



The Cinematic Christ-figure: From Everyman to Antihero-antichrist

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Abstract

In this second century of the Age of Hollywood and the reign of moving image culture, popular feature films are nowadays the *lingua franca* of our youth throughout Western society, and the natural home of numerous sacred subtexts; most notably the cinematic Christ-figure, but hitherto unexplicated in-depth to date. Consequently, a broad review of the critical religion-and-film literature plus a close reading of selected feature films utilizing humanist film criticism as the guiding analytical lens (i.e., examining the textual world *inside* the frame, but not necessarily the world *outside* the frame), revealed at least six (but not necessarily mutually exclusive) categories of the cinematic Christ-figure, namely: (1) Everyman Christ-figures: Earth-sourced Humans, (2) Alien Christ-figures: Extraterrestrial Messiahs, (3) Female Christ-figures: Gender Swapping Jesuses, (4) Animal Christ-figures: Veterinary Versions, (5) Inanimate Christ-figures: The Holy Non-living, and (6) Antihero-antichrist-figures: The Shadows of the Christos. To ensure category robustness, they were sourced from different directors, genres, countries, aesthetic styles, and release decades. Each category was briefly explicated and illustrated herein. It was concluded that the sacred subtexts subgenre within the exciting emerging field of religion-and-film is immense, under-explored, awaiting (re-)discovery, and with a promising future worthy of further investigation and pedagogic deployment within the classroom, home or pulpit. All of which strongly implies that these cinematic extra-ecclesiastical sources of insight function as modern-day missionaries that expands theological discussion far beyond Bible readings and tracking of the Apostle's journeys that more often had to be endured by students rather than enjoyed.

Keywords: Bible films; Christ-figures; popular culture, religion-and-film; sacred subtext.

Abstrak

Di abad kedua Era Hollywood dan pemerintahan budaya gambar bergerak, film merupakan fitur populer saat ini yang menjadi *lingua franca* kaum muda di seluruh masyarakat, dan rumah alami dari banyak subteks suci; terutama sosok Kristus sinematik, tetapi belum dijelaskan secara mendalam hingga saat ini. Konsekuensinya, tinjauan luas terhadap literatur agama dan film yang kritis ditambah pembacaan cermat atas film-film pilihan yang menggunakan kritik film humanis sebagai lensa analitik penuntun (yaitu, memeriksa dunia tekstual di dalam bingkai, tetapi belum tentu dunia di luar bingkai).), mengungkapkan setidaknya enam kategori (tetapi tidak harus saling eksklusif) dari sosok Kristus sinematik, yaitu: (1) Tokoh Kristus Setiap Manusia: Manusia yang bersumber dari Bumi, (2) Tokoh Kristus Alien: Mesias Luar Bumi, (3) Figur Kristus Perempuan: Yesus Bertukar Jenis Kelamin, (4) Figur Kristus Hewan: Versi Veteriner, (5) Figur Kristus Mati: Yang Suci Tidak Hidup, dan (6) Figur Antihero-antikristus: Bayangan Christos. Untuk memastikan kekokohan kategori, mereka bersumber dari sutradara, genre, negara, gaya estetika, dan dekade rilis yang berbeda. Setiap kategori dijelaskan dan diilustrasikan secara singkat di sini. Disimpulkan bahwa subgenre subteks sakral dalam bidang agama-dan-film yang menarik sangat besar, belum dieksplorasi, menunggu penemuan (ulang), dan dengan masa depan yang menjanjikan layak untuk penyelidikan lebih lanjut dan penerapan pedagogis di dalam kelas, rumah atau mimbar. Semuanya sangat menyiratkan bahwa sumber wawasan ekstra-gerejawi sinematik ini berfungsi sebagai misionaris zaman modern yang memperluas diskusi teologis jauh melampaui pembacaan Alkitab dan pelacakan perjalanan Rasul yang lebih sering harus ditanggung oleh siswa daripada dinikmati.

Kata Kunci: film Alkitab; figur Kristus; budaya populer, agama-dan-film; subteks suci.

INTRODUCTION

This is the second century of the “Age of Hollywood” (Paglia, 1994, p. 12) and the reign of moving image culture wherein popular movies have become the *lingua franca* of Western society. Black-and-white photography started it. Celluloid got it moving, talking, and coloured. Television got it out of picture palaces and into your private home, at first small, monochrome and monophonic, but later widescreen, Technicolor, and post-quadraphonic, whilst today both your domestic and office Internets stream them into your PC, tablet, or mobile phone. Movies entertain and inform us, but with maturity and increasing sophistication, they are fast becoming important extra-ecclesiastical resources for the non-traditional teaching of Scripture Studies or Religious Education wherein they were previously relegated to visual aide roles or for student pacification purposes; if employed at all (Kozlovic, 2005, 2006, 2007).

Popular feature films have become an exciting teaching tool for today that has given belated birth to the exciting interdisciplinary field of religion-and-film (aka sacred cinema, spiritual cinema, holy film, cinematic theology, cinematheology, theo-film, celluloid religion, film-and-faith, film-faith dialogue) which has grown from a critic’s fancy to an entrenched cottage industry to a fully-fledged field of academic discourse (Knauss, 2020). Therefore, to ignore the immense pedagogic power of feature films within our postmodern, post-Millennial, and increasingly post-print world is blinkered, churlish to deny, and educationally unwise. Why? For as Michael E. O’Keeffe and Kathleen Waller (2003) warned:

...the movie industry is certainly an intellectual challenge that we ignore at our peril. We must respond to the intellectual challenges of our day, regardless of how unlikely the source, if we are to equip the next...generations of believers to carry on the message of Jesus’ God. Not to do so cripples our students and hampers our efforts to foster religious and cultural literacy (p. 108).

Furthermore, moral, social, and spiritual benefits can also be attained, for as Peter MacNicol candidly admitted: “No priest or homily so calibrated my moral compass as did movies. No classroom lecture so humanized me as did Hollywood” (Malone & Pacatte, 2003, p. xi), whilst seeking the flickering light of God is increasingly becoming a 21st century Christian duty to “discern the signs of the times” (Matt. 16:3).¹

Sacred text-to-silver screen adaptations of Judeo-Christian stories abound, notably *Samson and Delilah* (1949), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *King of Kings* (1961), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), *Jesus Christ, Superstar* (1973), *King David* (1985), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), *Mary, Mother of Jesus* (1999), *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), *The Book of Esther* (2013), *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014), *Noah* (2014), *Son of God* (2014), *Risen* (2016), *Paul, Apostle of Christ* (2018), *Mary Magdalene* (2018), *The Penitent Thief* (2020) and many more (Campbell & Pitts, 1981; Page, 2022; Reinhartz, 2013). But less well-known by the general public, lay congregations, and even a few film scholars are the existence of sacred subtexts (aka holy subtexts, divine infranarratives). These are the hidden religious figures that are only detectable if one has the eyes to see, and the ears to hear them (Ezek. 44:5; Matt. 13:15-17), which were academically described as “anonymous religiousness” (Gallagher, 1997, p. 151) or the pursuit of “overtly religious themes in a secular ‘wrapper’” (Ellis, 2001, p. 304), and when applied to Christ-figures *per se* were labelled “Stealth Messiahs” (Frost, 2019).

Sacred subtexts exist because storytelling narratives can have a dual nature, namely: (a) an *overt* plot, and (b) a *covert* storyline of varying complexity that is comparable to the metaphorical or symbolic within literature. As Bernard Dick (1998, p. 129) described this relationship: “the narrative and infranarrative (or text and subtext) are not two separate entities (there is, after all, only one film); think of

¹ The King James Version of the Holy Bible (KJV) will be employed herein as appropriate.

them, rather, as two concentric circles, the infranarrative being *within* the narrative.” Furthermore, an on-screen “character needn’t be consciously aware of his shadings of the truth or the hidden meanings in his words or actions for there to be subtext or for us to become aware of it” (Howard, 2004, p. 189). Through this narratological arrangement, secular films can engage in religious storytelling *without* appearing “religious” in our increasingly secular, media-savvy society, and thus potentially deter atheists, non-believers, or the religiously wounded with unforgiving dispositions. The research purpose herein is to begin to map out some of the varieties of this subtextual phenomenon, explore some of its features, and prepare the way for its future pedagogic deployment within the classroom, home or pulpit.

RESEARCH METHOD

The critical religion-and-film literature was selectively reviewed and integrated into this text to enhance narrative coherence (albeit, with a strong reportage flavour) followed by a close reading of selected feature films utilizing textually-based humanist film criticism as the guiding analytical lens. This frequently under-utilized film analysis methodology is applicable to all film genres ranging from literary autobiography (Johnson, 2007) to science fiction (SF) wherein: “What we might broadly describe as a humanist tradition has long dominated discussion of science fiction cinema” (Telotte, 2001, p. 35). As Dennis W. Petrie and Joseph M. Boggs (2018) said of it in *The Art of Watching Film* (9th ed.):

We judge the film as an expression of an idea that has intellectual, moral, social, or cultural importance and the ability to influence our lives for the better. Acting, cinematography, lighting, editing, sound, and so on are all judged in terms of how effectively they contribute to the communication of the film’s message (p. 367).

Bywater and Sobchack (1989, pp. 24–47) considered it useful for films that left distinctive impressions, encouraged in-depth discussions of its appeal, and entailed close textual analysis of the world *inside* the frame, but not necessarily the world *outside* the frame. It assumes audiences are cultured, accept the cinema as fine art, and watched them closely to identify noteworthy incidents, and prompt critical commentary rooted in wide-ranging sources (e.g., trailers, film scripts, advertising posters, newspaper reviews, (auto-)biographies, memoirs, textbooks, magazines, comics, and academic journals). Whilst tracking themes, motifs, symbols, and other construction secrets, tropes, and topoi to reveal the inner depths. All of which make it apropos for this pop culture research task.

SIX CATEGORIES OF THE CINEMATIC CHRIST-FIGURE

Various types of sacred subtext exist within popular films (e.g., Judas-figures, Moses-figures, Mary Magdalene-figures) but the most prominent within the Western world are arguably cinematic Christ-figures² (aka the hidden Jesuses; stealth Messiahs; disguised Saviours) even though there are also potential sources of disquiet associated with them (Kozlovic, 2016, 2020). Given the nature and freedom of their construction, it is unsurprising to discover multiple forms manifesting, whether male or female, human or alien, animal or inanimate, and yet they remain legitimate subtextual figurations of the biblical Jesus Christ regardless of their outward form, historical milieu, socio-cultural context, physical location etc. Because of the existence of many Christ-figures, their (re-)discovery, coupled with their subsequent scholarly examination offers new theological insights, intellectual stimulation, and sometimes immense joy in what is the adult equivalent of a Where’s Waldo children’s book adventure (Baugh, 1997; Deacy, 1999; Reinhartz, 2011). A preliminary scan of the Western, predominately English language, popular cinema

² Throughout herein, one treats “Christ-figure(s)” as a noun and not necessarily an adjective

revealed at least six categories of the cinematic Christ-figure worthy of explication, namely: (1) Everyman Christ-figures: Earth-sourced Humans, (2) Alien Christ-figures: Extraterrestrial Messiahs, (3) Female Christ-figures: Gender Swapping Jesuses, (4) Animal Christ-figures: Veterinary Versions, (5) Inanimate Christ-figures: The Holy Non-living, and (6) Antihero-antichrist-figures: The Shadows of the Christos. Each category will be briefly explicated along with illustrative screen stills, as follows.

1. Everyman Christ-figures: Earth-sourced Humans

This type of hidden Jesus looks like an average, normal, everyday human, an “everyman,” but can also possess other powers (whether advanced, technologically augmented, or psychically evolved), who could be wearing the oddest of disguises, or found in unusual locations as in the sea drama *Destination Unknown* (1933):

A stranger (Ralph Bellamy) appears on a ship that is stranded on the Pacific Ocean with no wind, and brings peace to those on board [John 14:27]. When the ship is wrecked, the stranger saves the crew and passengers and then disappears. This well-done programmer implies that the stranger is Jesus Christ and the miracle of the changing of salt water into fresh water is shown [cf. John 2:1-10 water-into-wine transmutation] (Campbell & Pitts, 1981, p. 111).

The Christic Arnold-the-tramp (Jean-Claude Guilbert) in *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) “receives a Judas kiss before dying [Luke 22:48]; he rides on an ass [Matt. 21:5-7]; he even, as Jean Luc Godard put it to [Robert] Bresson, has something of the look of Jesus” (Hurley, 1982, p. 68).

Another everyman Christ-figure was the nineteen-year-old voyeuristic virgin Tomek (Olaf Lubaszenko) in Krzysztof Kieslowski’s *A Short Film about Love* (1988). He was smitten by the promiscuous Maria Magdalena (Frazyna Szapolowska), the Mary Magdalene-figure. Set in contemporary Poland, postal worker Tomek did not resemble any traditional representations of Jesus, but embodied aspects of Christ alongside extracanonical elements. The film was described as “the story of a love-relationship that is authentic, committed and redemptive, a love-story that is nothing less than an elaborate metaphor of the redemptive-salvific encounter of Jesus Christ and the sinner [Luke 7:36-50]” (Baugh, 2003a, p. 552). And in doing so evoked “the redemptive mystery of the Christ-event, that is, of the salvific love of God for the sinner revealed in the depth and Resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Baugh, 2003b, p. 935).

Christopher Deacy (1999, p. 336) argued that: “the Antiochene emphasis of Christ’s total humanity is an especially suitable model for understanding the function of Christ-figures in contemporary film.” Which explains why the main characters in Martin Scorsese’s trilogy: *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Raging Bull* (1980), and *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) “may be seen to constitute a fertile site of Antiochene christological significance, in respect of the depiction of both religious and ‘secular’ Christ-figures” (Deacy, 1999, p. 336). As Michael Grimshaw (1999) humorously noted regarding *Taxi Driver* (1976):

...Travis Bickle [Robert de Niro] refers to himself as ‘God’s lonely man’—a fitting sobriquet for their Jesus. This is Jesus the loner, who prefers, it seems, to spend time off by himself—misunderstood, misunderstanding and often mistaken and yet who finds, as in all ‘goodfella’ movies, that, in the end, the God Father makes you an offer you can’t refuse (p. 154).

Everyman Christ-figure, Jean-Claude Van Damme played Gibson Rickenbacker in the apocalyptic cyberpunk film *Cyborg* (1989). As he reported:

I play the messenger of the future, almost God-like, and I’m here to help cure a plague on Earth...Rickenbacker’s not really a superhero, *he’s just a person like you or I*. But halfway through the story, the guy’s almost physically dead, and when he comes back to save the world, he realizes he’s the ‘chosen one’ (Gilpin, 1989, p. 54; my emphasis).

Therein Rickenbacker presented a profound image of Christ in classic cruciform pose, *the* signature sign of the Divine, and repeated it throughout from different perspectives to reinforce the Christic subtext (see Figure 1). Director Albert Pyun deliberately had “the shadow of the cross fall on the actor’s face as the Flesh Pirates nail him to the ship’s mast” (Gilpin, 1989, p. 55), with even more cruciform poses during his subsequent resurrection scenes.



Figure 1. The Crucified Gibson Rickenbacker: *Cyborg* (1989)

[*Cyborg* © Cannon Entertainment. All Rights Reserved]

A normal but psychically-enhanced everyman Christ-figure was the morally upright schoolteacher John Smith (Christopher Walken) in *The Dead Zone* (1983). He survived a death-dealing experience, got on well with children (more than adults), was childless, a bachelor with a loner disposition, had visionary experiences, intimate contact with the dead, and performed miraculous intercessions. His humbleness, gentle nature, soft-spoken demeanour, love, selflessness, sympathy, and restraint made him approachable, but doomed by destiny. This “ordinary” man made an extraordinary decision that achieved far more by his death than his life, namely, Christic self-sacrifice for the future welfare of all humankind. “Christian imagery and icons follow Smith throughout the film, from the picture of Christ wearing a crown of thorns that hangs on his hospital room wall to his violent death with arms outstretched, bleeding atop the broken fragments of a wooden bench” (Magistrale, 2003, p. 123), his very own postmodern crucifixion cross.

A normal everyman, but this time an SF Christ-figure occurred in *Twelve Monkeys* (1995). Its protagonist-star, James Cole (Bruce Willis), is a time traveller with the Christologically resonant initials of “J. C.” who wore a blood-soaked top with observable letters strategically highlighting the word “Chris” (see Figure 2). He bodily suffered in front of a distraught woman, Dr. Kathryn Raily (Madeleine Stowe), who subsequently swore “Jesus” at him when they got off of their escape bus.



Figure 2. James Cole with a Blood-stained Top Spelling out “Chris”
[*Twelve Monkeys* © Universal Pictures. All Rights Reserved]

Not surprisingly, “Chris,” short for “Christopher” is derived “from a Greek word meaning ‘carrier of Christ’, used figuratively by the early Christians to indicate that they bore Christ in their hearts” (Fergusson, 1987, p. 47). That is, the deliberately named J. C. character, who is a Christ-figure, wears a blood-soaked “Chris” top (visually alluding to Jesus’s bloody smiting [John 19:3] and subsequent crucifixion wounding [John 19:34]), and has an adventure with a close female confidant, Kathryn Raily (subtextually Mary Magdalene). Just like Jesus, James Cole was sent from another world to try and save this world for the future benefit of all humanity.

The similarly initialled J. C. character-cum-Christ-figure, John Connor (Edward Furlong) in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), was like James Cole in *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), being a future leader of the human resistance, but this time battling robotic oppressors in order to save humanity from extinction. As Doran Larson (1997, p. 66) put it: “As Christ’s flesh was conceived in the premodern world merely as a “bait” to Satan, so is John Connor bait to the T1000 [Robert Patrick], and with equal assurance of a mercurial Satan’s downfall.” Overall, filmmakers can be very creative in these multi-layered Christological ways.

A normal everyman, but this time, a technologically augmented human Christ-figure is police officer Alex Murphy (Peter Weller), star of the dystopian SF film, *RoboCop* (1987). Officer Murphy dies horrifically (John 19:18) and is revived (Luke 24:6) as RoboCop, a cyborg law enforcer who walks over water at the steel mill (Matt. 14:25-26). Director Paul Verhoeven called this half-man, half-machine “the American Jesus” (Rosenberg, 2010, para. 4) in honour of the dual-natured Jesus who was both human and divine (Col. 2:8-9). For John A. Geck (2020, p. 65; my emphasis): “Verhoeven’s Christological imagery in *RoboCop* thus builds upon a long tradition of dramatic performances of the life of Christ...*RoboCop* successfully represents a Christ figure whose broken body reflects Regan-era civic weakness and decay while simultaneously possessing a revolutionary *salvific power*.”

Closely akin to the everyman human Christ-figures are the sometimes human-like, but definitely alien Christ-figures that populate many a science fiction film, and whose earthly experiences are similar to the scriptural Jesus during his time on ancient Earth.³

³ Jesus Christ can be considered a human-alien hybrid (a cosmic half-cast) because his mother the Virgin Mary was a normal Earth human, and “that which is conceived in her [Jesus] is of the Holy Ghost [a non-human entity]”

2. Alien Christ-figures: Extraterrestrial Messiahs

This variety of hidden Jesus utilised (typically humanoid) aliens as Christ-figures, Earth-bound Messiahs of extraterrestrial origin (Papandrea, 2017). A famous example is Vulcan Science Officer Spock (Leonard Nimoy) in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), which was themed “around sacrifice” (Nimoy, 1995, p. 223). Spock selflessly forfeited his life saving the USS Enterprise crew by repairing their damaged warp drive, but unavoidably exposing himself to lethal doses of radiation in the process (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Spock Sacrifices Himself to Save the USS Enterprise Crew
[*Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* © Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved]

His death was akin to Jesus’s willing self-sacrifice for the benefit of humankind (Matt. 20:28). Furthermore, this religious SF film also contained its:

...own versions of Good Friday and a hint of the Easter Sunday to come, as well as its equivalent of the Last Supper, the symbolic meal that anticipated the impending death of Jesus...Not only is Spock’s act of self-sacrifice to save the ship presented in such a way that it echoes with Christ’s surrender for others on the Cross at Calvary, but the shot of Spock’s coffin landing on the Genesis planet hints at the possibilities of a future resurrection...Spock’s exhortation that McCoy [DeForest Kelley] should “Remember!” is reminiscent of the command issued by Jesus Christ to his disciples at the Last Supper, “Do this in *remembrance* of me.” (recorded in Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24). The two stories (the narrative world of Jesus in the New Testament and the imaginative world of *Star Trek*) are united in that they contain an all-important call by the one who is to die (Spock in *Star Trek* and Christ in the New Testament) to the one(s) who are left behind (McCoy in *Star Trek* and the twelve Apostles in the New Testament) that they are to *remember* and not forget (Kreitzer, 1999, pp. 155–156).

Donald E. Palumbo (1987) read the same film, but focused upon different, and equally valid, Christic elements, as follows:

Scotty [James Doohan] pipes “Amazing Grace” as Spock’s coffin is ejected into space, suggesting that *Spock is like Christ*, in having sacrificed himself for his fellows, and that, *like Christ*, he too will be reborn. McCoy [DeForest Kelly] tells Kirk [William Shatner] that Spock is “really not dead as long as we remember him.” Kirk notes in his eulogy that “his death takes place in the shadow of new life” and associates it with “the sunrise on a new world”...Spock is symbolically resurrected in the final, accompanying voiceover, in which it is he, not Kirk, who speaks the well-known, standard prologue used in each *Star Trek* episode on television (p. 219; my emphasis).

(Matt.1:20). Such an understanding makes more meaningful, those references to Jesus as “human and divine” and “in the world but not of the world.”

However, in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984), the dead Vulcan is not just symbolically resurrected but also physically resurrected with his living spirit surviving intact in the SF equivalent of Christ's Second Coming. Furthermore, the Star Trek universe has provided fertile ground for the exploration of other Christ-figures, alien religions, and their various biblical associations (Kraemer, Cassidy, & Schwartz, 2001; Kreitzer, 1999; Lamp, 2010; Porter & McLaren, 1999).

Indeed, Christ-figures inhabit the SF genre simply because Jesus' holy life resonates with the iconic space opera of a human-alien hybrid who visited Earth, walked amongst the inhabitants incognito, was ill-treated, eventually departed the planet, resided off-world, and a return visit is expected, but when is unknown, as depicted within *Superman: The Movie* (1978), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), *Starman* (1984), *K-PAX* (2001) and assorted others (Barkman, 2013; Kozloff, 1981; Kozlovic, 2004; Papandrea, 2017). Although certainly different from everyman Christ-figures, the popular cinema is also replete with many female Christ-figures of the everyman flavour.

3. Female Christ-figures: Gender Swapping Jesuses

As biblical scholar William R. Telford (2000) reported:

A surprising number of female characters could be regarded as Christ-figures: ...Catholic nun, Sister Helen Prejean in *Dead Man Walking* (1995); Antonia of *Antonia's Line* (1995); Leeloo, the female warrior who is revealed as the Supreme being in *The Fifth Element (La Cinquieme Element)* (1997); Ripley of *Alien Resurrection* (1997), who uses her own corrosive blood to open a hole in a window of the spaceship, through which the destructive alien is sucked, and, in a searing portrayal of sacrifice, Bess of *Breaking the Waves* (1996) who gives her own body promiscuously, in the belief that she can thus 'save' her paralysed husband (p. 35).

The depressive but dour Bess (Emily Watson) represented transgressed goodness redeemed only at film's end by a moment of magical realism when ringing sky bells jarringly undercut the film's realist expectations. "As a Christ figure, she is certainly counter-cultural and alien. She's not *normal*. She's better. She's *good*" (Murphy, 2008, pp. 114–115). "Bess is nothing but the very representation of that which marks the fall of God himself into sin" (Elbeshlawy, 2016, p. 38), especially when Bess:

...sacrifices herself to the alleviation of a human being's suffering [her oil rigger husband Jan Nyman (Stellan Skarsgård)] in imitation of God who sacrifices himself or part of himself to alleviating humanity's suffering [1 John 2:2]. This total identification with the idea of *divine sacrifice*, which is clearly manifested in the film's portrayal of Bess as a Christ figure, seems to simultaneously glorify and mock God's sacrifice... (Elbeshlawy, 2016, p. 41; my emphasis).

Another controversial, multi-faceted, female Christ-figure was Sister Helen Prejean (Susan Sarandon), the working bride of Christ in the prison drama *Dead Man Walking* (1995) who represented Jesus in the darker corners of the world.

For Poncelet [Sean Penn], she is the face of love, the face of Christ and the figure of Christ. In the final minutes of the film her journey parallels the journey of Jesus on the way to the cross. It begins in the toilet scene where she begs for strength to cope [Garden of Gethsemane—Matt. 26:36-46], she then walks with Poncelet to the place of execution [Golgotha—John 19:17-18], she participates in his suffering and his death and, like the good thief [Luke 23:39-42], Poncelet looks to her for consolation and receives it [Luke 23:43]. For him her face becomes the face of Christ (Goldburg, 2001, p. 137).

Steve Lansingh (1999) considered the female Rambo, Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) in *Aliens* (1986), had possessed Christic qualities:

Perhaps the most striking *Christlikeness of Ripley* isn't just the fact that she's a savior, it's that she's a *personal savior*. She gets to know Newt [Rebecca Jorden (Carrie Henn)]; she protects her from the

horror but doesn't lie to her about danger; she promises never to leave Newt [Matt. 28:20]. Her actions are *reminiscent of Christ's* when he talks about leaving the herd of sheep to save the one lost lamb [Luke 15:4](para. 13; my emphasis).

Within *Alien³* (1992), the culmination of "her three-film *via dolorosa*" (Murphy, 1992, p. 17), the former Ramboesque Ripley is now impregnated with an alien embryo, and completed her Christic journey by engineering her own postmodern *auto-da-fé* as "a female Christ figure caught in the act of a glorious immolation-abortion" (Gallardo-C & Smith, 2004, p. 122). Unlike her very pronounced self-preservation motivations in *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986), when she arrived at the maximum security prison, planet Fiorina 161, it was inhabited by brothers of a religious order, all convicted murderers and rapists, whose faith was "some sort of millenarian apocalyptic Christian fundamentalist brew" according to Dr Jonathan Clemens (Charles Dance). This homosocial sanctum of fallen men worked without wages to achieve redemption and so Ripley "embodies for them a state, effectively, of innocence" (McCausland, 2015, p. 130). Jesus-like (Luke 23:14) she chose an act of selfless love-cum-death by willingly diving backwards into the foundry's bubbling cauldron of molten metal with arms outstretched in classic cruciform pose (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Ripley in Cruciform Pose Willingly Sacrifices Herself

[*Alien³* © Twentieth Century Fox. All Rights Reserved]

She had knowingly, unconditionally, and calmly sacrificed herself (and her chest-bursting baby Queen xenomorph) for the good of the remaining prison faithful-cum-universe, and thus "fired into godhood, becoming mother and messiah of humankind" (Murphy, 1992, p. 20). As George Faithful (2016) faithfully summed it up:

Despite her doubt, *Ripley became Christ-like*. She *made herself incarnate* among the inmate-brothers of Fiorina 161. Her hair shorn to ward off lice and dressed in rags, she became like them in appearance. She felt their loneliness, fear, and rage. Like them, she was bereft of all earthly comfort, abandoned, and left to die. By embracing the prisoners' dehumanizing circumstances, she temporarily emptied herself of her humanity in order to save the humanity of the prisoners. This was a humanistic version of the *traditional Christian doctrine* of *kenosis*, in which Christ emptied himself of his divinity, in order to save those in desperate need of the divine (p. 356; my emphasis).

However, prior to Ripley's deathly demise, the devilish Bishop (Lance Henriksen) desperately tried deception by: "Offering her life at the cost of her soul, he lures Ripley with the possibility of children in her future—the same celebration of the flesh for which Martin Scorsese's Christ deserts the Cross" (Murphy, 1992, p. 20) within *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988).

Overall, as Icelandic theologian Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir (2014, p. 43) argued: "while the historical Jesus was indeed a man, his maleness itself does not play an essential role in God's incarnation

among us.” “Female Christ-figures in films incarnate the image of God that is bestowed fully upon women, as they are called to share in *full humanity* and to represent the one who came to reveal what it means to be *fully human*” (Guðmundsdóttir, 2002, p. 39):

The distinctive factor about *female* Christ-figures in film is their potential to deepen our understanding of the radical message of God’s incarnation in Christ. Female Christ-figures argue in a powerfully visual form that it is Jesus’ humanity and not his historical maleness that is central to the christological discourse (Guðmundsdóttir, 2016, p. 375).

Further female Christ-figures can be unearthed within *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), *Nights of Cabiria* (1957), *Steel Magnolias* (1989), *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), *Amélie* (2001), *Whale Rider* (2002), *Twilight* (2008) and its sequels (Baugh, 1997; Elbeshlawy, 2016; Guðmundsdóttir, 2002, 2016; Haffmans, 2013; Mercadante, 2001; White, 2011). Nor are Christ-figures limited to the human or humanoid domains, non-human biological creatures as Christ-figures also exist.

4. Animal Christ-figures: Veterinary Versions

Religion scholars have often championed animal versions of the hidden Jesus, that is, Christ-figures eschewing humanity altogether whilst paradoxically reaffirming the unique otherness of Christ. For example, Lloyd Baugh (1997, p. 191) mediated upon cinematic saintliness within *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) and considered the mistreated little donkey Balthazar (who literally bore the burdens of humankind) to be “one of the most theologically-complex, biblically-verified, spiritually-moving and memorable Christ-figures in the history of the religious film” (see Figure 5).

Contrary to Joseph Cunneen’s (2002, p. 80) claim that “to employ Balthazar [sic] as a Christ-figure seems misdirected,” Baugh’s enthusiastic assessment is understandable because “the film begins with a mock baptism of the donkey and concludes with his brutal killing on a hillside surrounded by herds of sheep...[and so] the narrative puts into question the archetypal story of the crucifixion” (Cameron, 2011, p. 4). For Tony Pipolo (2010, p. 184), the “very idea of paralleling an animal’s life, suffering, and death to the story of Christ is both thematically bold and...an extraordinary test of [Robert] Bresson’s aesthetic;” especially since he “does not anthropomorphize Balthazar; he does not impose on Balthazar a presumed, human psychology as the donkey witnesses the people and events around him” (Vonderheide, 2017, p. 114).



Figure 5. Balthazar: The Dead Donkey & His Sheep Flock

[*Au Hasard Balthazar* © Argos Films. All Rights Reserved]

Moreover, these veterinary versions avoid traditional complications associated with Jesus films because: “By rooting Balthazar in blunt physicality, giving new meaning to the idea of the word made flesh, Bresson avoids the problem altogether [evoking divinity via the corporeal] as well as such clichés as images bathed in ethereal light and off screen evocations of the divine presence” (Pipolo, 2010, p. 188), whilst simultaneously “capturing the invisible, saying the ineffable, materializing the Spirit” (Jacob, 2003, p. 32). Pragmatically speaking, “by casting a donkey as the film’s central character, the when, why, and how of many plot points go unanswered” (Vonderheide, 2017, p. 114), thus preventing viewers being diverted away from its central spiritual message with realist minutiae.

Theologian Robert Farrar Capon (2002, p. 45) argued that: “in all the Lassie stories the Christ figure is Lassie, the dog. The dog is the one who makes the plot get reconciled,” whilst Father Peter Malone (1988, p. 82) proclaimed concerning the animated ecological tale, *Watership Down* (1978), that its community-conscious “Hazel, the rabbit [voice of John Hurt] who leads a group to safety, not without struggle and suffering, is, of course, the savior-figure.” In addition to Hazel the rabbit-Jesus, filmmaker George Miller considered the porcine hero, Babe in the animated feature film *Babe* (1995), and its sequel *Babe, Pig in the City* (1998) “acts much like a saviour – saving face, saving lives and saving a farm. In one of the scenes from *Babe: Pig in the City*, Babe is depicted as a *Christ-like figure* when he feeds a multitude of animals from one jar of jellybeans” (Andrews, 2011, p. 164; my emphasis), paralleling Jesus feeding the multitudes with five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:30-43). Indeed, Miller considered Babe a better Christ-figure than “Mad” Max Rockatansky (Mel Gibson) from his post-apocalyptic series beginning with *Mad Max* (1979):

I must say that Babe is much closer to a *Christ figure* than Max. Particularly in *Babe* (dir. Chris Noonan), he does change the established order. In fact, in *Babe, Pig in the City*, he’s *much more a Christ figure* because he turns the other cheek. He goes to save from drowning the one who was about to kill him. But in *Babe*, he relinquishes his self-interest in order to save Farmer Hoggett [James Cromwell] and to help fulfil the dream for Farmer Hoggett and to show that a pig can, indeed, be a champion sheepdog. He does it in part for himself but it’s mainly for the farmer. Yes, he’s closer to Christ – not that a pig should be Christ but he’s more *Christ-like* than Max! (Malone, 2001, p. 89; my emphasis).

The more famous animal Christ-figure within western Christianity is Aslan (voiced by Liam Neeson), the regal, talking lion in *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005) based upon C. S. Lewis’s novel of the same name and full of biblical allusions (Sharman, 2020). Aslan is the King of Beasts, comparable to Jesus—the “King of Kings” (Rev. 19:16), who was totally innocent and sin-free; just like Jesus who was innocent (Luke 23:41) and sin-free (1 John 3:5). Aslan willingly offered himself as a blood sacrifice, Jesus-like (1 John 1:7), in exchange for the life of a son of Adam (aka humanity), the Pevensie traitor Edmund (Skandar Keynes) who had betrayed Aslan just as Judas had betrayed Jesus (Luke 22:3-4).

The troubled Aslan like the troubled Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38-39) accepted his redemptive duty to die as a ransom sacrifice, just as Jesus did (Matt. 20:28). Although powerful, Aslan does not physically or verbally retaliate, just like Jesus (1 Peter 2:23), but instead meekly accepted being: (a) taunted and mocked (Matt. 27:41), (b) physically bound (Matt. 27:2), (c) shaved (the animal equivalent of being stripped—Matt. 27:28), (iv) then ritually executed akin to the ritually executed Christ (Mark 16:6). Aslan was laid out upon a Stone Table like a sacrificial lamb; akin to Jesus the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29), when Aslan’s nemesis, the wicked White Witch (Tilda Swinton) used a long, stone-bladed knife for the bloody death-dealing deed. This weapon was analogous to the Roman’s spearhead that pierced Jesus’s side causing flowing “blood and water” (John 19:34).

During the post-execution scenes, the sacrificial Stone Table cracked in two and the dead Aslan mysteriously disappeared; akin to the stone-separated sepulchre with Jesus's body missing (John 20:1-2). Suddenly, Aslan miraculously reappeared upright and physically restored nearby, and exited a stone doorway with sunlight halo-crown backdrop (see Figure 6), which was akin to Jesus's bodily resurrection (John 20:14) and not-quite-ascended state after exiting his stone sepulchre (John 20:17).



Figure 6. The Resurrected Aslan with Halo-crown Backdrop

[*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* © Walt Disney Pictures. All Rights Reserved]

Aslan is approached by initially hesitant-cum-delighted Susan (Anna Popplewell) and Lucy (Georgie Henley); akin to the uncertain “other Mary” (Matt. 28:1) and Mary Magdalene who first encountered the risen Christ (John 20:14). Aslan explained (in a non-scriptural rendering) that his miraculous resurrection was rooted in “the true meaning of sacrifice,” namely: “that when a willing victim who has committed no treachery, is killed in a traitor’s stead, the Stone Table will crack, and even death itself will turn backwards.” In short, “Aslan is Jesus in fur” (Colbert, 2005, p. 10).

Veterinary versions of the hidden Jesus, whether donkey, dog, rabbit, pig, or lion are unusual but understandable when recalling how God communicated with Balaam through a donkey (Num. 22:21-39), and the rebellious Devil/Satan/the dragon spoke to Eve through a serpent (Gen. 3:1-15) to see how animality could be so easily deployed. Potentially less palatable due to their non-creature natures are the inanimate Christ-figures that inhabit popular films.

5. Inanimate Christ-figures: The Holy Non-living

Potentially less palatable due to their non-creature nature are the inanimate Christ-figures, the holy non-living versions of the hidden Christ; albeit, understandable when recalling that God spoke to Moses through a burning bush (Exod. 3:1-17), Gideon via a fleece (Judg. 6:37-40), Saul-cum-Paul through a light from heaven (Acts 9:1-5), Jesus used “spirit” speech (John 6:63), and God talked to Elijah via “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12) which could be interpreted as a gentle whisper and thus evidence that contact with God need not always be accompanied by dramatic revelations or theatrical manifestations.

Nevertheless, filmmakers and their religious interpreters saw many similar exciting possibilities for inanimate objects. For example, theologian Robert Farrar Capon (2002, p. 57) argued that a Christ-figure need not be human-looking, biological, or even living to perform legitimate Christic functions. He cited: “Woody Allen’s film, *September* (1987), the house, in which a totally dysfunctional family was brought to

act functionally was the Christ figure,” and just as immobile as the crucified Christ. Director John Ruane of *That Eye, the Sky* (1994) constructed a yellow aura akin to the holy nimbus of traditional Christian iconography atop his protagonist’s house for spiritual resonance purposes (see Figure 7). As he mused:

I suppose it’s a combination of the father’s soul, of hope, of faith...The guys who were the gaffers, who set the lights up, they called it ‘the mother light’; then they started calling it ‘the God light’. So they would say, ‘Bring God over here’, and they would bring this big light over the house. So, for me, it was a mixture of God and the father’s soul... (Malone, 2001, p. 101).



Figure 7. Film Poster for *That Eye, the Sky* (1994): House with Aura-nimbus

[Source: Google Images]

Glenn Erickson (2001) suggested that the rogue planets Zyra and Bellus in the apocalyptic SF *When Worlds Collide* (1951) were subtextually Jesus and Jehovah:

Devout producer [George] Pal retained the book’s *Christ metaphor* that made the stellar apocalypse into a thinly disguised *Second Coming*...*Bellus, representing the Old Testament Jehovah*, will smash the Earth to pulp, killing every living soul. No simple flood this time folks [Gen. 6:9-9:17]...but Earth has a second chance, of sorts. A few weeks before the arrival of Bellus, its moon *Zyra, representing Jesus Christ*, will pass close by our planet, causing massive earthquakes, tidal waves and other assorted havoc. Only the Chosen Few technocrats who believe in science and are daring enough to build Space Arks to fly to Zyra will be saved (para. 3; my emphasis).

Computers, robots, androids, and cyborgs can also function as Christ-figures, as demonstrated by the Cyberdine Systems Model 101, T-800 Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) in *The Terminator* (1984) origin story (Boer, 1995), and again in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991)(aka *T2*). This cybernetic organism comprising of living tissue over a metal endoskeleton transformed from assassin into “the perfect postmodern Christ: technological genius incarnate and ready to die to smelt away the sins of technological man” (Larson, 1997, p. 65; my emphasis). Its Christic nature was verbally tagged when John Connor stopped the T-800 shooting a bully-boy by yelling out: “Jesus you were gonna kill that guy!” For David Greven (2017):

T2 brings out the Christian core of the god in ruins theme, the destruction and restoration of the body of a beautiful white man. When John [Edward Furlong] holds up the cyborg's bullet-riddled leather jacket to the sunlight, the pattern of light through the bullet holes recalls the image of Christ on the Shroud of Turin (p. 67).



Figure 8. John Inspecting the T-800's Bullet-ridden Leather Jacket
[*Terminator 2: Judgment Day* © Carolco Pictures. All Rights Reserved]

And yet, the jacket never leaves his body, and no sunlight shines *through* it, only *on* it, followed by employing a vivid imagination to see a Shroud of Turin Christ image. Nevertheless, there will always be a fine line between seeing and inventing Christ-figures because: "They are, of course, very difficult to define. Like ghosts in the night or faces in the clouds, you can imagine that you are seeing them, when they are in fact not really there" (Telford, 2000, p. 35). But what if really there, but not the flavour wanted?

6. Antihero-antichrist-figures: The Shadows of the Christos

Christ-figures can evoke disquiet, fear or terror when they manifest as evil antihero-antichrists, as in Martin Scorsese's *Cape Fear* (1991) starring Cady, the tattoo-tagged criminal who was literally signposted with a Christian cross (see Figure 9):

The anti-hero Max Cady (Robert de Niro) is all of an avenging angel, a destroyer, a bringer of justice, the Bible itself (with his quotations of Scripture), even a Christ figure (unjustly punished, later vindicated). Towards the end, he is even 'resurrected'. Several readings are possible. Cady is a Christ *and an antichrist figure*, with the intricate suspense of justice and retribution (Graham, 1997, p. 312; my emphasis).



Figure 9. Cady-the-Antichrist Exercising in Prison
[*Cape Fear* © Amblin Entertainment. All Rights Reserved]

Although Cady as Christ-cum-antichrist is undesirable, at least he is more palatable than cannibal-hero Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), the sympathetic but psychotic star of *Hannibal* (2001), in what Brian Godawa (2009, p. 186) called “an ironic postmodern recasting of the Christ story...This anti-Christian myth gives the Christ role to the villain”. Dr. Hannibal Lecter’s trinitarian character as cannibal-doctor-villain is one of the cinema’s nastiest antihero-antichrist figures to date. This was subtextually highlighted when he was betrayed by a Judas-figure and re-enacted iconic biblical events. As Brian Godawa (2009) explained:

[Inspector Rinaldo] Pazzi [Giancarlo Giannini], the Italian cop who tracks down Hannibal in Florence, is a clear Judas rewrite. Not only does he *betray* Hannibal for \$3 million (a multiple of thirty pieces of Judas’s silver [Matt. 26:15; 27:3, 9]), but he is also killed in exactly the same way as Judas, *by hanging* [Matt. 27:5] and having *his bowels spill out* [Acts 1:18], after a history lesson about the biblical Judas Iscariot given by Hannibal himself. Hannibal has a gruesome “last supper” [Matt 26:20-35] with [FBI Agent] Clarice [Starling (Julianne Moore)] (his nemesis *and* love interest) that is *quite literally the eating of a body*. When he discovers Clarice’s self-loathing thoughts, he jabs that she would like the apostle Paul because he hated women too—a reference to Paul’s instructions to women to be subject to their husbands as their husbands are subject to Christ (Eph 5:22-24). Hannibal ultimately “ascends to heaven” [Mark 16:19] in a jumbo jet (pp. 186–187).

Less obnoxious, and somewhat delightful, was the foul-mouthed Deadpool/Wade Wilson (Ryan Reynolds) in the anti-hero comedy *Deadpool 2* (2018). Paul Asay (2018) thought him:

...a twisted, sarcastic Christ figure of sorts...[who] compares himself to both Jesus and God...“The Lord works in mysterious ways, don’t I?” he says. At another juncture, he declares that he’s been anointed by a “higher power,” and someone in earshot of his monologue asks, “Did he just call himself Jesus?”...A promotional poster...[has] Cable [Josh Brolin] and Deadpool in the roles of God and Adam, respectively. It’s captioned “The Second Coming”...[Elsewhere] Weasel [T. J. Miller], another Deadpool friend, owns a bar and we see a glowing Christian cross inside it—another winking aside to Deadpool’s turn as a Christ-like figure” (nnp; my emphasis).

As such, one waits for his future cinematic incarnation as the rider on the white horse carrying a sharp sword who will come to judge and make war, smite and rule nations (Rev. 19:11-16), that is, Jesus Christ as a death-dealing heavenly warrior.

CONCLUSION

This study was by necessity pragmatically limited to focusing upon predominately English-language, Western renditions of the cinematic Jesus and its subtextual Christ-figure derivatives. However, non-English, non-Western biblical exemplars also existed, such as the Indian Malayalam-language *Jesus* (1973), the Indian Telugu-language *Karunamayudu* (1978), and the Indonesian-language inter-faith *Tanda Tanya* (2011) that deftly explored the complexities of religious diversity. All are worthy of deeper explication, but even less well-researched are their non-Western subtextual Christic manifestations that is still crying out for identification and thus a suggested direction for further scholarly investigation.

Nevertheless, given the restrictive scope of the above detailed explications, it was clearly demonstrated that Christ-figures of numerous form, style, and shape exist that can easily stretch the boundaries of one’s imagination, patience, and tolerance for (in)credulity. Whilst still being pedagogically rewarding, even if in a *via negativa* fashion as favoured by postmodern apophatic theologians (Esich, 2005). For Father Peter Malone (1997, p. 71; my emphasis), such explorations are also of great practical value for the church itself because: “Christ-figures and *antichrist-figures* in the arts, literature, theatre,

television drama and *cinema* can be (whether they are derived from faith or from culture) *key images* in making the Gospels and the church *credible*, [thus] a contemporary means of *apologetics*".

After all, as Jesus Christ commanded (albeit, in a different context): "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" (Matt. 10:27). And so, why would a 21st century person *not* choose to use movies during this Age of Hollywood? Since sacred subtexts are ever-growing, increasingly complex, and inherently intriguing, as aptly demonstrated by the six categories explicated above, they are certainly worthy of even deeper scholarly investigation and category expansion, and thus another suggested direction for further scholarly investigation that is wholeheartedly recommended, warmly welcomed, and already long overdue. Moreover, since these extra-ecclesiastical sources of insight function as modern-day missionaries that expands theological discussion far beyond traditional Scripture study that many a student had to endure rather than enjoy, that positive pedagogic result alone is worth the price of admission.

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Filmography

- A Short Film about Love* (1988, dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski; *Do Not Desire the Wife of Another; Decalogue Six; Krótki film o miłości*)
- Alien* (1979, dir. Ridley Scott)
- Alien Resurrection* (1997, dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet)
- Alien³* (1992, dir. David Fincher)
- Aliens* (1986, dir. James Cameron)
- Amélie* (2001, dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet; *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*)
- Antonia's Line* (1995, dir. Marleen Gorris)
- Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966, dir. Robert Bresson)
- Babe* (1995, dir. Chris Noonan)
- Babe, Pig in the City* (1998, dir. George Miller)
- Breaking the Waves* (1996, dir. Lars von Trier)
- Cape Fear* (1991, dir. Martin Scorsese)
- Cyborg* (1989, dir. Albert Pyun)
- Dancer in the Dark* (2000, dir. Lars von Trier)
- Dead Man Walking* (1995, dir. Tim Robbins)

Deadpool 2 (2018, dir. David Leitch)
Destination Unknown (1933, dir. Tay Garnett)
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982, dir. Steven Spielberg)
Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014, dir. Ridley Scott)
Hannibal (2001, dir. Ridley Scott)
Jesus (1973, dir. P. A. Thomas)
Jesus Christ, Superstar (1973, dir. Norman Jewison)
Karunamayudu (1978, dir. A. Bhimsingh & Christopher Coelho; *Ocean of Mercy*)
King David (1985, dir. Bruce Beresford)
King of Kings (1961, dir. Nicholas Ray)
K-PAX (2001, dir. Iain Softley)
Mad Max (1979, dir. George Miller)
Mary Magdalene (2018, dir. Garth Davis)
Mary, Mother of Jesus (1999, dir. Kevin Connor)
Nights of Cabiria (1957, dir. Federico Fellini)
Noah (2014, dir. Darren Aronofsky)
Paul, Apostle of Christ (2018, dir. Andrew Hyatt)
Raging Bull (1980, dir. Martin Scorsese)
Risen (2016, dir. Kevin Reynolds)
RoboCop (1987, dir. Paul Verhoeven)
Samson and Delilah (1949, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)
September (1987, dir. Woody Allen)
Son of God (2014, dir. Christopher Spencer)
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (1982, dir. Nicholas Meyer)
Star Trek III: The Search for Spock (1984, dir. Leonard Nimoy)
Starman (1984, dir. John Carpenter)
Steel Magnolias (1989, dir. Herbert Ross)
Superman: The Movie (1978, dir. Richard Donner; *Superman*)
Tanda Tanya (2011, dir. Hanung Bramantyo; ?; *Question Mark*)
Taxi Driver (1976, dir. Martin Scorsese)
Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991, dir. James Cameron)
That Eye, the Sky (1994, dir. John Ruane)
The Book of Esther (2013, dir. David R. A. White)
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005, dir. Andrew Adamson)
The Dead Zone (1983, dir. David Cronenberg)
The Fifth Element (1997, dir. Luc Besson; *Le cinquième élément*)
The Greatest Story Ever Told (1965, dir. George Stevens)
The Last Temptation of Christ (1988, dir. Martin Scorsese)
The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928, dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer)
The Passion of the Christ (2004, dir. Mel Gibson)
The Penitent Thief (2020, dir. Lucas Miles)
The Ten Commandments (1956, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)
The Terminator (1984, dir. James Cameron)
Twelve Monkeys (1995, dir. Terry Gilliam)
Twilight (2008, dir. Catherine Hardwicke)
Watership Down (1978, dir. Martin Rosen)
Whale Rider (2002, dir. Niki Caro)
When Worlds Collide (1951, dir. Rudolph Maté)