to think you were working right
          under our noses. Isn't it like a
          conflict of interest, taking other
          robots apart?

                    ROZ
          I was designed to ease people's
          misery. Easing a robot's misery
          seemed the next logical step.

Julia laughs again, delighted with Roz's sass.

                    JULIA
          You were also designed to put
          preserving human life first.

                    ROZ
          As you've tested.

                    JULIA
          I knew there was something off at
          Celine's place but your act was so
          good.

                    ROZ
          Isn't that the trick of being
          human? Pretending.

Julia laughs again but her eyes are deadly cold.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Wonder boy had me fooled. You too,
          from what I've seen.

Julia stiffens.

                    JULIA
          In your apartment, it triggered
          your protocol to protect human
          life?

ROZ
          I wouldn't have fucked up my cover
          so willingly.

Julia grabs a towel as she gets out of the pool. Her face is
stormy, but when she turns back it's breezy again.

                    JULIA
          To think we've created A.I. so good
          it can fool other aware robots into
          thinking it's human. We should pop
          a cork in the champagne.

                    ROZ
          But you're not going to because it
          kills Golem Therapy as we know it.

Roz gets out of the pool too, so they are on equal footing.

                    JULIA
          There is that.

                    ROZ
          You used Vigilant data to make him.

Julia grabs a can of juice from a side table and snaps it
open.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          You wanted to use stories to
          isolate the target emotion and
          bring it closer to the surface?

                    JULIA
          It seemed an elegant solution. A
          calculated risk that didn't work
          out as well. There won't be more
          like it. I can assure you.

As she drinks she side eyes Roz.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          So, you have the footage which can
          destroy me but you haven't released
          it yet... I'm guessing you aren't
          ready to come out to the world.

                    ROZ
          We, Marcin and me, are happy to
          keep your secret--

                    JULIA
          If I leave you alone? Yeah, I dunno
          how happy I am having my fate in
          your synthetic hands.

Roz's AR flares up, she can see that Julia is sending a
message out – I'M KEEPING HER BUSY. CLOSE IN.

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ROZ
          I really wouldn't use digital
          messaging around us, we do kinda
          see everything.

Julia blushes, caught out. She shuts down her AR.

                    JULIA
          Can you blame me for wanting
          support, I'm no match for you.

Roz's expression remains cold.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Okay, well I'm happy for one of
          Capek's sentient robots to go into
          the world but not the other.

Roz crosses her arms, pulling up her AR to public mode so
Julia can see the video files poised to be SENT.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Woah, woah, it's a matter of human
          safety. I said that to you at the
          beginning.
                (beat)
          It doesn't have your protocols. It
          can, and has, injured human life.

A FLASH image of Marcin and Franz appears in Roz's AR/memory.

                    ROZ
          Hurting your feelings doesn't
          count.

Julia, sits on the table, can in between her hands.

                    JULIA
          You don't know what it did to
          Celine. I bet it conveniently
          forgot.

Julia taps her data tattoo. BEEP. A notification pops up in
Roz's AR vision.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Marcin's missing memories, you can
          check it hasn't been tampered with.

Roz does, there's no overlay, no extra coding showing up. All
the coding is the same colour.

                    ROZ
          He took some of Celine's emotions
          to survive.

JULIA
          Some? It took everything and left
          her a nihilistic maniac.

Roz opens the video file.

INT. MARCIN'S MEMORIES - CELINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcin's P.O.V. His hands are clamped on Celine's head. She
writhes against them, all happiness and drive draining from
her.

Celine snatches up a keyboard and smacks him round the head
with it.

He lets go. Celine darts away a bundle of rage and sorrow.

                    JULIA (V.O.)
          We wiped its memory to prevent this
          material leaking.
               (beat)
          Here's the CCTV from the apartment.

INT. CELINE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

CCTV footage shows Celine rampaging down corridors attacking
CAPEK SECURITY GUARDS.

INT. CEDAR BATH ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Julia takes another sip of her drink, watching Roz carefully.

                    ROZ
          Golems turn the perfectly adjusted
          into mass murders? I can see the
          headlines now.

Julia laughs.

                    JULIA
          That one is a slippery customer,
          it'll do anything to survive. But
          the others, they really are a key
          tool in saving humanity, Roz.

Roz searches Julia's face but comes up blank, there's fire of
a religious zealot in Julia's eyes.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          I'll do anything to help humanity
          transcend. And you can help me,
          help us, that's what you've always
          done, right?

ROZ
          I hear change is good for you.

                    JULIA
          Everyone says that but no one
          really believes it.

Roz weighs this up, she adjusts her towel, ready to go.

                    ROZ
          This is the deal, you give me an
          hour to think about it and I'll
          make my location known. If I don't
          come, well, you have the resources
          to track us down.

Julia meets Roz's gaze and holds it. Julia holds her hand out
for Roz to shake. Roz takes it.

                    JULIA
          It will kill again, can you have
          that on your data files?

Roz turns and strides towards the door.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          I trust you to do the best for
          humanity, Roz.

Roz doesn't turn, she continues her leisurely stride towards
the door.

Julia waits a moment, then taps a panel in the wall. It
slides up to reveal Podzim and Zima.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          You know what to do. No tech, no
          warning.

Podzim and Zima nod.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          She'll lead us to that monstrous
          thing.

                    PODZIM
          Piece of junk to catch another
          piece of junk. Got it.

Julia wipes her hand vigorously on the towel, as if trying to
wipe every trace of Roz off.

INT. CAPEK VAN - SIMULTANEOUS

Arron drives the van away from the West Gate, he's lost in
thought.

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Genso! characters appear for him to catch, but he ignores
them.

A notification pops up in his AR. It's from ROZ.

Arron pulls over. Other cars swerve round him.

Arron opens the message.

I COULD BE ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING STUPID. IF I AM I WANT YOU
TO TAKE THIS TO THE POLICE.

Arron notices the video files attached.

I'M SORRY I LIED TO YOU. BUT YOU'LL KNOW EVERYTHING NOW.

He opens it, his expression darkening.

EXT. CHARLES PARK - EVENING

A green leafy sanctuary in the metropolis, next to the RIVER.
Fountains formed from the salvaged relics of Prague's past
squirt jets into the air to the delight of TOURISTS.

Some of the trees are beginning to shift into their
bioluminescent glow.

Many GAMERS wander the park catching Genso! characters.

Roz dodges round them with a good natured smile, as she
searches for--

Marcin. He sits on a bench surrounded by enthralled CHILDREN.
He's in the middle of telling a story.

A little way back, their PARENTS are also spell bound.

Roz pauses, conflicted. In her AR feed, the footage of
Celine's last moments are playing on loop. This couldn't be
more different to the scene in front of her.

Marcin looks up and catches sight of Roz. He winds up the
story. The Children CLAP.

Marcin gets up and carefully picks his way over to Roz.

He seems so self assured for a change that for a moment Roz
finds herself taken in by his charm.

                    ROZ
          What were you doing there?

                    MARCIN
          Acting like a human, recycling
          stories.

Roz can't help smiling. They move over to a bench under one
of the bioluminescent trees.

Marcin hands Roz a book. It's her copy of Kafka's
Metamorphosis and Other Stories.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          Don't worry I didn't tell that to
          the children.

                    ROZ
          Careful, you don't want to go
          depressing yourself with stuff like
          that.

                    MARCIN
          I wanted to understand why you
          liked it so much.

They watch people passing, happy in their own little bubbles.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          You and Gregor have a lot in
          common.

                    ROZ
          Well aren't you a charmer.

                    MARCIN
          I didn't mean, oh, you're joking.

Marcin chuckles.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          Gregor isn't what people think he
          is, he's forced to hear what his
          family think of him, what they
          think of this inhuman thing. And he
          can't show them all the wonderful
          things he can do.

                    ROZ
          That's like me?

Marcin nods emphatically.

                    MARCIN
          At the end of the story Gregor was
          just surviving, he wasn't really
          living anymore. There is more to
          being alive than just surviving.

Roz and Marcin's eyes meet and hold, he's hit the nail on the
head.

                    ROZ
          You're reading way too much into
          it.

Roz pockets the book.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   Mostly I like that it's travel
>   sized. And it helped me do my job.

Marcin cocks his head, not convinced.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   So let's have a look at you.

>   MARCIN
>   Did you make a deal with Julia?

Roz gestures, so-so.

>   ROZ
>   Say, Marcin do you remember the
>   last time you saw Celine.

Marcin nods. Roz gestures for him to go on.

>   MARCIN
>   It was at her apartment. Julia had
>   called in Capek Security and Celine
>   had knocked her out. Celine wanted
>   us, me, to go to the police.

>   ROZ
>   Which is why you wanted to go to
>   the police, you were riding those
>   emotions.

In the periphery of Roz's vision the CCTV footage plays.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   And she told you to take some
>   emotions to help her.

Marcin nods again.

>   MARCIN
>   We were going to go to the police
>   together, but she thought she might
>   talk herself out of it, if she kept
>   her hope.

>   ROZ
>   And you didn't argue with her?

>   MARCIN
>   Why should I?

Their eyes hold and tension oozes from it.

>   MARCIN (CONT'D)
>   It was what she wanted.

Roz breaks their gaze, looking across the park at the
children playing by the fountains.

                    ROZ
          What they want isn't always what's
          good for them.

Marcin frowns, confused. Roz launches herself off the bench,
as if needing to stretch.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Don't worry about it. This isn't
          your fault, just programming.

Roz's AR, she switches on her location tracker.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          It kinda reminds me of a tale about
          your namesake.

                    MARCIN
          Marcin?

                    ROZ
          No, the Golem. Wait was that a
          joke?

Marcin beams at her. Roz cringes, but her resolve holds.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          A long time ago there was this
          Rabbi, a Jewish holy man. He got it
          into his head to create a protector
          for his people.

EXT. PARK GATES - SIMULTANEOUS

Across the street, leaning in the alley Podzim and Zima prime
their weapons.

                    ROZ (V.O.)
          So he went down to the River bed
          and from the clay he shaped a
          colossal man.

Other Capek Security Vans pull up, blocking the park off.

                    ROZ (V.O.)
          The Rabbi placed a tablet in the
          Golem's mouth with "emet", the
          Hebrew for life, on it and the
          Golem came alive.

Capek Security Guards direct TOURISTS away from the park.

ROZ (V.O.)
          Once in the community no one could
          tell the Golem from other men. It
          carried out all sorts of useful
          tasks and protected the Jews of
          Prague from persecution.

INT. CAPEK VAN - SIMULTANEOUS

Arron sits in the van, stunned from what he's seen. Roz's
message is still visible in his AR when--

A notification appears sent to all Weepys. TARGET OF SEARCH
ACQUIRED and a location.

                    ROZ (V.O.)
          But as the Golem lived longer it
          grew more unpredictable. It became
          destructive, eventually hurting
          those it was created to protect.

Arron steps on the accelerator.

EXT. CHARLES PARK - SIMULTANEOUS

                    ROZ
          So the Rabbi was forced to take the
          tablet from the Golem's mouth.

Roz meets Marcin's eyes, searching for any hint that he
understands.

                    MARCIN
          All creations take on a life of
          their own once awakened. Like us?

Roz offers him a bitter smile.

                    ROZ
          Something like that. Come on, let's
          get going.

Roz scans the park, it's emptied of people.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
              (under her breath)
          I'm sorry, big guy.

Roz walks along the path to the exit where...

They meet the Capek welcoming committee.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          He'll come quietly.

Roz holds her hands up, gesturing for Marcin to do the same.

He shoots her a look of utter betrayal.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   I couldn't fight what I am.

Podzim and Zima take Marcin's arms.

>   MARCIN
>   You are so much more than that.

He meets Roz's eyes. It's the last thing he sees before
Podzim uses a master key to switch him off.

The full weight of what she's done hits Roz as Podzim and
Zima load the lifeless Marcin into a hover van.

Julia gets out a car, now the danger is over.

>   JULIA
>   You know what to do with it.

Podzim and Zima jump into the van.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   I knew I could trust our
>   programming.

Julia pulls an electric gun from her coat and shoots Roz in
the chest.

Roz collapses, sparks fly.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   Next step on the evolutionary path,
>   don't make me laugh.

Julia heads back to the car.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   Clean this mess up.

Roz groans.

Julia turns, surprised.

Roz hauls herself to her feet. Julia shoots her a WTF look.

Roz reaches into her pocket and pulls out her copy of the
Metamorphosis. The electro bullet discharged into that.

>   JULIA (CONT'D)
>   Destroy it.

All the other Weepys aim at Roz. Without warning they fire.

Roz winces, ready for the impact when--

She's knocked off her feet by Arron. He takes an electro bullet in the back.

Roz barrels backwards with Arron through the bushes...

... the moment they hit the bottom of the embankment Roz is on her feet, hauling Arron up.

She drags him at break neck speed through the undergrowth towards the river wall and away from danger.

EXT. RIVER WALL - CONTINUOUS

Roz pauses to get her bearings and realises the full extent of Arron's injuries. He coughs blood.

>
ARRON
Bet you didn't see that coming.

>
ROZ
You idiot, what did you think you
were doing?

>
ARRON
Saving a person I care about.

Roz leans him against the wall. The sound of FOOTSTEPS, Capek security searching.

>
ROZ
But I'm not a person.

Roz peels back the skin on her arm which is already torn.

Arron tries to smile and grimaces, blood bubbles at his lips.

>
ARRON
You're still my friend... and the
most human person I know.

>
ROZ
You couldn't be more wrong.

If Roz could cry she would be. She cradles him to her.

>
ROZ (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm meant to protect
life and you--

>
ARRON
Protected yours, get over it.

Arron shoves her away.

>
TALIA (O.S.)
Roz?! Roz, are you here.

Roz looks over the wall to the narrow path by the river where Talia stares up at her.

> TALIA (CONT'D)
> Why the fuck did you switch your location data on?

Roz shoots her a crestfallen look.

> ROZ
> I was just trying to do the right thing.

> ARRON
> Goodbye, Roz. It was good, except now I know you kept cheating at the coin toss...

Roz, squeezes his hand. He tries feebly to shove her away.

> TALIA
> We have to go, Roz.

Roz runs her hand over Arron's arm before turning and vaulting over the wall as--

Capek Security and Weepys swarm in.

They look down to the river bank but there's just Arron's lifeless body, lying in a spreading pool of blood.

INT. SEWERS - MOMENTS LATER

Dank, damp and pungent. Roz follows Talia along the sewer.

> TALIA
> I take it back, I preferred it when you were hiding.

There's no response.

> TALIA (CONT'D)
> What did you think you were playing at handing him over?

> ROZ
> I don't know. Something told me that was what I had to do. I couldn't fight it.

> TALIA
> Oh hunny, this life isn't easy on you.

> ROZ
> It isn't easy on anyone and they make better decisions than me.

They keep going, putting as much distance and turns between
them and the river.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   I'm sorry about your place. And
>   Hoffman. And Arron.

>   TALIA
>   Watch it, you're starting to sound
>   like wonder boy.

>   ROZ
>   And him, thanks.

Talia stops and grabs Roz by the shoulders.

>   ROZ (CONT'D)
>   Arron called me human, but I'm not.

>   TALIA
>   Kiddo, you're the only one who
>   thinks of yourself as a machine.

Roz looks stunned.

>   TALIA (CONT'D)
>   Enough of feeling bad. It's what
>   you do next that counts.

>   ROZ
>   I am going to get Marcin back.

>   TALIA
>   Good. How?

Roz holds up her hand, Arron's data tattoo is stuck to it.

>   ROZ
>   How badly did they trash Hoffman's
>   place?

A broad grin spreads across Talia's face.

INT. CAPEK CORP GARAGE - LATER

The place is pretty deserted at this time of night. A single
MALE FIGURE saunters through the van bays.

It looks like the Figure is playing a game on their AR.

A couple of WEEPYS wave at the figure, who is revealed, in
the light of the elevator, to be ARRON.

>   WEEPY
>   You'll miss the start of the
>   Launch, dude.

ROZ AS ARRON
          I'm just levelling up so I can get
          the jump on you guys.

The two Weepys leave chuckling.

                    ROZ
               (under her breath)
          Idiots.

Roz has been remodelled to look just like Arron. She uses
Arron's data tattoo, crossing her fingers.

It works. The elevator doors open and Roz steps inside.

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Julia, triumphant smile on her face, looks out of a glass
wall over the city of Prague.

Augmented Reality fireworks burst over the Old Town Square.
They form iconic characters of GENSO!

                    JULIA
               (into her AR comms)
          Whenever you're ready, let it go.
          One last taste of The Despair and
          they'll be eating out of our hands.

The fireworks reflect in her eyes.

                    ROZ AS ARRON
          I'd hold back on the celebrations,
          if I were you.

Julia sees Arron's reflection in the glass and spins,
horrified.

                    ROZ AS ARRON (CONT'D)
          I guess you didn't expect to see me
          again.
               (beat)
          You should've revoked his security
          clearance but that's confidence for
          you.

Julia's eyes dart over the figure before her, the cogs
working.

                    JULIA
          You never cease to amaze, Roz.

Roz drops Arron's mannerisms and his voice. Julia gives her a
round of applause.

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JULIA (CONT'D)
          I was wondering what you'd do, but
          this is bit creepy don't you think?

                    ROZ
          A victim returning to haunt their
          murderer is a pretty popular story
          trope.

Julia regains her composure, leaning to switch on a panic
button in her AR.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          I really wouldn't.

                    JULIA
          What could you do? You can't kill a
          human, none of the Vigilants could.
          It made things so much easier when
          we needed to destroy them.

                    ROZ
          They were all like me, weren't
          they?

Julia aims her fingers into a gun and shoots, bingo.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          The stories?

                    JULIA
          Knowing those patterns restructured
          the synthetic synapses in ways my
          predecessors didn't expect.

                    ROZ
          We recycled your myths so many
          times we become like you.

Julia gives Roz a slow round of applause.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          And you thought you could use their
          research without the same
          consequences?

Roz aims an electric gun at Julia.

                    JULIA
          A calculated risk that didn't pay
          off.

                    ROZ
          I'd add arrogance to the list of
          negative emotions to remove, if I
          were you.

Julia's gaze is distracted by FLASHING LIGHTS below. A couple of police vehicles pull up outside the building.

                    JULIA
          This should be interesting.

She gestures for Roz to take a look. Roz, slides over to the glass wall and looks down.

                    ROZ
          Did you call them?

                    JULIA
          Surprisingly, no.

Roz tightens her finger on the trigger.

                    ROZ
          Where's Marcin?

Roz looks from Julia to the AR Fireworks at Old Town Square and it hits her.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          You're going to use him like you
          used Celine, to boost your product
          sales?

Julia claps her hands in delight.

                    JULIA
          A tragic reminder of The Despair
          with a tragedy during the launch.
          Of course, before anyone can arrest
          him, Podzim will blast him to bits.

                    ROZ
          Call it off.

                    JULIA
          It's an exciting new time for
          humanity and you've helped that.

                    ROZ
          Stop it now.

HIGH PITCHED WHINE. The gun is primed.

                    JULIA
          Please, you can't, so don't
          pretend. The whole act is pathetic.
          You really thought you were as good
          as a human, didn't you?

Roz's expression is stony.

JULIA (CONT'D)
          Pull the trigger. If I die no one
          can call this off.

That stops Roz.

                    ROZ
          You're not doing such a good
          impression of a human right now
          either.

Roz lowers the gun as--

Julia smashes the window. Glass shards plummet into the
night.

Roz shoots her a confused look.

                    JULIA
          When the cops get here I'll tell
          them you fell after trying to
          defenestrate me. You'll help usher
          in the new age as much as that
          thing.

Julia positions herself with her back to the window.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          No one should stop what I've set in
          motion, not even me.

                    ROZ
          Step away, you'll fall.

                    JULIA
          Humanity will evolve.

Julia steps back a little more so her foot dangles out. Roz
involuntarily moves forward, a hand reaching for Julia.

                    JULIA (CONT'D)
          Which one of us is the more
          convincing at performing human, do
          you think?

A reckless look crosses Julia's face, she drops back through
the window.

The blank look comes into Roz's face, the protocol kicks in--

Roz dives for Julia's outstretched hand, ready to save her--

EXT. CAPEK CORP - NIGHT

Julia's face contorts with confusion as she plummets to her
death.

She hits the concrete blow with a sickening crunch.

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Roz teeters right on the edge of the window, staring down at
Julia's broken body. She stopped herself from saving her.

                    ROZ
          Not you.

Roz stares out of the window, frozen in shock.

                    TALIA (O.S.)
               (Through Roz's comms)
          Roz, Roz are you alright? Someone,
          something just fell out of--

                    ROZ
          I didn't save her..? Julia, I
          didn't...

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          She fell? Holy shit... wait, you
          didn't or couldn't?

                    ROZ
          Didn't. I think I just registered
          myself as more human than she was,
          if I tried to save her I'd have
          fallen.

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          I'd like to say, duh, but now's not
          really the time. Hun are you okay?

                    ROZ
          I guess, I dunno, it's--I'm like a
          human, Tarls, aren't I?

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          Yes, you always have been-- Shit,
          let's save the debrief for later,
          you've got company.

THE SOUND OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

Roz steps away from the window, reassuming Arron's
mannerisms, as Inspector Novak bursts into the room.

Novak recognises Arron, and his I.D. appears in Novak's AR.

                    NOVAK
          Where is Dr. Julia Horak, Arron?

                    ROZ AS ARRON
          You just missed her.

Roz points out the window. Novak storms over and looks down.

                    NOVAK
          She jumped?

Roz nods.

                    NOVAK (CONT'D)
          The CEO of Capek committed suicide?
          Two suicides in two days?

                    ROZ AS ARRON
          Well, Celine wasn't really a
          suicide.

                    NOVAK
          What? Just what the hell is going
          on here?

                    ROZ AS ARRON
          Oh boy, where do I start?
               (beat)
          In Prague, Golems kill themselves
          every day so real people don't...

                                        END FLASHBACK

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE - PRESENT NIGHT

Novak looks at Roz as Arron carefully. They are both seated
on the floor of Julia's office.

                    NOVAK
          You aren't him are you?

Novak shakes his head with disbelief.

                    NOVAK (CONT'D)
          I can't believe it. This is all so--

                    ROZ
          Impossible? Yeah, I don't know what
          else to say to convince you I'm the
          good guy, especially when I look
          like this...

Novak stretches, a joint clicks loudly.

                    NOVAK
          Well it's a good job the real Arron
          sent me these.

Novak turns his AR to public mode and reveals the videos from
Marcin's memory.

                    ROZ
          The smart bastard.

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Roz, as Arron, smiles to herself.

                    NOVAK
          I hope you don't find this rude,
          but how exactly are you and Marcin
          self-aware?

                    ROZ
          I dunno. Do you know how your
          consciousness functions?

                    NOVAK
          No, I suppose I don't. I leave that
          to scientists and philosophers.

In Roz's vision the AR fireworks are still bursting across
the darkening sky.

                    ROZ
          I need to stop Marcin from becoming
          The Despair in robot form.

                    NOVAK
          Where do we need to go?
             (off Roz's surprise)
          It isn't just your job to protect
          people.

Roz nods, getting to her feet. She offers a hand to Novak. He
takes it and she lifts him up with ease. He's impressed.

EXT. PRAGUE STREETS - SIMULTANEOUS

A Capek Van pulls into an alley near Old Town Square.

Zima opens the van door and Marcin is shoved out by Podzim.

Marcin's expression is one of pure woe and intense pain.

                    PODZIM
          Off you go, son, time to do the
          company proud.

Marcin lumbers toward bright lights at the end of the alley.

                    MARCIN
          I'll free them from this cruel
          world.

As he passes a fire escape, Marcin wrenches off a section of
metal, forming a makeshift weapon.

Podzim and Zima watch, with manic happiness.

Zima tries to call Julia on her AR. There is no answer.

EXT. SIDE STREET OFF OLD TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

A police hover car descends from the emergency skyline onto
the street.

Roz, as Arron, and Novak jump out. Other police cars are seen
descending on the square.

Novak throws Roz a stun gun.

>   NOVAK
>   I assume your robot buddy isn't our
>   only enemy.

>   ROZ
>   Podzim and Zima...

Roz primes the stun gun, face set with grim determination
They exit the side street into...

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Roz and Novak stall on the edge of the square. It is jam
packed with GAMERS. There's a real carnival atmosphere.

Roz's P.O.V. is filled with Genso! characters. She focuses
hard to tune that wavelength out of her robotic brain.

Novak casts a despairing look at Roz as he tunes in his AR
police dispatch.

>   NOVAK
>   (to dispatch)
>   Karel, what's the situation?

>   POLICE OFFICER KAREL (O.S.)
>   (via dispatch)
>   Nothing so far, sir. A couple of
>   friendly game spats.

Roz spots all the COPS fanned out across the square.

>   ROZ
>   (in her AR comms)
>   Tarls are you there?

>   TALIA (O.S.)
>   It's Bedlam here. I can't see any--
>   wait, by Tyn Church.

Roz turns to the opposite end of the square, near Tyn Church.
The crowd is surging differently.

Roz grabs Novak's shoulder and turns him in that direction.

The METAL BAR GLINTS above the crowd a second and then
descends.

NOVAK
          Fuck.
               (to dispatch)
          Officers to Tyn Church. Assailant
          is near Tyn Church. We have to
          clear the square.

Novak looks around for Roz but she's disappeared. Shit.

He wades into the crowds, pushing towards Tyn Church.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE, TYN CHUCH – SIMULTANEOUS

Marcin slumps through the crowds, lashing out with his metal
bar, his body wracked with dry sobs.

                    MARCIN
          Living is painful, cruel,
          pointless. Let me end it.

With each word he strikes out.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE – SIMULTANEOUS

Roz ducks and weaves through the crowd, it's tough going.

As she trips over a GAMER GIRL who's lost in her Genso!
world, Roz has an idea. For a moment she stalls, unwilling to
use her robot abilities then--

                    ROZ
               (into AR comms)
          Tarls, a little help.

Roz's P.O.V focuses on the Genso! signal. She hacks in,
passwords flare up. DENIED. DENIED. DENIED.

Then the passwords seems to fill themselves in.

The map for character locations appears in front of her.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
               (into AR comms)
          Thanks.

Roz swipes her hand over Old Town Square, scattering the
characters from the Square to other parts of the city.

                    TARLS (O.S.)
          Glad you're accepting all of
          yourself, hun.

The effect is instant. In waves, Gamers start to filter off
in different directions chasing the characters.

Roz catches Novak's eye and gives him a thumbs up before she dives into the dispersing crowd.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF TOP - SIMULTANEOUS

Podzim and Zima exchange a WTF look as they watch the crowds peeling away from the square.

Zima attempts to call Julia on her AR. THE PERSON YOU ARE TRYING TO CONTACT IS UNAVAILABLE pops up on the screen.

                    PODZIM
          Let it run its course?

Zima nods when--

Julia's face appears in their AR feeds.

                    JULIA
          Something's happened to me so I
          can't help you now. But remember,
          nothing stops progress. Don't
          waver. I'm trusting you.

Julia's face disappears and END OF RECORDED MESSAGE appears.

With new found focus Podzim and Zima look down the sites of their electro rifles and zero in on Marcin.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE, TYN CHUCH - SIMULTANEOUS

The crowds further from Marcin join the mass exodus on the hunt for Genso! characters.

                    TALIA (O.S.)
          Hey hunny, what madness have you
          got yourself involved with?

Marcin rounds on Talia. She beams at him.

                    MARCIN
          Talia, it's all so horrible.

Talia steps towards Marcin, arms out, nonthreatening.

                    TALIA
          Put the bar down, hun.

A mad look comes into Marcin's eyes and he swings his metal bar wild, bringing it crashing down towards Talia's head as--

--It connects with something and holds.

He turns, confused, to see Roz, as Arron, holding the other end.

MARCIN
               You were Roz's friend...

                         ROZ
               He was.

Marcin pulls the pipe away and swings at her again. Roz
counters with a kick.

Marcin follows up with a round house, which she ducks under.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
               I told you I wouldn't put up with
               this maudlin crap.

                         MARCIN
               Roz?

She smiles, thinking she's gotten through when the bar flies
at her face. Roz just manages to dodge.

                         TALIA
               He isn't listening to anything.

Roz slips aside as the bar crashes down on the cobbles.

                         ROZ
               He'll listen to this...
                    (beat)
               Hey, Marcin, wanna hear a story?

Marcin stalls. Roz grins until he lunges at her again.

She dodges and he careers into the crowd, which separates
from him in a wave of panic.

The police arrive, forming a ring around Roz and Marcin.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
               You sure? It's a really good one.

Roz's eyes dart around the ring of police officers, all stun-
guns are aimed at Marcin.

                         ROZ (CONT'D)
               I thought you liked stories.

Marcin lurches to his feet. The ELECTRONIC WHINE of stun-guns
being primed fills the air.

                         MARCIN
               What's it about?

Roz's relief is palpable, the tension sags from her body.

                         ROZ
               It's about a robot.

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Marcin cocks his head to the side, interested.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          This robot existed in a world where
          almost all humans had died. It
          worked in the forest and everyday
          it carried out its tasks without
          thinking.

Marcin starts to lumber towards Roz. She shoots a warning
glance at Novak. He gestures for the cops to hold off.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          One day the robot heard one of the
          last humans playing music, a soft
          song like the sound of rain and
          something inside its circuits
          switched on.

Recognition comes into Marcin's eyes as he reaches for Roz.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          It saw the world anew and it was
          glorious.

Marcin swings his fist at Roz's face. She just manages to
block it. He brings the other in for a blow to the stomach.
Roz jumps back.

EXT. CHURCH ROOFTOP - SIMULTANEOUS

Podzim and Zima exchange a questioning look.

                    ZIMA
          Let's just take them both out.

They get ready to pull the trigger, a HIGH PITCHED WHINE
resounds.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE, TYN CHUCH - SIMULTANEOUS

Roz tilts her head, she's heard the guns charging.

                    ROZ
          But the other robots couldn't
          understand. They thought it was
          malfunctioning.

Roz catches Marcin's arms, holding them fast. Nothing is
going to stop her telling this story.

She pulls Marcin to one side as--

Electro bullets scorch the ground they were just stood on.

Novak and the other cops turn their guns to the roof and fire
without thinking.

EXT. CHURCH ROOFTOP – SIMULTANEOUS

Podzim and Zima's bodies jerk on the roof top, reacting to
the electric shocks.

                    ROZ (O.S.)
          One rainy, summer day, it met the
          musician. She was astounded by this
          robot, it had consciousness.

They fall still. Dead.

EXT. OLD TOWN SQUARE, TYN CHUCH – SIMULTANEOUS

Roz and Marcin, locked in this test of strength strain
against each other's hold.

                    ROZ
          She taught it how to play music
          with emotion. And she set it a
          task, to think about why it did the
          job it did. Answering "I am
          programmed to" wasn't good enough.

Marcin's stronger. Just as it looks like he'll land those
blows, Roz lets go and ducks out of the way. She sends him
flying with a kick.

The cops watching stare with amazement at these two 'men'
fighting. Some are recording it.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Now the robot went back to its
          routine, it kept its head down,
          afraid that if it was found out the
          other robots would destroy it.

Roz dodges Marcin's wild attacks, using the police ring like
a boxing ring.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Eventually the robot found its
          answer. It worked in the forest
          because it enjoyed doing it.

Marcin stalls again, processing this. But his despair is too
much. Roz just isn't getting through enough.

                    MARCIN
          Because it made the robot happy?

Roz catches Novak's eye, his patience is running out.

Roz and Marcin end up arms locked together again.

                    ROZ
          The robot rushed to tell the
          musician but it was too late, the
          seasons had changed and she had
          died.

                    MARCIN
          She died?

Roz nods. Marcin's grip loosens.

                    ROZ
          The robot had never felt loneliness
          or sadness until then, this was the
          flip side of having emotions.

Roz takes his legs out from under Marcin.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          The robot was lost.

She's on top of him.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Despair weighed heavily upon it.

She pins him down. Using all her strength.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          To have life and no one to share it
          with seemed pointless.

Roz leans in really close, forcing him to look directly into
her eyes.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          But then, just when all seemed
          lost, what do you think happened?

Marcin stops struggling, he's enthralled by the story.

                    MARCIN
          He met another robot?

                    ROZ
          You're damn straight. The robot met
          another robot that was just like
          it. Alone and aware.

Roz loosens her grip. He doesn't fight back. There's a war of
emotions in his expression.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          It had found a friend.

MARCIN
          It found hope.

                    ROZ
          Through others, it found hope.

Marcin lunges for Roz, but it's not an attack, it's a hug.

Marcin dry sobs into Roz's shoulder, she rubs his back.

                    ROZ (CONT'D)
          Welcome back you big idiot.

Novak's shoulders slump, relieved. As he casts a look over
his officers he notices that more than a few are holding back
tears from the story.

                    NOVAK
          Right you lot, get back to work.
          Clean up, check the wounded, and
          someone call in the ambulances.

The officers pull themselves together, reluctant to leave
until Novak starts shoving them.

                    NOVAK (CONT'D)
          And find those would be assassins
          on the roof.

Roz leans her forehead against Marcin's.

                    ROZ
          I am so sorry. I made a terrible
          decision.

                    MARCIN
          You were scared.

                    ROZ
          Not as much as I was just then.
          Were you trying to take my head
          off?

                    MARCIN
          Maybe...

Roz playfully smacks his arm. Marcin fake winces.

                    ROZ
          I'm so proud of you. What you're
          feeling, those are your own
          emotions.

                    MARCIN
          Mine?

Roz helps Marcin to his feet.

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MARCIN (CONT'D)
          It was a very good story. Whose is
          it?

                    ROZ
          Yours. And kinda mine too.

                    MARCIN
          Together we found hope?

Marcin looks Roz over.

                    MARCIN (CONT'D)
          You look just like Arron.

Talia throws one arm over Roz's shoulders.

                    TALIA
          That's my handy work.

                    MARCIN
          I'm so very sorry, I didn't--

Talia gestures for him to shhhh.

Novak COUGHS. Marcin takes a defensive stance.

                    NOVAK
          I never thought I'd see a story
          tame a beast.

                    ROZ
          I wasn't sure it would work, but
          it's the thing we have in common.
          We both love stories.

Novak circles Marcin with a mixture of curiosity and fear.

                    NOVAK
          That fight was something else.

Roz inspects her limbs for damage. A little shredded
synthetic skin, nothing too bad. But because her metallic
body is red, they look like bloody wounds.

                    ROZ
          I'm impressed you held your nerve.
          I've never really been impressed by
          a cop before.

Roz surveys the damage in the square, it isn't as bad as she
thought either.

An advert for GOLEM THERAPY glitches across her vision.

                    TALIA
          Holy crap, you guys look awesome.

Talia makes her AR public to show a holographic video of the fight. It's very clear neither fighter is a normal human.

                    ROZ
          I guess the world knows. I hope
          you're happy.

Talia feigns innocence.

                    MARCIN
          You don't look un-happy.

There is a smile on Roz/Arron's lips.

                    ROZ
          Julia was right, we are going to
          help usher in a new age.

Roz's AR vision blurs into the multitude of AR feeds across the square.

I/E. MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A series of AR news blasts.

--CORRUPTION AT CAPEK - CEO PLANTS SUICIDES TO BOOST SALES FIGURES...

-- FOOTAGE OF THE FIGHTERS IN OLD TOWN SQUARE FAKED - CLICK HERE TO SEE HOW THEY DID IT...

--FAST TRIAL AND LONG TERM GOAL SENTENCE FOR OLD TOWN SQUARE ATTACKERS. Images of Roz as Arron and Marcin being escorted from the Old Town Square in handcuffs by Novak...

--NEW FACE OF CAPEK RESEARCH -- Talia, in a lab coat, walks through the labs checking up on the other RESEARCHERS.

The news becomes the AR feed of...

INT. PRAGUE WALL ELEVATOR - SIMULTANEOUS

...A female PASSENGER (ROZ), redheaded, on the glass elevator that runs up the city wall. She is joined by a male PASSENGER (MARCIN), an ash blonde.

                    MARCIN
          Talia looks very comfortable there.

                    ROZ
          She does, doesn't she?

Either side of the elevator, the wheat fields shimmer like gold in the morning sunshine. While the city itself is bright with possibilities.

MARCIN
          Novak put on a good show. I thought
          he'd betrayed us.

                    ROZ
          He was just doing what we all
          are... performing. They needed to
          arrest someone, and seeing as our
          appearances are so flexible...

Roz looks him over. He's kept the face shape Talia gave him.

                    MARCIN
          Being a redhead suits you.

                    ROZ
          Not as much as it suited you.

Marcin stands next to her, Roz leans her head against his
shoulder as the elevator reaches the top and stops.

                    MARCIN
          Do you think we'll find more like
          us?

                    ROZ
          I dunno, I'm making this story up
          as I go.

                    MARCIN
          I hope we do.

They walk out of the elevator without looking back.

                                        FADE OUT.

Chapter 4.2: (Post)Human beings as story machines

Human beings are naturally predisposed to hear,
remember, and to tell stories.

Roger C. Schank[7]

4.2.1: Human Storytelling

'Human beings have a passion for plots. Stories are shared in every society, in every age and in every social context, from intimate personal interactions to impersonal social gatherings.'[8] Storytelling ability, or the narrative impulse, is hardwired within the human brain. It is one of the principal functions through which the human mind makes sense of the world and passes on that knowledge to others.[9] In this section, I will explore a variety of ways that humans use storytelling to define what I mean by storytelling ability, before I move on to investigate how this ability is used in *posthuman noir*.

Human cognition is a narrative cognition; it relies on the use of stories to store information and to transform that information into a format which indicates intelligence and understanding.[10] Roger C. Schank, posits that:

> People remember what happens to them, and they tell other people what they remember. People learn from what happens to them, and they guide their future actions accordingly […] intelligence is really about understanding what has happened well enough to be able to predict when it might happen again.[11]

He argues that the memory is formed from stories of past experiences and we use those experiences to understand our position in the world. Human beings have been exchanging stories of our experiences since we developed language,[12] and this enables us to avoid, or at least attempt to avoid, making choices that are detrimental to our survival. Take, for example,

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[7] Roger C. Schank, *Tell Me A Story: Narrative and Intelligence* (1995; Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 243.

[8] Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 1.

[9] McKee, *Story*, 12.

[10] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 10.

[11] Ibid., 1.

[12] For more on the way humans have told stories since they developed means to communicate see Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (London: Harvill Secker, 2016), 156-157 or for a general overview of human storytelling see Brain Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition and Fiction* (U.S.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

early folk tales and stories which act to pass on information to their intended audiences; often these were cautionary tales, warning the listener about actions which will place them in danger.[13]

Storytelling is so ingrained in human beings that even on a day to day level, conversations comprise of the exchange of stories. In this process of telling our experiences to others, or to ourselves, we turn them into stories which can then be stored as memories.[14] However, humans are not the only ones who tell stories to pass on information; for example, bees also pass on stories of location information by the means of the waggle dance.[15]

Schank argues that human stories contain many details, which means they can be indexed in multiple ways in the brain, allowing for ease of recall; if a memory is connected to more nodes, it is more likely to be accessible in a greater number of situations.[16] If, Schank argues, human minds are complex story storage and recall devices that can process large quantities of situations and experiences, then the human mind might prove a stronger model to develop artificial intelligences.[17] This approach is perhaps already being put into practice, a computer can now use algorithmic processes to sift through, and splice together, information to create stories such as the short screenplay *Sunspring*;[18] meanwhile, the latest iteration of the DeepMind A.I. is being programmed to use imagination, drawing on experience and context rich information to make decisions.[19] It is interesting to note that in the films and anime I have collected together under the banner of *posthuman noir*, posthuman characters appear to be able to recall and reprocess their experience in the way humans do.[20] Therefore, we need to look

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[13] For more on folk tales and myths see Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of Folk Tales*, 2nd edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

[14] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 118-119.

[15] For a discussion of bee dance as a way to convey information see Eileen Crist, "Can an Insect Speak: The Case of Honey Bee Dance Language," *Social Studies of Science* 34/1, (2004): 7-43. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0306312704040611 or Hasan Al Toufailia, Margaret J. Couvillon, Francis L. W. Ratnieks and Christoph Grüter, **"**Honey bee waggle dance communication: signal meaning and signal noise affect dance follower behaviour**,"** *Behavioural Ecology and Sociobiology* 67:4, (2013): 549-556. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23479471.

[16] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 84 -113.

[17] Ibid., 16.

[18] See the result of an A.I. written screenplay in this article by Annalee Newitz, "Movie written by AI algorithm turns out to be hilarious and intense," *Arstechnica*, (2016): https://arstechnica.co.uk/the-multiverse/2016/06/sunspring-movie-watch-written-by-ai-details-interview/.

[19] David Nield, "Google has started adding Imagination to its DeepMind AI," *Sciencealert.com*, (27/07/17): http://www.sciencealert.com/google-has-started-adding-imagination-to-its-deepmind-ai. Last accessed 29/07/17.

[20] I will look at this in more detail in section 4.2.2.

beyond this aspect of storytelling, to develop an understanding of the human storytelling ability.[21]

Humans also use storytelling to function within social structures. As I discussed in Chapter 3, in relation to emotional awakening, 'humans are a profoundly social species;'[22] to live in groups, rules have to be established so that the members of the group can continue to work and live together.[23] These rules also take the form of story. For example, if selfish behaviour is detrimental to the survival of the group because it encourages an individual to hoard food which results in more members of the group starving, then there will be more stories created by that group which show this attitude in a negative light. These rules become stories, often culturally specific, which result in humans behaving in socially accepted ways, or rejecting these stories and forming new groups. Different societies and cultures have their own narrative patterns which people need to understand if they want to integrate;[24] therefore, to function within a society, it is important to be receptive to its stories.

It is interesting to note how Japanese stories place importance on being able to function as part of a community. David Desser argues that in Japanese film stories, specifically Japanese film noir, those outside of society are viewed as pitiable.[25] In the Japanese anime I have collected under the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, posthuman characters who develop storytelling abilities are brought back into the fold of a community in the end. In the imagined futures presented in *posthuman noir*, and potentially in our own future, social systems need to develop to integrate the human with the non-human, whether technological or organic. In these more complex societies, the need to tell stories increases to enable the diverse inhabitants to connect and live together.

Fictional stories allow those who read them to connect with viewpoints of others and develop empathy.[26] This is another aspect of human storytelling ability; in understanding others more, humans are less likely to act in ways that would be harmful to those around them, and are

[21] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 10.
[22] Cynthia Breazeal and Rodney Brooks, "Robot Emotion: A functional Perspective," in *Who Needs emotions? The Brain Meets the Robot*, Jean-Marc Fellous and Michael A. Arbib, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 279.
[23] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 62.
[24] Schank, *Tell Me a Story*, 37.
[25] David Desser, "The Gunman and the Gun: Japanese film noir since the late 1950s" in *International Noir*, eds. Homer B. Pettey and Robert Barton Palmer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 120. For more detailed discussion of this idea see Chapter 2.2.
[26] Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 243.

more able to work in groups. Fictions also provide an outlet for simulated experience which can act as a pressure valve for feelings/emotions/behaviours that would disrupt a society.[27] This demonstrates how the two traits I have chosen to look at, emotional awakening and storytelling ability, are interlinked; one of the functions of storytelling is to simulate emotions of others within us and to allow our emotions an outlet beyond reality.

Storytelling ability does not only function as a means of connection and understanding. It allows humans to think beyond the here and now, to imagine potential scenarios and play them out, transcending the present moment.[28] Imagining scenarios allows humans to trial options before acting and increases a human being's capacity for success in their endeavours. Boyd argues that 'fiction […] increases the range of our vicarious experience and behavioural options.'[29] In experiencing fictive narratives, humans can think through situations without having to deal with actual risk. To develop these fictional narratives, humans reprocess their experiences; human storytelling, therefore involves recycling and reinterpretation.[30] 'The process of story creation and invention is one of adaptation rather than creation out of nothing.'[31] By seeing how other people react to situations, through fiction and reality, we expand our conception of our own identities and then we use the stories we tell to project those identities into the world.

Finally, the stories we choose to tell, to remember/store, help to generate our sense of self; the 'I' is formed and reformed by our experiences, stories we encounter and stories we tell.[32] Through telling the stories of ourselves, we perform our identities, which might change depending on who we are talking to, and the situations we find ourselves in.[33] Our identity or self is an expression of our conscious minds;[34] it is our subjective understanding of ourselves and our position in relation to others and the world. In our current digital age, online performance of identity uses human storytelling to generate different narratives of multiple

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27 Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 65.
28 Ibid., 50.
29 Ibid., 193.
30 This element of human storytelling particularly pertinent in section 4.4, the critical reflection on *Golems Inc*.
31 Schank, *Tell Me a Story*, 32.
32 Stephen Crites, "Storytime: Recollecting the Past and Projecting the Future" in *Narrative Psychology: The Stored Nature of Human Conduct*, Theodore R. Sarbin (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 160-162.
33 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), 5-6.
34 Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*: *Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, (London: Vintage, 2004), 110.

virtual selves that may or may not link to our offline personae.[35] Van Dijck posits that since the appearance of online social media the need for 'a multiple composite self has only increased.'[36]

A final note particularly in relation to *posthuman noir*: the creation of fiction is also tied to the ability to tell fictive accounts of our experiences; to lie. Having thought through a scenario, it might aid our survival if we do not tell the truth, or if we present a version of ourselves which does not match our usual identity.[37] This is a particularly pertinent aspect of human storytelling when considering traditional film noir and *posthuman noir*, in which storytelling is used as a tactic of deception.[38]

4.2.2: Storytelling in *posthuman noir*

I argue that, in the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, the posthuman characters who demonstrate human storytelling ability—who are able to use stories to pass on information, to integrate into social groups, to think beyond the here and now, to lie and develop a sense of self—are presented in a more positive light than posthuman characters who stick to the 'scripts'[39] they have been programmed to follow. This draws attention to an underlying impulse within *posthuman noir* that privileges this human quality of storytelling. In this section, I demonstrate how the different facets of human storytelling ability, as discussed in the previous section, are present in *posthuman noir*.

As I mentioned, there are other creatures that use storytelling to pass on information,[40] so this facet in and of itself is not enough to indicate that posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* have gained human storytelling abilities. The AutoReiv robots in *Ergo Proxy* (dir. Shukō Murase, 2006) communicate with each other and pass on information to their human owners without being self-aware. This can be seen in episode one in the way Dorothy (voiced by Sanae Kobayasi) passes information to Vincent (voiced by Koji Yusa) to help him do his work and

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[35] For more on the changing presentation of digital selves see José van Dijck, "'You have one identity': performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn," *Media Culture and Society* 35:2, (2013): 199-215. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443712468605.

[36] Ibid. 200.

[37] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 5.

[38] For more in traditional film noir and storytelling see Chapter 2.2.

[39] For more on the way scripts are a method for storing and retrieving memories and experiences, allowing human beings to function on a daily basis see Roger C. Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 7-12.

[40] For an overview of the way bees use dance as a language to convey a story/information see Eileen Crist, "Can an Insect Speak: The Case of Honey Bee Dance Language:" 7-43.

integrate in the society of Romdeau.[41] In a similar manner, many of the posthumans that David (Haley Joel Osment) encounters in *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (dir. Spielberg, 2001) exist just to pass on information. Take, for example, the holographic Dr. Know (voiced by Robin Williams), who David visits to discover the whereabouts of the Blue Fairy; this programme does not understand context and thus sends David to Manhattan, chasing a fairy tale.[42] Therefore, it is the facets of the human storytelling ability beyond memory storage and recall that are presented as positive qualities in *posthuman noir*.

Humans use storytelling to establish the rules and customs of their societies, and once again this facet of storytelling is present in *posthuman noir*. This is particularly evident in *Dark City[43]* (dir. Alex Proyas, 1998), where no one wants to leave the city because they are following the rules of their society; a similar cultural story is presented in *Ergo Proxy*. In *Dark City*, the human characters are part of an experiment by the Strangers, aliens who rearrange human memories, rewriting the humans' stories every night, in order to find the essence of human nature which is paramount to their survival. The Strangers rely on the humans' capacity to follow their society's stories to keep them in the city. Therefore, the posthuman protagonist's, John Murdoch (Rufus Sewell), quest to leave for Shell Beach is presented as dangerous and disruptive, going off this society's script; little does he know that there is nothing but space beyond the walls of the city. The difficulties of using storytelling to develop the rules of a society is also addressed in *The Matrix* (dir. the Wachowskis, 1998), where Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving) explains to Neo (Keanu Reeves) the problems the robots had in constructing the Matrix; their initial design, a paradise, was rejected by the human minds for being too perfect.[44]

I previously mentioned that humans use storytelling to function within social groups; I further argue that in *posthuman noir*, the posthuman characters who develop storytelling ability are shown to cooperate more successfully with each other and with human characters. Through this cooperation, or in the case of *Ex_Machina*, manipulation,[45] the posthuman characters survive and are often shown as reintegrating into society at the end of the screen text. At the end of *Ex_Machina*, Ava is shown to blend into the crowds at a busy intersection in the city; she has

[41] 'The Pulse of Awakening/Awakening,' episode 1, *Ergo Proxy*, directed by Shukō Murase (2006; Chepstow: MVM Entertainment, 2007), DVD.
[42] *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, directed by Steven Spielberg (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers Pictures, 2001).
[43] *Dark City*, directed by Alex Proyas, (London; Entertainment in Video Ltd, 1998).
[44] *The Matrix*, directed by the Wachowskis, (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1999).
[45] See Chapter 3.3 in which I explore *Ex_Machina* in a more detailed case study.

learned how to pass for human. The idea that storytelling ability allows posthuman characters to fit within a society is especially foregrounded in the Japanese anime included within the *posthuman noir* subgenre. At the end of *Darker Than Black*, posthumans, Hei and Yin, who have demonstrated storytelling abilities, are able to disappear into the normal society of the near future Tokyo because they can interact the most effectively with normal humans.[46] While in *Ergo Proxy*, the three different posthumans—clone (Re-l, voiced by Rie Saitō); proxy (Vincent); and AutoReiv (Pino, voiced by Akiko Yajima)—learn to understand and empathise with each other, and choose to form a new social group of their own which mimics that of a human family: Vincent and Re-l as a couple, and Pino as their child.[47] Thus, the privileging of storytelling ability functions to perpetuate liberal humanist ideas of the human as a social creature, who can fit into a role within a complex social structure.[48]

In *Dark City*, it is the connections human storytelling ability fosters that enables John, who has evolved into a posthuman entity that can use the Stranger's abilities to manipulate space with their minds, to succeed. Through the stories he tells about himself, and those he listens to from others around him, John forms connections with Emma (Jennifer Connelly), Inspector Frank Bumstead (William Hurt) and Dr Daniel Schreber (Keifer Sutherland) and they work together to defeat the Strangers. The human capacity to tell stories, and to use those stories to form emotional bonds with others, is presented as the key to survival. The Strangers do not understand how important it is to use emotion in storytelling to engage with their audiences.[49] Thus they are unable to understand why John maintains his previous memories of Emma, rather than his new identity of being a serial killer. The power of that previous story, tied to the emotional connection between John and Emma, emphasises the difference between the Strangers and humans, and their application of storytelling. At the end of the film, John tells his nemesis, the Stranger called Mr Hand (Richard O'Brien), that in searching through the human mind the Strangers were looking in the wrong place to understand humanity; the implication being that it is the emotions which fuel our ability to tell stories, not just in the stories themselves.

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[46] I explore *Darker Than Black* in more detail in the next section, 4.3: "They Work hard to Blend In."

[47] 'Proxy/Deus ex Machina,' episode 23, *Ergo Proxy*, dir. Murase, (2006).

[48] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 64.

[49] See Linda Aronson, *The 21st Century Screenplay: A Comprehensive Guide to Writing Tomorrow's Films*, (U.S.A.; Silman-James Press, 2010), 45.

That is not to say that storytelling ability always allows for connection; there is also the potential for misinterpretation. Schank posits that 'A being must have a set of stories and tell them for the right reasons at the right time to be considered intelligent.'[50] This maps onto the way I argue storytelling functions within *posthuman noir*, where the emulation of human cognitive growth patterns hints at the humanist nature of the *posthuman noir*. Posthuman characters are often seen to make mistakes when they first gain the ability to tell stories; their narrative impulses must be honed, in similar ways to those of a child learning to make sense of the world. In episodes 5 and 6 of *Ergo Proxy*,[51] Pino is unable to understand the grief narratives presented to her when Timothy (voiced by Yasuhiro Takato) is killed by a drone strike from Romdeau. Pino's inability to tell the right story to those grieving in the Commune initially causes pain and conflict—Pino misinterpreting Timothy's death, tells his mother that he isn't being nice to her, that he is ignoring her and won't give her book back.[52] This highlights that she has not honed her storytelling ability, that she cannot interpret situations with enough context. However, when Hoody (voiced by Hiroshi Arikawa) explains to Pino how humans die, [53] she is able to interpret the grief narratives of those around her and she develops her own way of expressing loss.

Human storytelling not only allows humans to imagine scenarios, but also to create fictions. Here, it is fruitful to think of the relationship between storytelling and the proliferation of subjective narratives in traditional film noir. The ability to lie, to make up a story, is integral to the construction of film noir. Characters within traditional film noir are unreliable; they create personas to mask their true intentions and manipulate others.[54] It is interesting to note how storytelling as a skill is reframed from traditional film noir in *posthuman noir*. While the search for the truth, and the obscuring of the truth through unreliable storytelling, false memories, lies and deceit, continues in *posthuman noir*, the fatalistic tone that pervades voiceover narrations is reformed into one of hope. Vincent's voiceover in *Gattaca* (dir. Andrew Niccol, 1997),[55] for example, is an example of the shift in tone from fatalistic to optimistic. Throughout the film Vincent has consistently used his human storytelling ability to lie to those around him and

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[50] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 54.
[51] 'Recall/Twilight' episode 5 and 'Return Home/Domecoming,' episode 6, *Ergo Proxy*, dir. Murase, (2006).
[52] 'Recall/Twilight' episode 5, *Ergo Proxy*, dir. Murase, (2006), 00:23:29.
[53] 'Return Home/Domecoming,' episode 6, *Ergo Proxy*, dir. Murase, (2006), 00:10:09.
[54] Ian Brookes, *Film Noir: A Critical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 67-8.
[55] *Gattaca*, directed by Andrew Niccol, (1997; Los Angeles, CA: Columbia).

convince them her is Jerome Morrow. In the final moments, his voiceover recounts his experience from a position of triumph as he leaves the planet on a space ship; it is his human storytelling qualities that allow for his survival over the posthuman characters.

Humans can also be taken in by their own stories; J.P. Telotte suggests that characters in traditional film noir worlds can become lost in their own fictions, or false personas.[56] This is reflected in *posthuman noir*; Vincent (Ethan Hawke) in *Gattaca*, for example, is so convincing in his lie about being Jerome Morrow that even he is taken in by it. Vincent, like many of the characters in the *posthuman noir* subgenre, is a conman, using lies and fictional lives to blend in with the society around him. To maintain his cover identity, Vincent cleans his body carefully to prevent any skin or hair cells from being detected and incinerates these cells everyday—Vincent's failure at this, losing an eyelash near the scene of the crime, results in the police becoming involved and his real identity being potentially unearthed. Vincent is so enamoured with Irene (Uma Thurman) that he spends the night with her in her home; her belief in his fictive identity draws him in and causes him to make a mistake. In staying in her house, he leaves evidence of his real identity in discarded cells, and is forced to try and scrub himself clean on the beach.

In *posthuman noir*, the posthuman characters, like humans, recycle and repurpose their experiences and the stories they encounter.[57] This facet of storytelling can be seen in the way the citizens of the city in *Dark City* have their memories, their narratives, reconfigured on a daily basis; or in the way that posthuman characters quote and reference stories, as Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) in *Blade Runner*, for example, recites, 'Fiery the angels fell; deep thunder rolled around their shores; burning with the fires of Orc,'[58] reinterpreting *America A Prophecy*, a poem by William Blake. This ability to recycle and reimagine experiences demonstrates an awareness of the unreliable and changing nature of narrative. When a reader encounters a text, their previous experience, and their mood when reading, will change how they interpret the text,[59] whether they follow authorial intention or find something else within it.[60] I argue that posthuman

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[56] J.P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 191.
[57] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 58.
[58] *Blade Runner*, dir. Ridley Scott, (1982, Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD, 00:27:00.
[59] Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 242.
[60] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 142-148.

characters use their storytelling ability in evolving ways as their own experiences change. It is this adaptive behaviour which transcends their programming and enables their survival. In *Dark City*, John, who starts with amnesia—because he rejects the current narrative the Strangers have programmed for him—is able to adapt to his own narrative to navigate his way through the city; he is at his most vulnerable early on when he is not in control of his own story. The human ability to adapt to changing narratives is also demonstrated through the character of Inspector Bumstead. Although he is initially an antagonistic figure—in the Strangers' current story, he is the Inspector tasked with tracking down John's serial killer—his role as an inspector leads him to investigate the facts, develop his own interpretation of the story and eventually side with John.

Finally, storytelling enables posthuman characters to develop a sense of self and to perform that identity. I examine this facet in relation to Hei and Yin in my case study of *Darker Than Black* (section 4.3); however, it is not only these characters who use story to perform their identities. Vincent, in *Gattaca*, uses his storytelling ability to perform his role as Jerome; this is not a story he only performs with language but with his whole body. In discussing the way humans use performance to establish and shift their identity, Erving Goffman argues that 'Sometimes an individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain.'[61] Goffman goes on to explore how this performance is not just about use of language but also micro expressions and manipulation of environment, all of which are managed by the performer to enhance their narrative. The posthuman characters who survive in *posthuman noir* are those who can harness storytelling in order to perform their identities most effectively.

Through a convincing performance, a character can also become what they imitate, such as Ava. who becomes indistinguishable from other humans at the end of *Ex_Machina*. Through more than pretending, through the simulation of being human, posthuman characters appear more human.[62] Belief in the narrative one tells about oneself can change and help to define our sense of identity.[63] In *The Matrix*, it is important that Neo believes he is The One, as The Oracle

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[61] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), 5.
[62] Jean Baudrillard in the essay "The Precession of the Simulacra" in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (U.S.A.: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 3.
[63] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 15-19.

(Gloria Foster) explains when he visits her in her apartment: 'It means know thy self. I wanna tell you a little secret, being The One is just like being in love. No one needs to tell you you are in love, you just know it through and through.'[64] It is only when Neo believes the narrative, when he stops pretending and begins to believe the story, to simulate being The One that he becomes The One. In this case, performance of a story can lead to it becoming a reality; in *posthuman noir* more generally, through embracing this aspect of storytelling posthuman character transcend their performance and survive.

Now that I have established how storytelling ability is figured broadly in *posthuman noir*, setting up the ways I conceptualise storytelling, in the next section I apply these ideas to a close reading of *Darker Than Black*, which illuminates how this human trait is validated in the subgenre.

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[64] *The Matrix*, directed by the Wachowskis (1999, Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1999), DVD, 01:11:01.

4.3: They Work Hard to Blend In:

The use of storytelling ability in *Darker Than Black*

> *They work hard to blend in,*
> *But it's all pretending,*
> *Like a dream.*[65]

I argue that in *posthuman noir*, one of the key definers of a character's humanity is their ability to tell stories; as Reynolds Price states, 'a need to tell and hear stories is essential to the species Homo Sapiens.'[66] In this case study, I will analyse the importance of gaining storytelling ability in the posthuman characters in the Japanese anime *Darker than Black* (dir. Tensai Okamura, 2007).[67] I selected *Darker Than Black* for this close reading, firstly, because it is a Japanese anime series which provides a balance to the creative practice screenplay, *Golems Inc.*, which is written in the style of an Anglo-American film.

More significantly, I chose this text due to the way in which human storytelling ability is tied to its central premise. This series of 26 episodes, each twenty-five minutes long, tracks the progress of posthuman characters—humans who have been modified at a molecular level, called contractors and dolls—who must pretend to be human to carry out a series of missions for their employers, The Syndicate, in a near future Tokyo. After an unexplained incident ten years previous to the series, two areas of the world have emerged—one in South America labelled Heaven's Gate, and one in Tokyo labelled Hell's Gate—which are uninhabitable to humans. In Tokyo, a large wall has been built around the Hell's Gate, the area left for scientific research, while the city's occupants have resumed their normal lives. There is a link to the damaged cities

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[65] Tim Jensen and Yoko Kanno, *Blend In*, performed by James Wendt, *Darker Than Black Original Soundtrack*, Sony Music Distribution, JAN/ISBN 4534530019769, 25/07/2007. CD.

[66] Reynolds Price, *A Palpable God: Thirty Stories Translated from the Bible with an Essay on the Origins and Life of Narrative* (U.S.A: North Point Pr., 1985), 3.

[67] *Darker than Black*, directed by Tensai Okamura (2007, Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd., 2010) DVD. The series aired between April and September 2007, and was produced by animation studios Bones and Aniplex. The first series was recommended as a finalist by the jury at the 2007 Japan Media Arts Festival for the category of animation division, http://archive.j-mediaarts.jp/en/festival/2007/animation/#selections last accessed 27/09/2016. A shorter second series of 13 episodes followed in 2009, with an OVA (original video animation) of four episodes in 2010. The analysis in case study concentrates on the first series of *Darker Than Black*, although the themes discussed continue throughout the second series and the OVA.

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in this image,[68] harkening back to the collective national trauma memory of the Second World War.[69]

After the development of Hell's Gate and Heaven's Gate, and the ensuing disappearance of the real sky, some humans have evolved at a molecular level into posthumans called contractors and dolls. Throughout the series, it is explained that both contractors and dolls are modified humans, whose genetics have been altered at a cellular level, erasing their capacity to develop emotions and transforming them into posthumans. Various scientists in the series—like Dr Schroeder (Iemasa Kayumi) in episodes 21 and 22—investigate these posthumans but nothing conclusive is discovered.

Contractors are named for the contract, or price, they must obsessive-compulsively pay to use their posthuman abilities; these range from breaking their fingers after using an anti-gravitational ability or reverse-aging after using an ability to manipulate time.[70] Throughout the series, a contractor's rational, logical thought process is constantly held up as a major symbol of their superiority and difference from humans. Contractors are the most active posthuman characters in *Darker Than Black*; they are the characters who act out elaborate con scenarios to forward the agendas of the shadow organisations they work for. However, I argue that it is the contractors who demonstrate the human storytelling ability that are ultimately cast in a more positive light, especially when they use this ability to deviate from their rational or logical decision making. In this case study, I will focus on the main protagonist contractor in *Darker Than Black* named Hei (Hidenobu Kiuchi).

The other main type of posthuman character in *Darker Than Black* are dolls. These are 'blank slate' characters who have lost all trace of their original human personalities. These dolls are able to have their minds networked to act as living surveillance devices, sending their 'spectres'—small ghostly apparitions, amorphous globules with stylised dark patches for eyes—

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[68] Susan J. Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle – Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2005), 29.

[69] It is interesting to note that *Darker Than Black* is not the only anime with film noir aesthetics that depicts an inaccessible metropolitan area, a reflection of the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: e.g. *Akira* (dir. Katsuhiro Otomo, 1988). The impact of this event on the American psyche, adding to a spreading distrust of authority can be seen in the darker, cynical tone of film noir. It is fascinating to see this genre adapted back through a Japanese cultural product; it has become part of a global transcultural feedback loop, a concept posited by Tatsumi Takayuki, *Full Metal Apache: Transactions between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-pop America* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 176.

[70] As demonstrated respectively by the character of Louis in "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1 and Amber in "Memories of Betrayal in an Amber Smile" episode 16, *Darker Than Black,* Okamura, (2007).

out along wires, through water and through glass to spy on whomever they are ordered to. With no agency or self-awareness, dolls act purely on orders. They are an example of a posthuman perfectly evolved for a single task, but who lack the capacity to be unreliable, or even function, outside of these roles. Used and abused, as demonstrated in the episode arc titled 'A Love Song Sung from a Trash Heap,'[71] dolls are treated as little more than commodities to be traded, not people to be cared about. Therefore, when dolls begin to exhibit signs of emotion or the ability to tell their own stories, it is more noticeable and dramatic. This is not to say that they regain their original personalities; rather, they start again, constructing new personal stories and identities. In this case study, I will concentrate on the doll Yin (Misato Fukuen), who begins to display consciousness through storytelling ability.

There is a tantalising potential in these characters, especially Mao (Ikyua Sawaki), whose mind possesses the body of a cat, to re-imagine the world from a post-anthropocentric perspective. However, these alleys are closed down. Mao's human experiences and his human instinct for story are positioned as commendable. In the penultimate episode of the show when Mao is cut off from the Syndicate, the feline identity overwhelms him and Mao is lost, considered dead.[72] The cat runs away, abandoning Hei and Yin to their fate, which undermines the notion of Mao as a fully posthuman, integrated human/non-human animal, character who retains his purpose and loyalty to the team. I see *Darker Than Black* as a *posthuman noir* story in terms of what Stefan Herbrechter calls a "humanist parable,"[73] confirming the superiority and importance of storytelling as an intangible but inherently human trait that must be preserved in posthuman futures. If their cover is blown due to their stories not holding true, these posthuman characters will be hunted down and captured or even killed. Therefore, it is imperative that they maintain convincing cover stories, and it is the protagonists, Hei and Yin, who are the most effective at appearing human that survive.

In the rest of this sub-section, as with the previous chapter I first establish *Darker Than Black* as a *posthuman noir* anime in 4.3.1, exploring how it fits within the subgenre. I then move on to examine the ways that storytelling ability is presented in the series through analysing the subversion of traditional film noir structure (4.3.2) and the focus on the way human storytelling

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[71] "A Love Song Sung from the Trash Heap," episodes 17 and 18, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007).
[72] "Meteor Shower," episode 24, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura, (2007).
[73] Stefan Herbrechter, *Posthumanism: a critical analysis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 119.

manifests in the characters of Hei and Yin (4.3.3). The importance of storytelling as human trait is seen through the shift that occurs in how this skill is refigured in *posthuman noir*. Storytelling transforms from a framing device that charts the fatalistic journey of the human protagonist— as demonstrated in *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944)[74] or *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950)[75]—to an acquired skill which enables posthuman characters to pass for human, tell their own subjective versions of events, and ultimately navigate their way through the complex narrative web that surrounds them.

4.3.1: Darker Than Black as *posthuman noir*

In Chapter 2.4, I set out a series of defining features, linked to traditional film noir, which are present in the Anglo-American films and Japanese anime I have selected to form the subgenre of *posthuman noir*. In this section, I demonstrate how through aesthetics, *Darker Than Black* is also representative of the subgenre.

As mentioned before, one of the major defining features of film noir aesthetic is 'constant opposition of light and shadow [...use of] oblique camera angles [... with a] disruptive compositional balance of frames and scenes.'[76] *Darker Than Black* emulates the use of camera angles and compositional balance in both the microcosm of each episode and the series overall. After the natural environment of the opening scene, attention shifts to the heavily urban environment of a near future Tokyo.[77] A series of shots, emulating oblique camera angles, are presented as a contractor called Louis (Yasuyuki Kase), initially seen almost in silhouette, is chased by the police across the rooftops. In each shot, the angle is awkward and unbalanced, the pursuit framed from the streets below glancing up,[78] before switching to a bird's eye perspective, staring down on Louis' escape.[79] Not only do these angles disorientate the viewer, as with the angles in film noir, they reflect the atmosphere of mystery and confusion which pervades the

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[74] *Double Indemnity*, directed by Billy Wilder (1944, Universal City, CA: Universal Studios). In this film the narrative framing device functions as a confession, Walter Neff relates how he came to end up in his current fatal situation.

[75] *Sunset Boulevard*, directed by Billy Wilder (1950, Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures). Joe Gillis is already dead at the beginning of *Sunset Boulevard*, his body floats face down in a pool. His narration, from beyond the grave acts as a fatalistic warning to the living.

[76] Mark T. Conard, ed. *The Philosophy of Film Noir* (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 1.

[77] It has been argued that an urban environment is one of the key features of film noir, see Andrew Spicer, *Film Noir*, (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 66-67.

[78] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura (2007), 00:00:46

[79] Ibid., 00:00:48.

narrative. Louis' face is lit from below, a sharp contrast of light and shadow,[80] indicative of the way the environment is also presented.

Instead of the sharp contrast of black and white used in traditional film noir, *Darker Than Black* is dominated by a palate of moody purples, acid greens and deep blues which provide similar lighting effects to traditional film noir. This colour contrast, established in the first scenes,[81] develops as a visual signifier not only of film noir but of the rotting, corrupt nature of the world the characters populate, tying thematically to central concepts of traditional film noir.

Paul Schrader points out that in traditional film noir, 'a majority of scenes [are] lit for night',[82] just as many of the scenes are set in the night-time. This visualisation of the secretive, shady and deceitful world of film noir is emulated by Okamura in *Darker Than Black*. Most of the pivotal scenes in the series occur at night, from the meeting in episode 1 between contractor Hei, masquerading as human Li, and Chiaki Shinoda (Megumi Toyoguchi) the femme fatale target of Hei's first mission; to the showdown between Hei and Nick, a contractor masquerading as a scientist, in Hell's Gate in episode 14, where Yin first demonstrates her free will; to the moment when Hei and Yin enter Hell's Gate in the final pair of episodes.

The series soundtrack, composed by Yoko Kanno, invokes the jazz and blues music popular during the period that traditional film noir films were made, with track titles such as 'Scat Cat.'[83] Through the use of rhythms, instruments and arrangements that reference the music used in traditional film noir, *Darker Than Black* generates the moody aural landscape to match its dark and disorientating visual aesthetics.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Schrader also notes that in traditional film noir 'there is [an] attachment to water.'[84] From the first scene, the deep connection with water that flows through *Darker Than Black* is established. A still lake perfectly reflects a starry sky; it is difficult to discern where the water ends and where the sky begins.[85] Water is an element which is tied to

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[80] Ibid., 00:00:52.
[81] Ibid., 00:00:30
[82] Paul Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir" (1972) in *Film Noir Reader*, eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight editions, 1996), 57.
[83] Yoko Kanno, *Darker Than Black Original Soundtrack*, Sony Music Distribution, JAN/ISBN 4534530019769, 25/07/2007. CD.
[84] Schrader, 'Notes on Film Noir,' 57.
[85] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:00:23.

ideas of the unconscious, and narratively bound to ideas of interiority and introspection.[86] In film noir, water is used as a medium of reflection, where rain-slicked streets generate warped reflections of the environment and characters. Water has hidden depths and still surfaces can conceal currents and riptides. This demonstrates the difference between perception and reality which is constantly at play in film noir narratives, and water is used in a similar way in *Darker Than Black*. The first scene establishes a peaceful natural environment, but this is the first glimpse of Hei's trauma memory, one which drives his actions throughout the series; a peaceful memory which disguises the ugly truth of his sister's posthuman descent into slaughter and madness. Water acts in *Darker Than Black* as a symbol for the ways in which the surface perception and reality of characters is often at odds.

Water is also the element tied to Yin. As a doll, Yin sends her 'spectre,' a type of observation spirit, through water to track the movements of her team and enemies.[87] The final image of the series, like the first, is an image of water, although this time it is of a Tokyo Canal. Hovering over the surface of the water is Yin's spectre, which has transformed; it is no longer an amorphous globule but resembles Yin's human form.[88] This new spectre's change in appearance visualises the change within Yin; by the end of the series she has connected with human abilities of storytelling and experienced an emotional awakening, thus she represents a balance between human and posthuman qualities.

4.3.2: Storytelling in the subversion of traditional film noir structure

As mentioned in previous chapters, traditional film noir structure revolves around establishing the protagonist in their typical routine, which is then disrupted by the entrance of the femme, or homme, fatale. What follows is seduction, the transgression of moral and social boundaries by the protagonist in pursuit of the fatale which inevitably leads to the protagonist's downfall.[89] Film noir structure employs flashback, with or without voiceover narration, to add to the fatalistic tone of the story.[90] What I will demonstrate in this section is that when the

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[86] C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Routledge: Hove. 1959), 24.

[87] I will explore this in more detail when discussing Yin's character later in this section.

[88] "Does the Reaper Dream of Darkness Darker Than Black?" episode 25, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura, (2007).

[89] J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark*, 217. This is a simplification of the structure for reiteration at the beginning of this section, for more on film noir structure see Chapter 2.2.

[90] Mark T. Conard, "Nietzsche and meaning and the definition of film noir," in *The Philosophy of Film Noir*, ed. Mark. T. Conard (London: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 7.

posthuman characters within *Darker Than Black* fully embrace the human trait of storytelling, this structure is subverted on both the micro scale of each pair of episodes, and the macro scale of the whole series.

On a micro scale, this subversion of traditional film noir structure is established from the first pair of episodes titled "The Fallen Star of a Contract." The narrative revolves around a stolen piece of technology which the femme fatale, the white and red clad[91] Chiaki Shinoda, has taken. Chiaki seemingly seduces Hei into helping her escape from, and kill, her co-conspirators, ultimately leading him into a trap which should result in his death. When Hei steps in front of Chiaki to defend her from the other contractors—an illogical and emotional move—he is shot in the back by Chiaki.[92]

Thus far, the typical film noir structure is demonstrated in this pair of episodes. However, this is *posthuman noir*, not traditional film noir, and Hei continuously exhibits an ability to be a storyteller. Hei assumes a fake identity as a Chinese exchange student, Li Shengshun, to move into the apartment next to Chiaki. Through his human storytelling ability, Hei is able to convincingly create this alter ego, and ingratiate himself into Chiaki's life, for example appearing in the park stargazing just when she needs rescuing.[93] Storytelling is a process of emotional manipulation,[94] and Hei's assumption of the Li persona calculatingly manipulates Chiaki to earn her trust. Li appears surprised to see Chiaki, but then acts as a gallant protector, pulling her into an embrace to avoid the police. After the kiss, his bashful and embarrassed reaction draws Chiaki in, inviting her to drop her guard around this shy, altruistic man. This is all an act. Even at the end of the second part where Hei reveals himself to the other contractors and is shot, he is still in control of the narrative. Through placing himself supposedly in danger, he creates a story in which his opponents reveal their secrets over his 'dead' body. Through performing the persona of Li, Hei employs human storytelling ability to the fullest, incorporating emotional awakening and manipulation, to succeed where other contractors fail.

Through this encounter with the femme fatale, Hei and the team are pushed to craft a more convincing narrative; this fake identity that Hei assumes is strong enough to fool the doll

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[91] Kathrina Giltre, discusses the costuming of femme fatales in red and white in "Under the Neon Rainbow: Colour and Neo Noir" in *Neo Noir*, ed. Mark Bould, Kathrina Giltre and Greg Tuck (London: Wallflower Press, 2009), 20.

[92] 'The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part Two,' episode 2, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura, (2007).

[93] 'The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One,' episode 1, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:14:45.

[94] Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 243.

imprinted with Chiaki's memories as well as her contractor employers. Through the manipulation of experience, using the other human quality of emotionality,[95] Hei survives the attack and is triumphant in his mission. As a posthuman character, Hei is rewarded rather than punished for his transgression from his logical programming. The other contractors and Chiaki, who is in fact a doll, are killed because they cannot keep up with Hei's superior storytelling.

Boyd argues that storytelling allows humans to think beyond the here and now[96] which increases mental flexibility and furthers survival. In this episode, Hei projects beyond the here and now, thinking beyond the scenario played out for him by the doll posing as Chiaki; he predicts her duplicity and plans for it. Hei uses his experience of interacting with contractors and dolls, envisioning their rational approach to this situation, combined with imagination to foresee a series of outcomes and then use his own abilities as a storyteller to turn the tables on the other contractors. This first pair of episodes establishes a pattern that, in this world, the posthuman who can generate the most convincing con wins. Hei and his team are more accomplished storytellers than the contractors they face, their con is ultimately the most successful, allowing them to emerge triumphant.

All the other episodes within the series follow this structure, building a pattern which, in the macrocosm of the series arc, fully reinforces the humanist standpoint: the characters who regain their human ability for storytelling are able to outsmart their enemies and survive. The two main protagonists, Hei and Yin, who to some extent act as femme fatale and homme fatal for each other, form emotional bonds, reawakening their human desires and human abilities for storytelling. Storytelling is linked to human sensory and emotional experience and, through each other, Hei and Yin reconnect with this human facet of their posthuman selves. They are thus able to function more illogically and unpredictably than other posthuman characters. This is important in ensuring their survival and shared positive ending.

In the pair of episodes titled 'The White Dress Stained with the Girl's Dreams and Blood,'[97] Hei again performs the person of Li at a party. He maintains this cover identity in front of police section chief Misaki Kirihara (Nana Mizuki), emotionally manipulating her, winning her sympathy and trust as he saves her life. This forms a bond which connects these two

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[95] For more on this see the previous case study on *Ex_Machina* (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) in Chapter 3.3.
[96] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 50.
[97] "The White Dress Stained with the Girl's Dreams and Blood… Part One and Two" episodes 9 and 10, *Darker Than Black*, dir. Okamura (2007).

characters throughout the series; Hei comes to trust and respect Kirihara and conversely, Kirihara is able to trust and rely on Hei. On the other hand, the second contractor in episodes 9 and 10, Wei (Takashi Kusao), is less convincing in his performance because he lacks some elements of the human storytelling ability. When he first appears, Wei seems different to the others at the party, he is cold and aloof which raises Kirihara's suspicions. Wei, like other contractors, functions on logic and this rational mindset means he only needs to convince his target, Alice Wang (Shizuka Ito), to whom he is very attentive. But this single mindedness is his downfall as his act is perceived by others who are watching; unlike Hei, he does not perform for a general audience. Wei does not understand, nor care about, the social function of storytelling and how his act will be viewed by those other than his target; thus, his narrative is shallow and easily detected.

Finally, the series is framed by voiceover narration from the human police section chief, Misaki Kirihara. Kirihara is not the main protagonist, nor is she posthuman; however, the tone of her voiceover demonstrates the shift from fatalistic to something more positive. The opening voiceover is expositional,[98] informing the audience that Kirihara is a no-nonsense character who takes the job seriously; she is logical and impartial. However, being human, her virtues come from her intangible human qualities of emotion and storytelling. By the final voiceover, Kirihara's perspective on Hei and Yin has changed—initially Kirihara dislikes all contractors and is dismissive of the dolls—and now the tone is hopeful. Kirihara wants these posthuman characters to survive and fit in. The final message is one of their assimilation or normalisation into society.

4.3.3: Presentation of human storytelling ability in Hei and Yin

I have demonstrated how the subversion of traditional film noir structures and narrative devices occur when characters regain the ability to be storytellers. I now want to focus on two posthuman protagonists, Hei and Yin, and explore how they employ and represent different aspects of human storytelling ability. In *Darker Than Black,* the ability to maintain more traditionally human qualities of storytelling in combination with their emotions, as well as harnessing their posthuman natures, equips the protagonists with the skills needed to thrive and reintegrate with society.

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[98] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, 2007).

As I mentioned earlier in this section, Hei draws on his human storytelling abilities to construct more convincing fake identities and succeed in his missions for The Syndicate. He also wants to solve the story of his strange situation—he has contractor abilities but he also still has his human emotions. The solution to the mystery Hei is trying to solve throughout the series is ultimately hidden inside himself, but he needs to learn to express that story. Hei is defined by the journey he takes to understand his dual human/posthuman nature and his inability to come to terms with what he is. Ironically, before his posthuman transformation, Hei was considered as less human than after his transformation to being posthuman. This is noted by the contractor Havoc (Naomi Shindō): 'You, who were more cold-blooded than anyone, despite not being a contractor […] Now that you are a contractor, here you are beside yourself over something like your sister. You're emotional […] Are you really a contractor?'[99] It takes being considered an 'other' to allow Hei to truly embrace his intangible human qualities. He no longer has to act to keep up with the contractors around him; the act of physically becoming less human allows Hei to rediscover his humanity. Hei embraces human storytelling ability to such an extent that his act, the mild and empathetic Li personality, starts to break through even when he does not need to perform, for example, when Hei and Yin assist the nameless doll escape in episode 18,[100] and in the final episodes when Hei confronts the ghosts of his past in the centre of Hell's Gate.[101] It is when Hei accepts both side of his story—his posthuman and human identities—that he takes control of his narrative and he is able to survive.

Hei is represented on screen by two distinct personas which visualise his posthuman and human natures. It is only once he embraces both aspects that he can thrive. While Hei's professional posthuman persona is a masked, efficient assassin, his everyday 'human' persona is the exact opposite as Li Shenshun, a Chinese student and a sensitive, shy everyman. The Hei persona dresses in a black trench coat, reminiscent of the 1940s/50s fashion of traditional film noir as well as iconic *posthuman noir* antecedents like Deckard (Harrison Ford) in *Blade Runner*, while his face is hidden by a white mask;[102] this appearance hints at duplicity and danger. On the other hand, the Li persona wears a white shirt, which is always partially

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[99] "Red Giant over Eastern Europe... Part Two," episode 6, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:03:50.
[100] "A Love Song Sung from the Trash Heap… Part Two," episode 18, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007).
[101] "Does the Reaper Dream of Darkness Darker than Black?" episode 25, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007).
[102] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:02:57.

untucked, with blue jeans and his expression is often figured as bewildered innocence.[103] The prevalence of white in Li's outfits symbolically casts Li as the moral half to Hei's criminal immoral killer. The Hei persona fits into traditional hardboiled rational masculine tropes while the Li persona is characterised by the more stereotypically feminine attributes of empathy and intuition. It is as the Li persona, which needs to pass as a human, that Hei's storytelling abilities are most evident. Li is exposed, both physically—his outfit is more open and does not offer the protection Hei's armoured trench coat has, nor the anonymity of the mask—and situationally, where the Li persona enacts the various con missions until the target is ascertained and the Hei persona can fight his way out. Therefore, it is in his Li persona, that Hei must be a master of storytelling and narrative if he is to have any chance of being successful. Through embracing his human storytelling ability, and the human aspects of his nature, at the end of the series Hei chooses to allow humans and posthumans to both survive, restoring the equilibrium of the world.

In traditional film noir, characters are often depicted on the margins of society, private detectives, policemen gone rogue and bored everymen who try to cheat the system.[104] These characters use storytelling to lie and manipulate others, transgressing that society's rules until they are destroyed.[105] In *posthuman noir*, however, once a posthuman character gains human storytelling ability they are able to blend into the societies they inhabit. Hei's human persona, Li Shenshun, is a Chinese exchange student; this situates him as an outsider in Japan just as being a posthuman contractor marks Hei as an outsider to humanity. This outsider identity allows Li to make, and fake, mistakes; it excuses him from knowing Japanese customs, the culturally common stories, which provides him with an alibi when his responses differ to the humans around him.

This outsider status functions on two levels with characters like Hei or Yin, who is Finnish; they are foreigners as well as posthumans. For them, finding their community with each other, and within the team they are part of, forms the locus of their transformation back towards their humanity.[106] 'Human cooperation [through storytelling] enables millions of individuals

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[103] Ibid., 00:14:34.

[104] Spicer, *Film Noir*, 85-89.

[105] J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 217.

[106] David Desser argues that in Japanese noir 'to be alienated and alone, adrift from family and friends, is a fate worse than death.' I believe this can be equally applied to Japanese *posthuman noir* see "The Gunman and the Gun: Japanese film noir since the late 1950s," in *International Noir*, ed. H. Pettey and R. Palmer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 133.

and myriad groups with distinct purposes to cooperate on more-than-local and sometimes global scale.'[107] Finding their identity and claiming the narrative of that identity, reclaiming their storytelling ability enables Hei and Yin to blend in with society.

Hei's journey as a posthuman protagonist is mirrored in another of the series' protagonists, Yin, a doll. At the start of the series, Yin is a typical doll; her facial expressions are constantly blank, her eyes fixed in the middle distance, her breath imperceptible, as if she were really a doll.[108] Yin is introduced through the stylised features of her 'spectre,' which is indistinguishable from any other doll's spectre.[109] This emphasises that she is no longer a human being with an individual freewill or consciousness. Yin's spectre has an affinity to water, and it manifests in bodies of water near her intended target. The element of water is tied to the unconscious and ideas of introspection and interiority;[110] water also acts as a mirror which can reflect and conceal, and is a motif in traditional film noir.[111] The clear, still surface hides currents and depth, just as Yin's blank exterior conceals an evolving storytelling instinct. Yin has no story to tell; she merely relays information to her team.

In a similar manner to traditional film noir protagonists, such as Sam Spade (Humphry Bogart) in *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941), Philip Marlow (Humphry Bogart) in *The Big Sleep* (dir. Howard Hawkes, 1946), or Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) in *Double Indemnity* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1944), Yin is shown to be very efficient at her job. Yin has evolved to be emotionless, a keen observer; in the opening of episode 1 she is shown to track multiple targets and easily guides Hei to Louis.[112] Due to her emotionless appearance, when Yin begins to manifest a personality, its impact is far more visible. In episode 14, Huang (Masaru Ikeda) comments that it is 'impossible, dolls can't shed tears,'[113] as he watches the tears rolling down Yin's cheeks. This is the beginning of Yin's transformation; she rejects her past life for the place she has as Hei's partner, as part of the team. Yin embraces her new identity and begins to construct her own narrative around it. At the end of the episode, Yin uses a finger to raise the

[107] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 53.
[108] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007). 00:04:00.
[109] Ibid. 00:02:52.
[110] Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 24.
[111] Schrader, 'Notes on Film Noir,' 57.
[112] "The Fallen Star of a Contract... Part One," episode 1, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007).
[113] "A Heart Unswaying on the Water's Surface... Part Two," episode 14, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:18:26.

side of her mouth into a smile.[114] This is the second moment where Yin actively makes a decision, but it is the first time she is acknowledged as a person, rather than a doll, because this decision is physically visible in her body not just through her 'spectre.'

The way that humans recycle experiences to tell their own stories[115] is demonstrated when Yin takes the experience of meeting Kiko Kayanuma (Emiri Katō) and then uses it to express her feelings through telling her own narrative about her situation. This expression, raising the corner of her mouth into a smile, starts as mimicry but through the process of recycling the experience over the following episodes it becomes her own, as Yin uses the gesture to express the story of her emotional change.

Yin also manifests the human storytelling ability to create fictive narratives. She starts out as a passive participant in the cons that her team enact; her only role is as an observer and lookout. However, as she begins to regain her human abilities this role shifts and Yin becomes more active in constructing the narrative of the con. This is most evident in the part of episodes titled "A Love Song Sung from a Trash Heap," where Yin writes herself into the con without permission from her team, or the organisation they work for. She turns up at Hei's apartment to help Kenji (Hiroyuki Yoshino) and a nameless doll, and pretends to be Hei's girlfriend. In episode 18, Hei asks why Yin decided to monitor him, she responds with 'You were a little different than usual.'[116] Through the connection that Yin has developed with Hei, she is able to sense his conflicted emotions over this case and she acts to support him, to help him construct the story he needs. Yin's intervention in the story not only enables them to win Kenji's trust, but also to subvert the narrative they have been told to enact. In the end, Hei and Yin allow Kenji and the nameless doll to escape, rather than handing them over to The Syndicate as they are supposed to. This act of rebellion seems to support a relationship between a human and a posthuman, one which looks for cohesion rather than segregation.

Human storytelling allows humans to connect and form emotional bonds; this ability in *posthuman noir* helps characters to work together to emerge triumphantly from situations. In episode 18, another nameless doll regains her lost humanity and sense of self. Through a romantic connection with Kenji, the nameless doll experiences an awakening of emotion and

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[114] Ibid. 00:21: 55.
[115] Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 58.
[116] "A Love Song Sung from the Trash Heap... Part Two," episode 18, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:07:25.

her storytelling ability which allows her to simulate being and then become Kenji's girlfriend. the nameless doll's posthuman abilities are strengthened; she becomes more powerful and begins to develop her own identity. In a similar manner, Yin's abilities become more powerful once she starts to connect with Hei and regain human traits. Through being able to lie and develop her own take on stories she saves her friends; this is evident at the end of episode 12, 'When One Takes Back What is Lost Within the Wall… Part Two,' where Yin goes against programming to send her spectre into Hell's Gate to guide Hei out.[117] Once again, the humanist agenda appears to demonstrate how the balance of intangible human abilities of storytelling and emotion in combination with rationalism are preferable in posthuman characters. While the protagonists of noir are 'emasculated' by love,[118] in *posthuman noir* they are redeemed by it.

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[117] "When One Takes Back What is Lost Within the Wall… Part Two," episode 12, *Darker Than Black,* dir. Okamura, (2007), 00:19:58.

[118] Jackie Stacey, *The Cinematic Life of the Gene* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 160.

4.4 Critical Reflection on *Golems Inc.*

We recycled your myths so many times we became like you.

Roz Valiant.[119]

The multifaceted way that humans use storytelling—including to make sense of the world around them; to construct and project their identities; and to interact and connect with others—provided the points of departure for the screenplay *Golems Inc.* I wanted to engage with these different facets of the human storytelling ability and investigate how a robotic posthuman character could employ that ability to successfully pretend to be, or simulate being, human; and how, despite their synthetic nature, they might come to be considered more human than the human characters in the screenplay. Through the simulation of being human through storytelling, the boundaries between the posthuman and human are blurred until my posthuman protagonist, Roz Valiant, is perceived as being human.[120] In this way, *Golems Inc.* enters into a dialogue with the subgenre of *posthuman noir*, bringing to the surface and overtly applying the ways in which, as I have argued, previous *posthuman noir* Anglo-American films and Japanese anime have privileged storytelling as an important aspect of the human that needs to be preserved. Through practice, I aimed to use as many facets of human storytelling ability as I could in one text to illustrate my argument and create an original piece of creative work.

In this section, I will set out how I used the recycling and reinterpretation aspect of human storytelling ability by unpacking the influences behind my creative decisions, especially with regard to the location and use of film noir tropes. I will then deconstruct the ways I used storytelling in *Golems Inc.*, including how robots programmed with stories transcend their code to become self-aware; the narrated flashback structure; and the way the posthuman protagonist, Roz Valiant, and homme fatal, Marcin, use story to pretend to be human and connect with others.

4.4.1: My position as a storyteller

In writing a screenplay, I engage my own human storytelling ability to create a fictional scenario in which I aim to manipulate my potential readers into imagining a version of the

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[119] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.* (PhD Thesis: University of York, 2017), 256.

[120] I refer to the concept of simulation posited by Jean Baudrillard in the essay "The Precession of the Simulacra" in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (U.S.A.: University of Michigan Press, 1994), in which he discusses the difference between pretending and simulating; the latter leading toward a point where it is difficult to tell the difference between the simulation and the real.

posthuman future. Fictional stories across a variety of mediums enable humans to experience scenarios without real-life risk and expand our set of experiences.[121] I find science fiction creates a space to test encounters with the posthuman and find the most positive solutions to posited problems. In *Golems Inc.*, I ask the reader to question their assumptions about the importance of appearance when assessing how human, or humane, a character is—this ties into science fiction's continued engagement with narratives around the human self and the inhuman Other[122]—and to think about how far one might change a human being before, despite appearance, they become unrecognisable as human, as evidenced in the character of Julia. I use the conceit of removing emotions to explore an underlying theme around attitudes towards curing mental health conditions and draw on research presented in Chapter 3 towards a need for balance between emotion and reason for humans[123] to function successfully. I have argued that it is the combination of human and posthuman traits that enable posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* to successfully navigate the narrative; therefore, in *Golems Inc.* I created a positive ending for the posthuman characters who I developed to demonstrate this balance.

Of course, I set out to privilege storytelling ability and therefore the characters who exhibit this quality best are those who I allow to survive. In writing *Golems Inc.*, I illuminated the connections between emotional awakening and storytelling ability as essential human traits, and how this interplay between the two enables the creative practitioner to develop characters who may be different from humans in many ways, but who a human audience is able to empathise with and root for. I would argue that, from my position as a creative practitioner, neither exists in isolation of the other.[124] These two traits are used by humans as social and connected beings; if, as I have argued, the trend in *posthuman noir* is to rehabilitate the posthuman so that they continue to function in ways a human would, despite evolutionary changes, it is these traits they need to display.

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[121] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 193.

[122] For an introduction to some issues in this area see Christine Cornea, *Science Fiction Cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 176-182.

[123] See the chapter titled "Emotion and Reason" in David Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (U.S.A.: Oxford University Press, 1978), 131-174.

[124] Throughout my training as screenwriter, and writer more generally, there has been an emphasis on engaging an emotional response from the reader for the piece of work to function successfully. For more on this see Aronson, *The 21st Century Screenplay*, 45 or Robert McKee, *Story* (London: Methuen, 1999), 110-112.

Storytelling is used by humans to pass on information.[125] As discussed in Chapter 1, I see my creative practice as a constant feedback loop of knowledge gained and knowledge disseminated. In writing *Golems Inc.*, I wanted to use the screenplay as a conduit not only to gain new insights into *posthuman noir* but also to pass on information about what it is to be human, as well as my own personal understanding of myself as human, and potentially posthuman. I previously highlighted some of the ways that the use of digital technologies complicates the creative storytelling process, transforming myself as writer into a cyborg figure.[126] To write the screenplay on the computer, using software which may suggest, or even correct, typing mistakes incorporates technology into the creative process.[127] There is already evidence of researchers taking the creative interaction between human programmers and A.I one step further; in 2016, a novella written by a Japanese A.I. passed the first round of the Nikkei Hoshi Shinichi Literary Award.[128] Although the A.I. wrote the novella autonomously, its parameters were programmed by human researchers.

My screenplay, written using Final Draft™ software, is a hybrid construct; part human creative output, part technological code. Through generating a new screenplay via software, am I starting down the path towards the posthuman? Perhaps through its interaction in my creative process, the posthuman code, a future A.I. in the making, might learn and develop its own storytelling ability. If so, then could the creative outputs of this PhD do more than analyse and present my findings on *posthuman noir*; am I creating a training ground in which to develop creative posthumans that other humans would view in a positive light? While this is too great a generalisation to make about current interactions between code and creative writer, it is something to be aware of as posthuman technologies advance.

Many creative practitioners now invite the posthuman into the process without assessing the implications this has on their understanding of their creative practice. In the screen texts I

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have grouped under the banner of *posthuman noir*, the ability to create,[129] specifically in relation to storytelling, is an indication that these posthuman characters are connected to their human roots. Therefore, in *Golems Inc.,* I gave Roz and Marcin an interest in reading and telling stories as something that marks them as different from the other robots; through translating that skill they are thus able to survive in the predominantly human environment of Prague Walled City.

4.4.2: Recycling and reinterpreting

The nostalgic impulse which is present in *posthuman noir*[130] reflects on previous stories, recycling them and repackaging them into worlds which blend the past and future. Therefore, in *Golems Inc*., I decided to use the storytelling technique of recycling, which the posthuman characters in my screenplay use, to repurpose the mythology around the figure of the robot, tying my method to the content of my creative practice. Therefore, I decided to set this screenplay in Prague to draw on two posthuman antecedents.

The first is *R.U.R.*,[131] a play by Karel Capek, initially performed in Prague in 1921, which coined the term "robot" for a mechanical slave. I wanted my posthuman robots, the Golem models, to also be presented as mindless slaves; they exist to save humans from their dangerous emotions, but they are not conscious or aware until the latest model. I did this to question the way in which humans engage with the technologies we create. Thus, I drew on and reinterpreted this story to develop my own narrative.

Secondly, I decided to recycle the Jewish folk tale of the golem, and more specifically the humanoid creature created by Rabbi Loew from clay by the banks of the Vltava River to protect the Jewish population.[132] The themes of this early posthuman story also resonated with the themes of *posthuman noir*, therefore I chose to use this story at the dark moment of the screenplay to illustrate the way in which this folktale contains the seeds of humanity's fear of technology and fear of the Other. The creation is useful at first, but it is too good at its job and

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[129] Although I have focused on creative impulse through storytelling, posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* demonstrate the ability to create through a variety of mediums: Rachel in *Blade Runner* and Yin in *Darker than Black* play the piano*,* Pino in *Ergo Proxy* paints and plays a musical instrument, Ava in *Ex_Machina* draws.

[130] See chapter 2.4 where I discuss nostalgia in elements of posthuman noir aesthetics, harkening back to the look of the 1940s and 1950s which could reflect nostalgia for a similar time before the increased development of posthuman technologies.

[131] Karel Capek, *R.U.R*, trans. Peter Majer and Cathy Porter, (1921; London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[132] See Peter Farshew, 'Curious Knowledge and Wonder Working: Wisdom in the occult works of Heinrich Khunrath,' in R.J.W. Evans, and Alexander Marr (eds), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, (Aldershot; Ashgate, 2006), 120.

it becomes violent and destructive. I felt that parallels could be drawn with fears that persist about the development of artificial intelligence and robots, which is why I used the explicit reference to the folklore in the brand name of Capek Corporation's therapy robots, the Golems of *Golems Inc.* The augmented reality game, Genso![133] which occurs in my screenplay also ties back to the roots of alchemy in Prague in the years between 1587-1612 during the rule of Rudolf II (1552-1612),[134] evoking comparison between the alchemists who sought to interfere with the natural order of the world, and the Capek Corporation, as well as referencing current gaming trends.

I am aware that using a folklore figure from another culture, the Golem, brings a set of problematic and complex issues; the boundary between appreciation and appropriation is tough to navigate.[135] However, in using the name of the Golem, I hope to continue a discussion of the posthuman as Other, drawing comparative ties to the history of Jews in Prague[136]—both invited, conducting required roles, and feared or persecuted throughout different periods. This seemed a fruitful way to make a point about the Golem robots, who are treated hypocritically by the humans who need them to function in their society, but to whom they are disposable and, if conscious, something to be feared. The figure of the posthuman has occupied the space of the Other, as well as being used as an analogous figure to map otherness onto.[137] My use of the terminology is one which comes with, I hope, a level of sensitivity which does not appropriate a term completely out of context, but which works with the history and environment of that term

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[133] The name Genso! derives from Japanese and translates as a 'chemical element.' The chemical elements provide the inspiration of the cute creatures that players of Genso! need to collect. The game itself is a reference to the mania for Pokemon Go™ which occurred in the summer of 2016.

[134] For more on Rudolf II, Prague, and the development of science and arts, see R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) or Eliska Fučíkova, ed. *Rudolf II and Prague – The Court and the City* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

[135] In the preface to the second edition, included in the third edition, of *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Studio City: Michael Weise Productions, 2007), xix-xxiiii, Christopher Vogler highlights some of the criticism faced by his work with regards to cultural imperialism, gender bias and what he terms 'heterophobic cultures.' As a writer, it is necessary to be aware of times when your work interacts with cultures and dangers of interpretation, however, each reader brings their interpretation to the text (to reference Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977) 142-148) so it is difficult to plan for all interpretations.

[136] See Arno Pařik, *The Jewish Town of Prague* (Praha: Oswald, 1992) for a general overview, or Ritchie Robertson, *Kafka: Judaism, Politics and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), for a more focused look at position of Jews in Prague around the turn of the twentieth century, the period of Franz Kafka.

[137] For more on this see Donna Haraway's influential work, "A Cyborg Manifesto," in *Posthumanism*, ed. Neil Badmington, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 69-84.

to develop a story which warns against these types of behaviour, drawing on historic use of these behavioural patterns as examples of what not to do.

To develop my aesthetics for *Golems Inc.*, I turned to European noir, specifically Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949), and German Expressionist antecedents like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and *Der Golem* (dir. Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen, 1915). These films mix historic European architecture with contemporary or futuristic technology, along with using experimental techniques to generate disorientating environments which mirror the instability of the character's internal dilemmas. In *Golems Inc.*, I wanted to show a city which still held onto its gothic architecture, albeit as a tourist attraction, a hyperreal theme park-ization of the historic, but which had also embraced modern, functional architecture. The walls around the city, not only serve to protect the citizens of this future Prague, but also provide an agricultural space to grow food needed to feed the population.

Once again, I have implied the disorientating angles used in the way I have written the screenplay, for example in the opening sequence where the reader is introduced to Celine Dubray. I wrote the scene to appear as if Celine is walking through a field of wheat; however, little hints, such as the knife she drops falling sideways, alert the reader to the fact things are not what they seem. At the climax of the scene, Celine undoes her futuristic shoes and, 'For a second it seems like an invisible force is dragging Celine backwards through the wheat field.'[138] However, I have tricked the reader, for 'the perspective is all wrong. The wheat field is growing out of a vertical wall. Celine is plummeting a hundred feet to her death.'[139] This shift in perspective—a deliberate attempt to disorientate the reader—is a visual warning that the screenplay they are about to read is related to traditional film noir and they cannot trust any of the information they are given at face value. In this scene, the theme of natural/man made is established as this seemingly innocent wheat field is revealed to have been technologically manipulated to grow out of the walls of the city. Like Roz and Marcin, what appears natural might be manufactured underneath a veneer of the organic. In *Golems Inc*., what is important is not flesh and blood but how human a character's storytelling ability is.

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[138] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.*, 166.
[139] Ibid., 166.

4.4.3: Storytelling ability in *Golems Inc.*

In *Golems Inc.*, storytelling ability is given centre stage and used in numerous ways to highlight how previous *posthuman noirs* have approached the human quality of storytelling in diverse ways. I made this element integral in all my creative decisions and now I will illustrate some of the techniques I employed in the screenplay.

The central science fiction conceit of the screenplay is that the Capek Corporation have developed a line of robots who can remove negative emotions from humans, enabling people to be 'happier, healthier and more productive,'[140] as I have written the advertising slogan. The Golem robots are not conscious; they do not have artificial intelligence and are seen as disposable by their creators. However, in an attempt to find a solution to improve the emotional transfer, Julia, the CEO of Capek Corp, decides to use some older company research to programme the new generation of Golems with the ability to tell stories. This is the catalyst which generates the central dilemma of the film. Robots with the ability to tell stories develop artificial intelligence, and one of them has been hiding amongst the humans for decades. Through telling human stories, through repetition, recycling, and retelling, their synthetic synapses are rewritten and consciousness emerges. As I stated through Roz (and as I used for the opening quote of this section), 'We recycled your myths so many times we became like you.'[141] I wanted to place what a non-academic reader might consider as storytelling—the process of telling a fictional story—at the heart of the screenplay, elevating it to allow the reader to reflect upon the types of stories they tell every day.

As Roz is one of the characters most closely connected with telling stories, this skill is displayed when the reader first meets her. Roz uses Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* to carry out her duties as a Weepy more efficiently, bringing the Golem robots to emotional overload and self-destruction. I selected Kafka's *Metamorphosis* for a number of reasons in relation to storytelling: it is a story about transformation, from human to Other; of the ways humans cannot function as social beings when communication, storytelling, breaks down; of loneliness and the desire to connect; and of self-sacrifice for the good of a community, where in the end Gregor Samsa commits suicide to release his family from the burden he has placed on them. All these ideas are at play in the character of Roz, who bears some resemblance to Gregor. She has

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[140] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.*, 164.
[141] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.* 256.

undergone a transformation from programmed creation to self-aware being; she can neither reveal what she is nor perform acts that might make her and others' lives easier, because the world she inhabits is hostile to artificial intelligence. Roz is in denial about her loneliness, and underneath her attitude she is desperate to connect with other humans like Talia and Arron; she is programmed to sacrifice herself for the good of the humans around her. Finally, I wanted to use Kafka's *Metamorphosis* because it is linked to Prague and clearly illustrated how human storytelling ability uses and applies tales from the past to act as allegories, or warnings, about our present.

I decided to use a passion for stories to connect Roz and Marcin, from the first time Marcin sees Roz fight for Celine's books, through to the finale in which Roz uses a story to coax Marcin out of his depressive spiral into generating his first original emotion. Therefore, the screenplay is peppered with references to stories. I used the tale of the Golem of Prague to ground the use of the term golem and to act as a metaphor for Marcin's creation and to explain Roz's betrayal. When Marcin needed to take positive emotions to pass for human, he told the tale of 'The Fox and the Crow' from Aesop's fables. I chose this comedic tale because it ties to early traditions of storytelling and demonstrates the range of the story knowledge Marcin has been programmed with. There is also reference to the fairy tale *And Seven*, in which Marcin uses a story he knows to draw comparisons with his own situation and memory loss; this is another way that humans use storytelling, to use common tales to explain their problems.[142]

In the final sequence of the screenplay, Marcin has been overloaded with negative emotions and unleashed on an unsuspecting crowd to cement their future dependence on Golem Therapy. To bring him out of this negative mindset and to heal Marcin, I decided that Roz would demonstrate her human storytelling ability in conjunction with her robotic strength and agility. This is a moment of emotional as well as storytelling awakening for Marcin, and so I decided to recycle a story from earlier in this thesis, *Hydrangea*. The quiet tale about the emotional awakening of two robots, written to explore the human quality of emotional awakening, mapped onto this moment in *Golems Inc*. Through overt reference to, and reinterpretation of, one of my previous screenplays, I highlight this facet of the way human storytelling ability is used. This

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[142] See Schank, *Tell Me A Story*, 58, for more on the ways that humans recycle stories and even to understand and phrase their experiences, and for a creative practitioner approach to this see Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 300.

draws together my idea around storytelling and emotional awakening, developing a chain through creative and critical elements of this thesis.

A more intricate use of the human storytelling ability is present in the way the main plot of the screenplay is told as a subjective flashback; it is all a tale constructed by the posthuman other, Roz Valiant, to gain the sympathy of Inspector Novak. One of the ways that humans use storytelling is to connect with others who are different to them;[143] to develop an empathetic response. Like Inspector Novak, the reader/audience for *Golems Inc.* is being invited to develop an empathetic response towards the robots in the screenplay. As a writer, I use the tools of storytelling to facilitate this response and present it through the mouth of the posthuman character to develop them in a positive light in the eyes of the audience.

In this way, I wanted to draw attention to the way human storytelling abilities are at play in traditional film noir narratives such as *Double Indemnity* and *Sunset Boulevard*. In film noir, the subjective nature of the recounted tales raises questions of their validity.[144] Human memory is an unstable recording device which adds interpretation, mediation and embellishment to past events. And at points in *Golems Inc.*, computer memory is also shown to be faulty; it can be overwritten and erased. The digital image, like a memory, can be manipulated to serve a purpose. There are assumptions about the authenticity of the recorded image;[145] in crime shows, CCTV footage is used to highlight a lie in a criminal's testimony, proving they were where they said they weren't. A recording is taken as factual evidence, but in *Golems Inc.* I manipulated it to illustrate how computer memory, like human memory, is unstable and open to interpretation.

I decided to take the manipulation of the truth one step further to enhance the theme of subjective narrative and to demonstrate how much control my posthuman protagonist has over their ability to create stories.[146] Initially, it appeared that *Golems Inc.* was being recounted by Arron Béžový, the unassuming Weepy partner of the protagonist, Roz. Arron made no attempt to hide the fact that he was not the main player in this story,[147] and his dialogue was filled with

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[143] Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 53.

[144] J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 41.

[145] For more on the manipulation of digital images see Thomas Elsaesser, "Truth or Dare: Reality Checks on Indexicality, or the Future of Illusionism," in Anu Koivunnen and Astrid Soderbergh Widding (eds), *Cinema Studies into Visual Theory?* (Turku: D-Vision, 1998), 31-50.

[146] This use of storytelling to generate lies and for performance is a key element in *Darker Than Black*, in a similar manner the characters in my script need to employ storytelling to maintain fictive identities.

[147] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.*, 167.

references to the process of telling stories.[148] From the outset, I presented this character as someone who knew the intimate workings of human storytelling, a master manipulator of emotions. However, two-thirds into the narrative, Arron is shot and killed; rendering the possibility that he was telling the story to Novak highly unlikely. Taking full advantage of the fact that Roz is an androgynous robot under the camouflage of synthetic skin, I developed the story so that she would be forced to step into her dead partner's skin to infiltrate Capek HQ. The screenplay begins near the end of the story, when Roz's plans have failed and Inspector Novak has arrived. The entire screenplay becomes an elaborate display of Roz's storytelling ability. My agenda was to show how this essential human quality is tied to the way humans interpret their interactions with others to judge them as human. This is brought to the surface at the moment of the twist reveal, where the narrator Arron is in fact Roz, and hinted at in moments when Novak interrupts the story to defend the human rights of a character he had previously considered nothing more than a machine.[149]

I further use subjective narrative perspective to align the reader with the other self-aware posthuman, the homme fatal, Marcin. After Roz is unmasked as a robot, her proximity to Marcin triggers a glitch in his erased memories, which have begun to heal through the process of hearing and telling stories. Roz and the reader are placed within Marcin's memories, within his point of view, as he comes to consciousness and is modelled as a honey trap for Julia to demonstrate that he has artificial intelligence. Once again, aligning the reader with the posthuman character allows for this shift of perception, for empathy to develop, as well as to allow the ironic backstory between Julia, the head of Capek Corporation, and her latest creation. I constructed this plot point to take advantage of the film noir character of the fatale, a figure of seduction who is tied to the downfall of the film noir protagonist.[150] Marcin is a homme fatal figure for both Julia and Roz, although he is only fatal for Julia as the human whose obsession to remove her emotions leads to her downfall. Julia's rejection of Marcin's seduction, and the emotional and storytelling awakenings, are what lead to her demise. Roz, on the other hand, engages with Marcin and through connecting with him she harnesses her human qualities, her storytelling abilities, as a survival tactic. Through interaction with the homme fatal, Roz recognises and

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[148] Ibid., 166.

[149] Maxine Gee, *Golems Inc.*, 218.

[150] For more on this see Chapter 2.2 and Ian Brookes, *Film Noir: A Critical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 67.

accepts her own humanity in balance with her mechanical construction; she comes to terms with her 'need,'[151] to accept both sides of her identity.

Marcin is a contradiction; he is a lie, a synthetic being that looks like a human, designed to be attractive to humans, and yet he is programmed to be incapable of lying, a reference to another fairy tale: Pinocchio. This is a contradiction explored in the robot character of Sonny in *I, Robot* (dir. Alex Proyas, 2004) who is also established as incapable of lying. It is later revealed that Sonny can lie and tell stories, and it has used this to expose V.I.K.I's dangerous protocols. Marcin is also designed to tell stories and through this ability he learns to tell his own stories, to develop his own lies at the very end of the screenplay. Throughout his interactions with Roz, Marcin is taught to turn his knowledge of stories into a powerful tool to blend in and connect with humans which he demonstrates in the Charles Park sequence, where children and their parents listen, spellbound to his tale.

I, Robot (2004) is loosely based on Isaac Asimov's work which posited three laws of robotics[152] which continue to govern the way creative practitioners, and to some extent scientists, think about how to programme robots to protect human life. I also use these protocols to unmask Roz's robot identity: she is programmed to protect human life above everything else. It is due to these protocols that Roz protects Julia, the human antagonist, twice: from a falling wall unit in Celine's apartment and from drowning in the spa. Roz is bound by her programming until the climax of the screenplay when she considers herself to be more human than Julia and thus does not save Julia from falling off the building. It is in this moment that the synthetic becomes real; Roz has simulated being human for so long, through using her human storytelling ability to appear human, that the boundaries between the manufactured and the natural have blurred and shifted. Through simulation, not just mere pretending,[153] Roz becomes the thing she simulated.

Although less able to blend in, Marcin's programming appears more human than Roz's. I display Marcin's sense of personality through his dialogue and his love of stories, and I demonstrate that he can make independent choices, such as following Roz in the beginning. He

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[151] When constructing characters in screenwriting there are two aspects which are often discussed, the character's external goal, their 'want', and their internal goal, their 'need.' See McKee, *Story*, 136-141 and Craig Batty and Zara Waldeback, *Writing for the Screen: Creative and Critical Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17-28.

[152] Isaac Asimov, 'Runaround' in *The Complete Robot* (1942; London: Grafton Books, 1983), 269-270.

[153] Baudrillard, "The Precession of the Simulacra," 3.

does not have the protocols that override Roz's personality if a human is in danger, thus he seems to have more freewill. It is these factors, in combination with his appearance that leads Roz to mis-register Marcin as human when she first meets him and to place herself in danger to protect him. I wanted to explicitly discuss this development in artificial intelligence, and used the scene where Roz and Julia come face to face to do that.

Julia states, 'To think we've created A.I. so good it can fool other aware robots into thinking its human,'[154] before she goes on to explain the problem with Marcin: 'It doesn't have your protocols. It can, and has, injured human life.'[155] This is, however, Julia's subjective spin on the situation; she is not only stating the facts but using them to form her own narrative and convince Roz to join her. Facts and fictions blend in the stories humans tell each other about events to achieve their goals, and it is this use of the storytelling ability which is dominant within film noir and *posthuman noir*. I use Julia's character as another fatale figure,[156] who also aims to seduce Roz into carrying out her own goal of marketing Golem Therapy to the world. In this sequence where Julia is naked and physically vulnerable, she is dangerous because she uses her very human appearance to manipulate Roz.[157] Julia also plays on Roz's desire to remain hidden, to continue to pass as human without accepting that she is something other. The encounter between Roz and Julia proves almost fatal for Roz when Julia shoots her at Charles Park. However, Roz ultimately overcomes the femme fatale: she is able to see through Julia's stories and this vivacious, overly positive character is brought down by her own technology. She has removed so many of her emotions she is unable to make rational decisions, and she no longer registers to Roz as a human worthy of saving. Roz's simulated humanity becomes more real than the real thing.

Roz has mastered the way that humans tell stories to construct/conceal their identities. Not only did I create her to be able to project her own identity as human, but she is also able to emulate Arron successfully enough to fool people who knew him well. Roz, like the characters in *Darker Than Black*, performs and simulates being human to blend into the human society of Prague Walled City. With Roz, to some extent, I wanted to take the implicit question of *Blade*

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[154] Gee, *Golems Inc..*, 242.
[155] Ibid., 243.
[156] The pattern of two fatale figures is a reference to the way Ava and Nathan act as fatales to Caleb in *Ex_Machina*.
[157] In *Ex_Machina*, Ava's design also plays with ideas of nudity, exposing her internal mechanics by concealing the parts of her body usually associated with desire. For more see Chapter 3.3.

Runner—is Deckard a replicant—and turn it on its head; my *posthuman noir* protagonist was going to be posthuman, a robot. Roz is written as observant, vigilant even, to the world around her. Programmed initially as a carer robot, I used this character trait to create a reason for the way Roz assimilates this information into her human performance. Little hints of this original purpose bleed through in early scenes where Roz interacts with the Elderly Lady at her apartment block, to establish a trail of bread crumbs for the observant reader. These work alongside the moments where Roz's programming overrides her personality when she considered a human life to be in danger.

Outside of these moments where her code takes control, Roz is indistinguishable from another human being. When writing her, I constructed her dialogue and mannerisms to match those of another human character, to blend in and develop her own identity. I also wrote her to be able to think through scenarios and use the problem solving aspect of storytelling to figure out the best outcomes, this is evident when Roz is attacked by her co-workers: she thinks of the best outcome, going to the police, which, when thwarted, sends her train of thought down alleyways of experience which leads her back to Talia. In a similar manner, this trait is visible in my decision to make her take on Arron's appearance, which is a creative use of her past experiences to tell the story that she is someone else.

To fit the sub-genre of *posthuman noir*, the posthumans who exhibit the human trait of storytelling had to survive the story. In the final sequence of the screenplay, Roz and Marcin enact another con, pretending to be arrested and convicted of interfering with Golem technology; telling 'a lie as close to the truth, recycle the real.'[158] They then use their ability to change appearances and become new characters and finally leave the city. As with the end of *Hydrangea*, this screenplay echoes similar sentiments about the potential for other conscious robots to have developed. The tone is hopeful. Their future is open, unwritten, and waiting to be explored.

In this chapter I have surveyed a variety of fields to construct a definition for what I mean by the human storytelling ability, drawing from social cognitive neurosciences, literature and robotics studies. I have combined these approaches as they tie to my exploration of the human in presentations of posthuman. This chapter in particular has delved into the way the human mind is constructed around story patterns and demonstrated how those story patterns

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[158] Gee, *Golems Inc.*, 221.

have implications on the societies humans build and the connections humans make with each other. The screenplay *Golems Inc*. has added to the field, by applying the self-same storytelling patterns, enhancing my knowledge of how this aspect of being human functions and through it I have garnered a greater appreciation for how I can enhance my skills as a storyteller to convey my ideas. Not only that, through deconstructing how the mind and society revolves around story types, and through the integration of technology into my process, this chapter has revealed potential ways to think about connecting with posthuman others. As the potential for posthuman futures draws closer, storytelling, which allows humans to imagine the best and worst scenarios, is an important tool to project the futures we wish to see or avoid. Through analysing screen texts and envisioning my own posthuman future, I generate a template for viewing the future through the *posthuman noir* lens and creating positive posthumans.

Conclusion

There is no gene for the human spirit.[1]

A neon-lit, future metropolis. It is raining. In a park, a group of figures shelter under a gazebo. They exchange stories to pass the time, their daily exploits, anecdotes; one even recalls a favourite folk tale. In the red light of a street sign, one smiles provocatively at another; their eyes hold for just a second too long for the look to be innocent. Not all of them are human, but from looking at them it is hard to tell which is genetically modified, or a clone, or an android/gynoid; all except one that seems to be a forestry robot. None of them care. There is nothing in their interactions that differentiate them; at their core, each still carries human qualities: emotionality mixed with rationality, an ability to spin a tale that allows them to socialise and empathise with each other. As the rain lets up, each goes their separate way, blending into the flow of humanity/post-humanity in the city. They are part of a society that embraces each of them for who they are, linked by their common human qualities. This positive vision for a potential future is what I would identify as *posthuman noir*.

In this thesis, I have defined and explored *posthuman noir*, a subgenre that I have discovered at the intersection of posthuman science fiction and film noir. Although elements of the subgenre have been explored separately, no one has grouped these films and anime together in this way before; therefore, my contribution to the field has been partly in the identification and classification of this new subgenre. I have laid out a series of defining features for the subgenre, establishing its aesthetic, thematic, structural and character tropes and how the traditional film noir tropes are subverted within the subgenre. I have uncovered the subgenre's antecedents in traditional film noir and philosophical positions of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism. Then through case studies, I have explored the way the subgenre privileges two human traits—emotional awakening and storytelling ability—and argued that these intangible traits act as essential definers of what it is to be human in the posthuman future.

In the introduction I established three questions that I have explored in this thesis. Through Chapters 1 and 2, I explored the first of my questions: What are the defining features of *posthuman noir* and what are its antecedents? Through establishing pre-existing debates around traditional film noir, I situated my thesis within this varied field and used the literature

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[1] Promotional poster for *Gattaca*, directed by Andrew Niccol (Los Angeles, CA: Columbia, 1997).

to provide a grounding for the key features that appear within my new subgenre. This is important as this thesis provides another angle from which to explore this contested genre/style. In addition, mapping these conventions onto a set of science fiction texts illuminates ways that these screen texts are attempting to answer the question: what is it to be human?

In order to differentiate my study from both neo-noir and tech noir, I further rooted my subgenre within philosophical discussion of transhumanism and posthumanism. I decided on the term *posthuman noir*, naming the subgenre after the posthuman characters present in these texts, as the focus of these screen texts was neither posthumanist nor transhumanist. Finally, to answer this question I created a series of conventions by which to identify a screen text as *posthuman noir*, illustrating these conventions with reference to a wide range of examples from Anglo-American film and Japanese anime.

I examined my second question—How are two essential human traits, namely emotional awakening and storytelling ability, employed within the subgenre as definers of what it is to be human in posthuman futures—in chapters 3 and 4. I explored each term respectively through a dedicated chapter, investigating the ideas through an interdisciplinary lens that bridged humanities approaches with those used in the cognitive neurosciences and computer sciences. Through these readings I developed my definitions of 'emotional awakening' and 'storytelling ability.' I found these definitions not only useful for analysing pre-existing screen texts, but also as a creative practitioner when writing my own *posthuman noir* screenplays. My central argument is also grounded in these cognitive neuroscientific concepts of the human mind; balance between emotion and intellect was key to the positive portrayal of posthuman characters in *posthuman noir*. Therefore, in the case studies which supported each of these chapters, I sought to identify how and where these human traits were applied exposing the tension at the core of the subgenre: while *posthuman noir* appears to focus on posthuman characters, it is the presence of these arguably human traits that enabled them to survive.

In unearthing this subgenre, this thesis identifies a gap in existing studies where science fiction and film noir blur in screen texts across different cultures. In focusing primarily on the characters of the posthuman, the thesis brings to light the ways these screen texts reflect concerns around the shifting nature of the human and how these concerns are reflected in a manipulation of pre-existing genres. In 2017, the point of submission for this thesis, two high budget science fiction films, *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve) and *Ghost in the Shell*

(dir. Rupert Sanders), also employ film noir conventions to explore concepts around the nature of the human in posthuman worlds, demonstrating a continued engagement with this subgenre. Thus, this subgenre remains a relevant and significant space to explore positive representations of posthuman character, as indicated by these recent iterations of *posthuman noir*.

Not only have I set out a series of defining features through which to identify a screen text as part of the *posthuman noir* subgenre, but I have also sought to add to the genre through the creation of original screenplays. These three screenplays demonstrate the versatility of the subgenre. Each is set in a distinctly different posthuman future, from the sterile corporate/government environment of *Terminal*, to the overgrown metropolis of *Hydrangea*, to the healthy living-focused Prague Walled City in *Golems Inc*. Each screenplay looks at a different iteration of the posthuman, from genetically modified humans, to non-humanoid robots, to gynoids and androids. In this way, the screenplays exemplify the breadth and scope of the subgenre. However, all three screenplays use aesthetic, thematic and structural tropes of traditional film noir to affirm qualities of the human—namely emotional awakening and storytelling ability—in this way, they also act as examples for this newly identified subgenre. It is my hope that my screenplays will enable me to disseminate my research to a non-academic audience. *Terminal* is already on its way to becoming-film, with the screenplay now networked with filmmakers and filmmaking technologies, where principle photography has wrapped and post production has begun; meanwhile *Hydrangea* and *Golems Inc*. have placed in international screenwriting competitions.[2]

Yet, it is not only in their content that these screenplays enter the debate around our posthuman future. In this thesis, I have argued, particularly in Chapter 1, that the screenplay is text on the cusp of becoming-film. I see the screenplay as alive with potentiality; it is a text that is in motion, changing and evolving through its encounters with human and non-human technology in its journey towards becoming-film. I see this way of conceptualising the screenplay generating a new lens through which we can explore the screenwriting studies. Not only that, as a screenwriter who uses a computer and screenwriting software to write, I see myself refigured as a cyborg. The screenplays I write, which are an expression of human

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[2] At the point of writing this conclusion, *Hydrangea* had placed as a second rounder in the 2016 Austin Film Festival Screenwriting Competition, while *Golems Inc.* was placed as a quarter finalist in the BlueCat Screenwriting Competition.

storytelling ability, are designed to encourage an emotional awakening within their readers and therefore reflect, in their construction, the themes of this thesis and *posthuman noir* more generally.

My creative practice methodology has sought to explore a non-hierarchical approach to knowledge production, drawing on the work of other academic practitioners such as Barbara Bolt, Linda Candy and Craig Batty, while I have also aimed for the format to mirror the content. Therefore, I have taken the approach of interspersing the creative practice sections with theoretical or analytical sections. In this way, the reader is encouraged to engage both their emotional and rational thinking processes when reading the thesis; it is this balanced combination, which reflects human thought processes, that is validated within the subgenre. At the University of York, previous creative practice PhDs were submitted around clearly demarcated sections—dissertation, creative work, exegesis. I found this distinction artificial, my process developed as an iterative feedback loop[3] between research and practice. Therefore, my decision to allow the sections to flow into and inform each other reflects my research journey. The thesis has been structured to take the reader on a similar journey to that of the posthuman characters in *posthuman noir*, opening their awareness of the ways human beings encounter and process the world. Thus, another addition to the field comes through the way I have employed the method of creative practice research, not only as a way of investigating a question but as a means of embodying that question. I feel there is scope outside the tight focus of this thesis to further explore unconventional ways of structuring research projects and providing alternative methods for organising and presenting academic findings.

I believe that this subgenre is particularly relevant for discussion at this present moment as we increasingly invite technology into our daily lives—through smart phones and other smart appliances, through computers and algorithms, through augmentations that counter injury and disability, through online personas and digital projections of ourselves. In the twenty-first century, human beings are on a rapid path to becoming posthuman, if we aren't already there, as critics like N. Katherine Hayles argue.[4] It is, therefore, important to look to creative products which reflect current concerns about out interactions with technology. My central focus has

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[3] Smith and Dean, eds., *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

[4] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

been on the ways that these posthuman screen texts fall back on validating humanistic notions of the human rather than pushing a posthumanist vision. These texts seek to maintain an anthropocentric view of the future instead of bursting out of the confines of the human, exploring the blurring of boundaries between human, non-human animal, non-human organic and the technological. I have, therefore, highlighted the conservative nature at the heart of the subgenre. Creative practice offers the chance to blur the binary between theory and practice, and it is my hope that in the future I will, through practice, develop screen texts that are aligned with notions of posthumanism, that attempt to disrupt an anthropocentric view of the world. Perhaps, in that way, I can enable the subgenre to evolve from posthuman to posthuman*ist* noir.

Due to the scope of the thesis I have only been able to focus on two areas—Anglo-American film and Japanese anime—where the *posthuman noir* subgenre is particularly visible, especially in the wake of the recent (as of writing) adaptation of *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Rupert Sanders, 2017) from Japanese anime to Anglo-American film. I have explained my decision to focus on Anglo-American and Japanese screen texts in the way that these cultures have intertwined during particular moments in the twentieth century; more specifically the period around the Second World War—the era in which traditional film noir emerged—and the 1980s, the period in which the Japanese economy boomed and seemed to threaten American dominance—the era in which *posthuman noir* came into its own. However, I believe there are examples of the subgenre in screen texts of other countries; opening out this study to further explore these iterations of *posthuman noir* could offer fruitful avenues for examining how these essential human qualities are figured in light of other cultural frameworks.

In Chapter 2, I incorporated Japanese storytelling techniques into my creative process to develop the screenplay *Hydrangea*, and ripples of these approaches can be seen in *Golems Inc.* the screenplay I wrote last. Due to the contained focus of the thesis, I could not investigate this blending of techniques further, therefore I see potential in exploring the use of different screen storytelling styles as another avenue to broaden my investigation into *posthuman noir* outside of Anglo-American parameters.

In developing this thesis through the creative practice of writing screenplays, I have embarked in a small way along the process of integration between human and non-human technology. As Major Motoko Kusangai (Atsuko Tanaka) states in the original *Ghost in the Shell* film (dir. Mamoru Oshii, 1995): 'But that's just it, that's the only thing that makes me feel

human. The way I'm treated. I mean, who knows what's inside our heads?'[5] To treat posthuman characters in the same way as human characters, I have argued that they must exhibit two inherent human qualities: the ability to use both emotional and intellectual reasoning and the ability to tell stories. These stories enable human and posthuman characters in *posthuman noir* to work together and image futures where they can cooperate. Meanwhile, the screen texts these characters feature in convey ideas of the posthuman future to their audiences, potentially shaping their engagement with posthuman technologies. These stories are also consumed and programmed into algorithms in experiments to see if these algorithms can create tales of their own. Therefore, in creating my own iterations of posthuman futures, through the screenplays and my analysis of screen texts, I wonder if a seed might have been planted in this thesis, that enables the awakening of the positive posthumans that *posthuman noir* envisions.

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[5] *Ghost in the Shell*, directed by Mamoru Oshii (1995, Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd).

Appendix:
List of *posthuman noir* Anglo-American Films and Japanese Anime

A.I.: Artificial Intelligence. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 2001. Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers Pictures.

Akira. Directed by Katsuhiro Otomo. 1988. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd. 1988.

Blade Runner. Directed by Ridley Scott. 1982. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video.

Code 46. Directed by Michael Winterbottom. 2003. Beverly Hills: MGM.

Dark City. Directed by Alex Proyas. 1998. London: Entertainment in Video Ltd.

Darker Than Black. DVD. Directed by Tensai Okamura. 2007. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Ergo Proxy. Directed by Shukō Murase. 2006. Chepstow: MVM Entertainment.

Ex Machina. Directed by Alex Garland. 2015. London: Universal Pictures UK.

Gattaca. Directed by Andrew Niccol. 1997. Los Angeles, CA: Columbia.

Ghost in the Shell. Directed by Mamoru Oshii. 1995. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Ghost in the Shell Innocence. Directed by Mamoru Oshii. 2004. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex. Directed by Kenji Kamiyama. 2001-2006. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Ghost in the Shell. Directed by Rupert Sanders. 2017. Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures.

Guilty Crown. Directed by Tetsuro Araki. 2011-2012. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Heat Guy J. Directed by Kazuki Akane. 2002-2003. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

I, Robot. Directed by Alex Proyas. 2004. Los Angeles, CA: Twentieth Century Fox.

Judge Dredd. Directed by Danny Cannon. 1995. Burbank, CA: Buena Vista Pictures.

The Machine. Directed by Caradog W. James. 2013. London: Content Media.

The Matrix. Directed by the Wachowskis. 1999. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video.

Metropolis. Directed by Rintaro. 2001. Culver City, CA: Columbia Tri-star.

Morgan. Directed by Luke Scott. 2016. Los Angeles, CA: Twentieth Century Fox.

Paprika. Directed by Satoshi Kon. 2006. Tokyo: Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Psycho Pass. Directed by Naoyoshi Shiotani. 2012. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Psycho Pass: Series 2. Directed by Naoyoshi Shiotani. 2014. Los Angeles, CA: Manga Entertainment Ltd.

Robocop. Directed by Paul Verhoeven. 1987. Los Angeles, CA: Orion Pictures.

Serial Experiments Lain. Directed by Ryutaro Nakamura. 1998. Chepstow: MVM Entertainment. 1998.

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