

In the film I Robot, show how narrative and genre create meaning and generate response from the viewer

The film 'I Robot' is a classic conventional sci-fi film. From the outset the audience establishes that this is of the science fiction genre due to the synthetic bubbles, vibrant colours, short snippets of wires and menacing orchestral music. The film shapes the particular expectations of the sci-fi genre by summoning up curiosity and suspense.

The first character the audience sees is Will Smith. From this the audience can establish that he is the lead and central character. In addition, from his previous work, Will Smith is associated with sci-fi and action genres, such as Independence Day, Men in Black I and II and Bad Boys.

Levi-Strauss' concepts and ideas of binary opposites are noticeable throughout. The initial shots see Will Smith's character, Del Spooner, at home, surrounded by old furniture and old appliances, for example the alarm clock, the ceiling fan and his music player. The fact that he surrounds himself with this type of stuff would suggest that he is clinging to the past. It then changes to the outside world, the non diegetic music suddenly stops and the audience is confronted with a robot, which is shocking. The high shot from the ceiling fan reflects the chaos and shows the mess of his room, when the future is generically seen as perfect and simplistic.

The song by Stevie Wonder, a black iconic figure, is heard singing the song Superstition, which reflects Spooner's attitude towards the robots perfectly.

The Converse shoes, vintage 2004, demonstrate that Del Spooner is clinging onto the past and the robots demonstrate the advanced futuristic side. In addition, the way in which Del Spooner interacts in his household clearly defines these binary opposites and sets the tone and narrative of the film. Instead of relying on technology in his house, he prefers to be in control. This is the purpose of the shower scene as firstly it shows that he is not using any technology to turn it on and off. Secondly, the nudity shows the beauty of the human frame and how advanced it is, much like the robots. This comparison with the human frame and robots is clear in other sci-fi action films such as The Terminator.

The intertextuality with the advert for the NS5 Robots demonstrates the disruption the Robots cause, due to it juxtaposing the scene, and the mass impact that Robots have on the lives of the people who live in Chicago, as they are unable to avoid them.

The apple pie represents family ideals and traditions. It is homemade and not synthetic, again showing Spooner's non-conformist side.

Spooner's disrespect of the robots presents the audience with a common enemy for our hero. This is supported by the music abruptly stopping as Spooner leaves the house. Also later, a robot gets him into trouble with his chief after he believed the robot had been stealing.

Spooner carries a gun, which is an iconic symbol in the action genre as it represents power and authority for our hero.

At the point that the Robot is seen running with the bag, Spooner tells the man to hold the pie he is eating or wear it. This shows that he is an authoritative character, conventional to the action hero genre and the fact that he is eating a pie while walking the streets is seen as very individualist and presents Spooner as a type of maverick and this connotes him as being as being non-conformist. As Spooner chases the robot, he is able to keep up with the robot, which portrays him as strong and again compares him to the robot. As the camera cannot catch up this creates the audience to seem inferior. From other films of the same genre, it is clear that robots are generally superior, so it is a surprise to see a human who has the same physical attributes as a robot and thus we perceive Spooner as an even stronger and powerful hero.

At the point where the stereotypically black, American, fat, lady starts shouting her mouth off at Spooner, he gets embarrassed. Subsequently, the audience feels empathy for Spooner and a gentle, tender is exposed in his personality, which makes him an even greater hero.

In Spooner's work place, the police department, the room has low key, dark, and dingy lighting and Spooner is alienated at his desk. This is typical generic mise en scene of the film noir, thriller, and detective genre. This is supported by the fact that Spooner's workmates tease him and show no respect over him for his mistake. These work colleagues are white males and dress in white suits, a great contrast when compared to Spooner, who dresses in all black leather and wears a beanie hat as a detective, which is not very professional and thus again Spooner is seen as a maverick figure.

The USR building is shot from a low angle to show how grand this building is and how it looms over the city. It is in the shape of a knife, which connotes power and evil. The camera starts high and then drops to underground. Narrative wise this could present the idea of the thriller, detective genre as Spooner must start at the bottom and work his way up. This would also be an example of Levi-Strauss' binary opposites as in top and bottom.

The use of the Audi car creates realism for the audience, as it is an existing brand. This further highlights the sci-fi genre as the way in which the car is stored can be seen in the film *Minority Report*, also a sci-fi film. As the camera is lifted in the camera follows as the audience is equally wishing to see what is inside however it suddenly cuts to Spooner as if the minor secrets of the future technology is not to be revealed and this makes this future world seem even more impressive, inspiring and almost dreamlike

The first shots of Robertson present him as an anti-hero or villain figure, part of Propp's character ideas. Although there is a giant window in his office the lighting is still low key and dingy. All his furniture is black and made with leather. His office is also at the top of the building as he looks over the city where his robots are about to preside, although he believes with good intentions not bad. Conventionally the villain's office is always at the top of a building as it presents his false power and true vulnerability.

Dr Lanning would fit in Propp's basic characters as the dispatcher and donor. Lanning is clearly identified as an eccentric Dr as he is wearing a white scientist's coat, which

connotes eccentric and reclusive figures. This can be seen in such Sci-fi films such as the Dr in Back to the Future who has these same characteristics and too wears a white coat.

The sci-fi holographic projector is also an iconic object in the sci-fi genre. This is what Lanning gives to Spooner, which helps him along his way. On first impressions, it would seem that Spooner is actually talking to the Dr until it gets closer, which is conventional to the genre as this type of film generally tries to inspire the audience's minds and to create wonder and amazement. As the camera tilts and rises upwards the giant NS5 Robot is seen looming over Lanning, Spooner and the audience, which connotes evilness and evokes an emotional response from the audience that they are evil. In addition, robots personify, if it can be classed as personifying, as the future and the future is thus seen as something to fear.

Throughout the first part of the film, women play a vital role in the technology. V.I.K.I, which happens to also be a female name, has a female's voice. This could represent the postmodern ideology of women in this futuristic world, however, generically it is because this technological world is mainly made up of men and thus the women's voice is soothing and calming and synthetic. Although, Dr Calvin breaks these conventions of mainly male Drs. However this is not exactly true as Calvin acts very much like a man and a robot showing very few female emotions, as if she is acting more like a man or robot as to fit in.

Calvin is seen as the Princess, as in Propp's theory, and Lanning is seen as her Father figure. This is presented when she protects Lanning when Spooner says he was just an old man. It is Spooner's job as the hero to help the Princess from her misleading views and it is Lanning who inadvertently helps her by asking Spooner to help him. The relationship between Calvin and Spooner is seen as a romantic comedy style relationship, as Calvin says the line, "Are you trying to be funny" and Spooner replies with "I guess not."