

A critical analysis of the island philosophy essay

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Phil 3350 - Medical Humanities Writing Assignment 1A Critical Analysis of The Island. Themes surround life and death. The movie I chose for this assignment was The Island, directed by Michael Bay. The movie features two main characters - Lincoln Six Echo (played by Ewan McGregor) and Jordan Two Delta (played by Scarlett Johansson). It begins with Lincoln Six Echo waking up in what appears to be a very sterile facility, he is surrounded by shades of grey and white and as he is preparing for his day, there are sensors and screenings that analyze his body chemistry and subsequently report to the rest of the faculty that he is to alter his diet, presumably to stay in optimal physical health. As we explore the facility, it is shown that there are many more people, like Lincoln, that are wearing the exact same clothes, going through the exact same physical and mental screenings and carrying out daily chores (jobs) that ensure complacency. It is immediately obvious that Lincoln questions authority when he asks the breakfast server for " more bacon, why can't I have any bacon?" As his day progresses, we see him mindlessly feeding nutrient tubes with a syringe (presumably this is his whole day) and reporting to various doctors and staff personnel about his nutritional diet. Exercise is clearly encouraged as not only are all inhabitants of the facility in great physical shape, but there are numerous gym like rooms, and even their leisure activity - a holographic fighting arena - encourages physical movement and stamina. Eventually, Lincoln's curiosity gets the better of him as purposefully disables his computer in order to leave his workplace to get a part to fix it. He instead goes to a different " sector" and meets with James McCord (played by Steve Buscemi). Here we see Lincoln asking questions like " Who is God" and " Where do you (McCord) live and come from?" As he is returning to his work station, he eyes a bug

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and catches it to show to Jordan Two Delta. Later during their scheduled period of leisure and rest, Lincoln is talking with Jordan, saying he found a bug, and asking how it could have survived outside of their shelter (their shelter is said to be protecting them from outside contamination). Before the scene is over, it is shown that Jordan wins the lottery and will be going to the island. Lincoln, in stunned disbelief, grabs Jordan's arm and says " I wish I would have known you better", showing that they were developing feelings for each other, despite their rigorous schedules and that they were forbidden to be in close proximity to each other for extended periods of time. Lincoln awakens in a sweat from his nightmare (the same nightmare that he has been plagued with for presumably a long time). He releases the bug he caught earlier and follows it to a ladder that leads him up to the sector above them. There he disguises himself as a nurse and explores this new world that has been shown to him. He stumbles upon an operating room where Starkweather Two Delta (played by Michael Clark Duncan), who had previously won the lottery, is shown on an operating table about to be harvested for his organs (more specifically his liver). He awakens, in shock shouting " I want to go to the island" and " I want to live". As he is running for his life, a team of presumed special military take him down and drag him back to the operating room. It is obvious at this point that The Island is not what it seems. As Dr. Bernard Merrick (played by Sean Bean) is watching the footage of the events, he sees Lincoln and his identifying bracelet and puts out an alert saying he was " contaminated" andCox 3that he should be quarantined immediately. Meanwhile Lincoln is rushing to Jordans room to get her before she leaves for the island. They end up fleeing the complex and learning that they are in the middle of a desert wasteland, and that their

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housing facility was nothing more than an underground bunker with a holographic screen of the outside. Lincoln and Jordan make their way to a bar on the outskirts of a town, where they meet with McCord, who tells them that they are clones and their real world counterparts (their sponsors) are the wealthy elite of modern society and that they (the clones) are their "insurance policy". It is explained that Jordan's sponsor was a famous actress and model that was in a car accident, and that she won the lottery so they could use her organs to revive her sponsor. In stunned disbelief, they then leave to L. A. to find Lincoln's sponsor. After an elaborate chase, and the death of McCord, they arrive in L. A. to the house of Tom Lincoln - Lincoln's very wealthy sponsor. Tom Lincoln, in stunned disbelief that his "insurance policy" is right in front of his eyes, contacts the Merrick institute to tell them of the events. They send a team to intercept them and, after a very Hollywood style car chase that involves lots of explosions, gun fire, and a few deaths of some random baddies, Lincoln Six Echo sneaks his ID bracelet onto the wrist of his sponsor, tricking Albert Laurent (played by Djimon Hounsou) into shooting Tom Lincoln, and believing that Lincoln Six Echo is the real Tom Lincoln. After a brief moment of relaxation, Lincoln and Jordan agree to go back into the facility to confront Dr. Merrick and free the rest of their friends. Meanwhile Dr. Merrick is shown talking with his shareholders about Lincoln's defiance and that they must dispose of "over 2 million dollars worth of product." The Cox 4 shareholders agree, and in a moment of utter sadness, the camera pans to the living growing organisms in the labs, who will never get the chance to be grown into humans because of their imminent death. Lincoln and Jordan successfully make it back into the facility, and manage to take down the holographic interface that is surrounding the facility, freeing

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their friends. Lincoln kills Merrick (who is inferred as his father or his god as he had given him life) and he and Jordan are shown living peacefully in the real world. I had seen this movie when it was first released in 2005, but I wanted to re watch it again and again after learning I could write about it for this paper. This movie hits on several themes that we have been discussing over the past weeks. In the following analysis, I will hit upon the controversy of cloning, and human organ transplant. Then I will discuss end-of-life decisions and finally finish with a synopsis of the movie as a whole and how it relates to medical humanities as a field. The idea of cloning has been around for as long as anyone can remember, but it came to the homes of the world with Dolly the sheep, the first successful cloned mammal (sciencedaily.com). Dolly brought to light the advancements in modern technology and emphasized the technology that many thought we did not currently possess. However Dolly was a sheep, and not a human. The concept of cloning humans brings to light more than just a simple yes-we should, or no-we-should-not answer. To answer whether we should clone humans brings to light science, technology, moral and ethical concerns, as well as religions notions. If we clone humans will we lose what makes us human? (This is what ICox 5 personally think; it is not an unaccredited quote). We are brought up to believe no two people are exactly alike and that each and everyone of us are special, so to clone a human being would be essentially taking away from that humanity and personal nature. However, in today's modern medical world of increasing need for organs and the constant limited supply of viable organs for use, does that in and of itself justify cloning human beings? In the movie, the clones were encouraged complacency and exercise in an effort to ensure the healthiest human body for when their sponsors needed their

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organs. This also ensured that, for the right cost, that a healthy organ was always ready when the sponsor needed it. This eliminated the need for long waitlists and potential deaths from waiting for an organ. The clones themselves however were hidden from public eye and their existence was communicated as " In a constant vegetative state." Lincoln Six Echo is seen asking " Why don't we show ourselves as people?" with which Buscemi's character replies " Just because people want the burger doesn't mean they want to meet the cow." This implies that their sponsors want the end result, they want the organs, they want the instant answer, they do not want to meet nor necessarily care about the clone. This asks the question then, if we are to clone humans, then does that mean these clones are not human, and that their lives are less than ours? This argument stems from the moral and ethical side of things, even going as far as to say if these clones are not human, then it must be ok to take their lives as they are like any other animal. But does a living, breathing, even feeling human clone mean they are to be treated like animals? Touching on the subject of religion then, if we, as humans, are to clone individuals, then we become their creators, their God. But many religions (including the majorCox 6Abrahamic religions) state that there is only one true God. One creator of all and that to create artificial life is to play, and even defy that God. This is tied into the separation of church and state debate, where science should not create life, that birth should be natural. End-of-life decisions also play a part in this movie. After Lincoln Six Echo and Jordan Two Delta break back into the facility to confront their maker (Dr. Merrick), it is shown that he is asking for permission to " Dispose of over \$2 million worth of product." Monetary value aside, when it is confirmed that he is allowed to do this, the movie cuts to a close up of a <https://assignbuster.com/a-critical-analysis-of-the-island-philosophy-essay/>

beating heart, then pans out to the human embryos in various stages of development, showing that, with that heartbeat and the formation of human organs, that these are more than just clones, they are human beings inside a "mothers womb". I understood it then that when the scientists, led by Merrick, were cutting the embryos and killing the product, it was a metaphor for abortion. To kill something that is growing, inside of a womb, to kill it and take its life for no other purpose than the decision of others, brings to light end-of-life decisions that we have been discussing in class. Especially after this past week of dignity therapy, of living a long and healthy life and upon ones deathbed being able to reflect upon and record their life experiences, being able to kill something before it is even allowed to live, really makes one think about abortion and its current state of controversy. Speaking in part to the movie as a whole and how it ties into today's medical field. When I sat back and thought critically about the themes and message of the movie, if I was to place blame on someone, I would think the blame lied on the shoulders of society more than anything. The wealthy elite payed " five million dollars" for a clone to aid in their life and toCox 7prolong it should anything go wrong. It was not society as a whole that enabled this, but it was the people with money that allowed this idea to happen, and it was their continued support that kept the industry alive. The public I believe can see this film as a metaphor for healthcare and organ transplant. It is no secret that the wealthy are afforded luxuries that not every one else has, and in the case of The Island those wealthy were afforded longer life and a clone. This also meant no waitlists for organ transplant, and in specific cases, a child for a couple that could not conceive naturally (I forgot her name, but the clone gave birth, was then euthanized, and the child given to her sponsor), and a <https://assignbuster.com/a-critical-analysis-of-the-island-philosophy-essay/>

famous football player (Clark Duncan) who presumably drank his liver to failure, was given a new one right away from his clone, without having to wait on a waitlist. This movie is set in the near-future (2025 I believe), and while as of right now, this is unthought of, it is by no means purely science fiction. We have already cloned sheep (Dolly) and if the technology was there to clone humans and subsequently "breed" them in labs as insurance policies, this luxury would be afforded to the wealthy elite first off. I believe that should this ever occur, policies should be put in place to make the entire process (from initial scan, to birth of the clone, to the raising of said clone) as transparent as possible. Thorough documents should be kept and recorded on the progress of the clone, and should anything at all go wrong, that it should be documented and made readily available to the public. Doing so I believe would help eliminate the extreme cases presented in the film (of a clone getting loose and destroying the entire facility) but also it would help to not hide technology from the public eye. Cox 8In the end though, I do enjoy this movie. Not only is it a great stand-alone science fiction movie with great acting and visual effects second to none (thanks in part to Michael Bay), but I believe it warrants several watch-throughs to catch the themes and underlying tones of the movie. One quote that is said at the beginning of the movie, but is also mentioned throughout is "You are special; you have a very special purpose in life...." This is alluding to the fact that the clones' purpose is to live for their sponsors, but this quote can also be said about anybody alive today. Religion teaches us just that, that everyone is special and everyone has a purpose in life. Speaking in terms of Medical Humanities, this movie I feel ties in very well to the past discussions we have been having in class. It touches on religion, abortion, organ transplantation, end-

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of-life decisions and healthcare. I'm glad I chose this movie to write about, and I look forward to the next time I watch it.