INTERSTELLAR - AN ENVIRONMENTAL INVOCATION OR A TRIVIAL HOLLYWOOD FILM?

Bachelor Thesis ✳ *Marieke Elisa Haus*

ABSTRACT

Environmental topics within cinema have become more prominent and thematized over the past years, as has the question what should be considered beneficial within the climate change discourse which is especially represented by the discourse about ecocinema. Despite alternative film productions being the pioneers within this field, Hollywood also addresses potential scenarios of a post-climate change world, at least, so it seems. The Hollywood film *Interstellar* primarily focuses on the notion of finding a new home in space for humans, due to the uninhabitable circumstances on earth. The film depicts a dystopian society while not directly addressing the causes for this situation.

This thesis investigates how *Interstellar* can be understood with regards to the discourse surrounding the notion of ecocinema. Thus, this is analyzed by the means of a framing analysis that relies on how the film presents the environment to the viewer, going more in-depth into the film style, as well as the film form. Utilizing the concepts of ecocinema, environmentalist films, dystopia, as well as anthropocentrism, this thesis will shed light on the potential of *Interstellar* as conveying an ecological message. Moreover, the film's representation of a dystopian society will be connected to ecological themes in order to understand how these images might also effect the audience and their understanding of the environment. Additionally, the analysis relates the film's images, as well as its overall narrative to the notion of anthropocentrism, as this directly relates to environmental framing and perception. Consequently, *Interstellar* frames the adverse situation on earth in such a manner that it becomes unclear what has actually caused these uninhabitable circumstances on earth. However, as this film might not serve as a climate change parable, it can still be understood as having the potential to influence audiences' perception concerning their environmental awareness by the means of the visualization within the film.

Key Words: Ecocinema, Environmentalist Films, Dystopia, Anthropocentrism, Hollywood

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

The natural environment on earth relies on its complex structures which are constantly in correspondence with each other. If this system is thrown off balance, changes will become apparent. According to Richard S. J. Tol, "weather affects agriculture, energy use, health, and many aspects of nature—which in turn affects everything and everyone."[1] Therefore, as the results of climate change become more prominent, raising awareness to the potential risks and possibilities of future scenarios this problem might cultivate within our society, gains significance. Among other types of media, the medium of film presents itself as an effective tool to engage audiences within environmental topics. Many scholars identify cinema that solely concentrates on educating, as well as raising awareness to climate change, as ecocinema. However, there is not just one definition of what can be considered ecocinema and what can not. Scholar Paula Willoquet-Maricondi has a clear standpoint, which defines ecocinema as purely educational and non-fictional[2], while John Parham belies this unilateral notion of ecocinema, saying that "(…) popular film offers a foundation, albeit qualified, to the fundamental task of transforming environmentalism into a popular movement."[3] Acknowledging both these perspectives, Scott Macdonald argues that a rather unconventional, new cinema experience serves as ecocinema, as it portrays the environment in a new light to the audience.[4] Thus, a clear discourse about the different conceptions of ecocinema is visible. Within this already demonstrated discourse, different theories and concepts are discussed, such as the display of a dystopian society, the importance of the visualization and the notion of anthropocentrism. These will help to examine and evaluate the environmental representation within the film *Interstellar*.

The Hollywood film *Interstellar*, produced by Christopher Nolan, presents a space mission to find a new planet because earth has become uninhabitable for humanity due to unlivable circumstances caused by dust storms, lack of food and a crop disease called "blight." The film tells the story of a man called Joseph Cooper, a current farmer, but former engineer and NASA Pilot. After finding the coordinates for the hidden NASA space station he tries to find a way to survive by the means of a utopian society within space.[5] Within this research, the focus will lie on the environmental framing within *Interstellar*, as there are multiple scenes which can be viewed through an environmentalist lens. For instance, the depiction of a dust storm approaching a baseball match that Cooper and his family are attending, abruptly interrupting the normality of the

---

[1] Richard S. J. Tol, "The Economic Effects of Climate Change," *Journal of Economic Perspectives 23*, no. 2 (2009): 29.

[2] Paula Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms: From Environmentalist Films to Ecocinema," in *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 43-61.

[3] John Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2016), 51.

[4] Scott Macdonald, "The Ecocinema Experience" in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt (New York: Routledge, 2013), 20.

[5] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.

scene.[6] (17:06-21:25) By dissecting this scene with regards to ecocinema and the different concepts and theories this discourse entails, a clearer vision of how *Interstellar* plays a part within this discussion will be determined. Thus, scholars often minimize Hollywood films' potential with regards to representing an environmental messages based on the human-centered story line. However, this research will try to identify that through the means of film style and form, Hollywood films could potentially play an important role within raising climate change awareness and creating new environmental frames within the audiences' minds.

Research Question

How can the film *Interstellar* be interpreted with regards to the discourse referring to ecocinema?

Sub-Questions
- What characteristics of ecocinema does *Interstellar* display?
- What relevance does the display of a dystopian society have within the film in relation to its potential as depicting ecological themes?
- To what extent may the images, created through the mode of dystopia, effect the film's audience?
- How does the narrative of *Interstellar* relate to the concept of anthropocentrism?

These questions aim to understand how science fiction films within popular culture might be able to contribute to the ecological debates and climate change movement. Furthermore, they aim to shed light on how *Interstellar* in particular might help to shape more awareness within the broader society and not just within niche audiences. Ecocinema in itself seems to be a varying prospect, as one clear definition can not be pinpointed. Therefore, *Interstellar* could be regarded as a form of entertainment cinema which through the use of stylistic choices and elements portrayed within it, is able to represent ecological themes to audiences. Thus, this might contribute to raising environmental consciousness and how the viewers might also perceive their own environment.

First, this research will focus on the existing discourse of ecocinema, hence also diving into various scholarly frameworks surrounding the concept of dystopia within films, the effects of dystopian images, as well as anthropocentrism with regards to environmental representation. Secondly, the methodology will be discussed, which will be applied in the following analysis. This analysis will specifically focus on the film's framing of the environment by the means of stylistic choices and film form. Lastly, the outcome of the research will be discussed with regards to potential changes and ideas for further research.

---

[6] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Ecocinema and Hollywood

Within the first section, the aforementioned discourse of ecocinema will be outlined in connection to Hollywood and in particular, the genre of science fiction.

As the topic of climate change becomes more prominent within cinema, entertainment-based or educational, the discussion arises, as to what can and should be considered ecocinema. Patrick Brereton delineates the classification often made by scholars between ‚light' and ‚deep' ecology. He distinguishes this by saying that "(…) 'light' tends to provide a more 'environmental/managerial' approach to the environment with the status quo almost implicitly accepted, deep ecology is considered to be more progressive if somewhat abstract and idealistic."[7] Thus, light ecology relates to Willoquet-Maricondi's notion of environmentalist cinema, while "deep ecology evidently goes beyond the transformation of technology and politics to a transformation of humanity," according to Brereton.[8]

Scholar Willoquet-Maricondi makes this distinction as well as she denounces the purpose of ecological themes within entertainment besides its compelling characteristics. She narrows the term ecocinema to cinema that "(…) strives to inspire personal and political action," thus actively tries to intervene in the viewers' consciousness of the global warming crisis and to create change.[9] Hence, according to her, entertainment-based films that use environmental themes are considered to be "environmentalist", rather than ecological.[10] She distinguishes between the different approaches of environmental framing, which are environmentalist cinema and ecocinema. The latter is "(…) stimulating our thinking so as to bring about concrete changes in the choices we make, daily and in the long run (…), according to Willoquet-Maricondi."[11] This might be developed through a "lyrical and contemplative style," which strives to implement "appreciation for ecosystems" within audiences, or an "(…) overt activist approach to inspire our care, inform, educate, and motivate us to act on the knowledge they provide."[12] Contrary to this, she delineates environmentalist cinema as films where "(…) environmental issues are central to the narrative but where the environment is merely another ‚'topical issue' at Hollywood's disposal."[13] Therefore diminishing the potential of films that portray climate change within their entertainment-based narrative in a way that differs from scientific knowledge or a lyrical approach.

---

[7] Patrick Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005), 28.

[8] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 29.

[9] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 45.

[10] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 45.

[11] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 45.

[12] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 45.

[13] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 47.

Willoquet-Maricondi paints a rather negative light on films that do not distinctly position the environment within the focus. Ultimately, the more relevance environmentalism obtains within contemporary films, the more attention it also gets from its audiences. Although, as she mentions, this can also result in a misconception of scientific facts.[14] According to Willoquet-Maricondi's argumentation, *Interstellar* would not be considered ecocinema, as the film focuses on a human-centered approach, and therefore contradicts the idea of the main focus on environmental health. Furthermore, the narrative that humans need to escape the earth to survive does not create a new reimagined relationship between humanity and the environment, but instead implements the opposite, reinforcing the current relationship. Thus, within this research Willoquet-Maricondi's rather one-sided outlook upon ecocinema will be questioned and examined, by the means of concepts within this discourse.

Furthering this notion, Scott Macdonald delineates that "(…) the job of an ecocinema is to provide new kinds of film experience that demonstrate an alternative to conventional media-spectatorship and help to nurture a more environmentally progressive mindset."[15] Therefore, depicting ecocinema as something outside the norm of popular culture. Moreover, Macdonald describes the characteristics of ecocinema as offering "(…) audiences a depiction of the natural world within a cinematic experience that models patience and mindfulness— qualities of consciousness crucial for a deep appreciation of and an ongoing commitment to the natural environment."[16] Hence, this description portrays a focus on the audience's experience rather than the actual content of the film itself. However, the question remains as to what can actually be considered a new cinematic experience, that has the ability to fundamentally change audiences' thinking. Thus, this standpoint differs from the idea of light and deep ecology, as well as the distinction made by Willoquet-Maricondi between ecocinema and environmentalist films. With regards to *Interstellar*, this notion highlights its ability to visualize environmental topics whilst also condemning its function as it has been filmed in a "Hollywood manner."[17]

Sharing a different perspective towards Hollywood as part of ecocinema, John Parham offers a rather optimistic outlook as he defends environmentalist films by saying that "(…) popular film offers a foundation, albeit qualified, to the fundamental task of transforming environmentalism into a popular movement."[18] Therefore, he considers environmentalist cinema as an effective tool to accommodate environmentalism within mainstream media by appealing to a broader audience who is not already engaged within this movement. Parham supports his argument by the use of the apocalyptic film *The Day After Tomorrow*, as he argues that "the memorable dystopian inversion of iconic images (…)" can "(…) provide a cultural jolt that may well remain with the

---

[14] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 49.

[15] Macdonald, "The Ecocinema Experience," 20.

[16] Macdonald, "The Ecocinema Experience," 19.

[17] Macdonald, "The Ecocinema Experience," 20.

[18] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 51.

audience."[19] Thus, he states that the display of a dystopian future gives off a strong impression to its audience, which might then result in a rise of awareness concerning climate change, objecting Willoquet-Maricondi's opinion, by saying that she downplays the potential of such films.[20] As Parham provides an alternative perspective upon environmentalist films, it still raises questions about how and if these images manage to stay within audiences in connection to environmental problems. Concerning *Interstellar*, Parham attributes a lot of potential to this genre, as the film is made to appeal to a broad audience since its main motives are focused on typical Hollywood narratives, such as the focus on love.[21]

Paying closer attention to the genre of science fiction, David Seed delineates that *"the label science fiction contains a tension between the first term which suggests organized knowledge and the second which denotes feigning or imaginative construction."[22]* Thus, the genre of science fiction (SF) explores societal, economical, and political themes through the mode of fiction. An important part of SF, according to Seed, is the notion of "world-building," which describes the explorative nature of SF narratives.[23] Relating to this, he also notes that within SF, the reader/viewer is confronted with the correlation of the familiar and the "strangely new."[24] Consequently, the genre of SF can be identified as one that explores, questions, and reimagines society, and as this research will argue, also the environment.

By paying closer attention to ecology within this genre, Brian Stableford adds to this discussion, as he portrays the rise of ecocatastrophes as a theme in SF from the 1950s onwards. According to him, these ecocatastrophes address the problem of the exhaustibility of natural resources (food, oil, etc.) and environmental pollution.[25] Thus, science fiction acts as a genre in which the exploration of critical problems is possible and presumably elementary. Accordingly, *Interstellar* could be considered to act within this understanding of SF as it displays a narrative of exploration and a re-imagination of the known world. Ultimately this adds to Parham's standpoint, because they agree on the notion that a fictional film has potential within the roams of environmentalist cinema. Although Stableford and Parham substantiate this position with different reasons, Stableford concentrates on the potential of SF itself in relation to exploration and depiction of the environment, while Parham rather refers to the visualization. Consequently, the idea of the genre SF as a foundation for ecological themes presents itself as favorable with

---

[19] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 49.

[20] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 46.

[21] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 46.

[22] David Seed, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. David Seed (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 4-5.

[23] Seed, "Introduction," 4.

[24] Seed, "Introduction," 4.

[25] Brian Stableford, "Science Fiction and Ecology," in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. David Seed (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 138.

regards to ecocinema. However, the actual impact and acknowledgment of these themes by audiences in relation to climate change is disputable.

To sum up, scholars' conceptualization of how ecological themes should be framed within cinema differs greatly, not only the terms. Within my research, I will focus on the conceptualization of ecocinema from a rather extensive perspective, hence *Interstellar* is a Hollywood film that does not primarily focus on ecological topics to educate but rather uses them as main motives within the narrative. Thus, the environment is framed and highlighted employing a dystopian narrative that creates a newly constructed perspective for the viewer.

Within the next section, the concept of dystopia, as well as utopia, in relation to ecocinema will be discussed, especially with a focus on how the display of these might influence viewers' perception of climate change.

2.2. Dystopia and Utopia within Environmentalist Cinema

Interstellar is set within a dystopian society where sand storms and the lack of food make human life on earth insurmountable. Regarding the current state of our earth, this dystopian society still seems to be imaginative although due to our changing environment it might be closer to reality within some places rather than others. As the film progresses, a utopian society is created within a fifth dimension, diminishing the daunting ending of humanity. While the film is based on a dystopian narrative, it is relevant to have a closer look at how this story world might help to signify and contextualize climate change.

As Inês Crespo and Ângela Pereira delineate that "fear-inducing representations comprise one of the ways in which the film-makers attempt to engage audiences with the issues portrayed and ultimately inspire eco-friendly behaviour."[26] Therefore, what they call "fear narrative" seems to represent an effective tool to engage audiences and inspire change. However, Crespo and Pereira also describe how an unrealistic representation of climate change, as in the case of the SF film *The Day After Tomorrow* can be, as they say it "(…) does not succeed in engaging the participants on climate change because it was perceived as mere entertainment."[27] Thus, concerning the film *Interstellar*, it can be said to have similar characteristics to *The Day After Tomorrow*, such as the dystopian society. Although, *Interstellar* can be seen as a more realistic representation of climate change, as it does not represent a sudden apocalyptic turn of events but rather a gradual worsening of the situation. Therefore, potentially not underlying Crespo and Pereira's perception of unrealistic representations of dystopian futures.

Adding to this, Patrick Brereton argues that utopian, as well as dystopian cinema, is not inherently as bad as other scholars may say. He sees the potential within the "liberal-humanist ecological agenda" as well as within the sublime of visual images which can "(…) stay(s) with the

---

[26] Inês Crespo and Ângela Pereira, "Climate Change Films: Fear and Agency Appeals," in *Transnational Ecocinema: Film Culture in an Era of Ecological Transformation*, ed. Tommy Gustaffson and Pietari Kääpä (Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2013), 168.

[27] Crespo and Pereira, "Climate Change Films: Fear and Agency Appeals," 180.

audience long after (…)."[28] Hence, utopia is often used within SF films, Brereton discusses the significance this genre presents. According to him, science fiction "(…) can be considered a primary postmodern genre, (which) explicitly represents and problematises notions concerning 'nature' and thereby addresses specific ecofears and sensibilities."[29] Furthering this statement, Brereton presents the effects of "sublime spectacle" within films, as he claims that through the visualization, the images are able to stay longer within the audience afterward.[30] Thus, this entails that "filmic time and space is dramatised, often above and beyond strict narrative requirements, and serves, whether accidentally or not, to reconnect audiences with their inclusive ecosystem," according to Brereton.[31] This notion as described within the context of utopian narratives helps to understand how exactly a utopia, as well as a dystopia, is able to represent the environment through the form of an abstract and reimagined display of society. Although, with the growing technological advancements within cinema, the notion of the sublime might be contested. Since science fiction films are a part of popular culture now, audiences might not pay that much attention anymore to films with special effects and visual excess, as they have become used to them. Therefore, possibly diminishing the idea that visuals remain within audiences long after the film.

      Adding to Brereton's standpoint, Stephen Rust argues that dystopian narratives are able to change the risk perception of climate change within audiences. This is possible through the representation of a reimagined relationship between human and planet, which he describes as "cultural logic of ecology."[32] Rust coins this term based on his critique of Fredric Jameson's "cultural logic of late capitalism." Hence, Rust says that Jameson's perception describes the idea that nature could be gone for good in the future. Thus, by replacing "late capitalism" with "ecology," Rust delineates the change of the relationship between humans and earth that has taken place within recent years.[33] Furthermore, Rust argues that dystopian films might "present themselves not as prophecies of apocalyptic doom but as prescient calls for humanity to alter its deeply dysfunctional relationship with the planet before it is forced to do so by the planet itself."[34] Although, this idea seems to be very idealistic, as a film must provide a dystopian society closely related to the viewers' own reality, in order for them to built such a connection. Relating to this notion, Rust and Monani point out that the depiction of the reason for an apocalyptic event or a dystopian society is relevant, as this directs the audience to pay more attention to these aspects,

---

[28] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 13.

[29] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 187.

[30] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 13.

[31] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 11.

[32] Rust, Stephen, "Hollywood and Climate Change," in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt (New York: Routledge, 2013), 192.

[33] Rust, "Hollywood and Climate Change," in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, 204/5.

[34] Rust, "Hollywood and Climate Change," in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, 204.

potentially also outside of the story world.[35] Concerning *Interstellar*, a film that portrays a dystopian world with a strong focus on specific elements as the cause for the uninhabitability, the audiences' reception of their own world might be influenced by the new perspective that is represented in form of these elements within the film.

Consequently, dystopian narratives are commonly accompanied by environmental themes, as they might represent potential futures. As for the effect this might have on audiences, scholars have very different views, thus either denying the educational effects or directing the attention to the raised awareness through the general environmental motif. *Interstellar* represents itself as an alluring example, as the film entails both, a dystopian society, as well as a utopian society. Therefore, investigating how the film can be understood in relation to the concept of dystopia with a closer look at the sublime effects, as delineated by Brereton, will help to fathom the ecological frames possibly demonstrated within the dramatic narrative that deals with the relations between the characters.

Next, the notion of anthropocentrism will be briefly discussed, as it is closely related to ecological topics. Discussing different anthropocentric approaches will serve this research in order to delineate the underlying conventions *Interstellar* potentially represents.

2.3. Anthropocentrism and Environmentalism

Willoquet-Maricondi delineates that there is a current shift from "(…) a narrow anthropocentric worldview to an earth-centered, or ecocentric, view in which the ecosphere, rather than merely the human sphere, is taken as the 'center of value for humanity'."[36] This statement entails that while moving towards a more sustainable, and eco-centered reality, an anthropocentric approach is often outdated. However, in cinema, especially Hollywood, anthropocentrism is often still visible, as humans act as the center of the narrative. The narrative of *Interstellar* could be considered to reflect this approach since the space mission solely operates in order to save the human race from the circumstances on earth, rather than to preserve the environment and help strengthen it to make it vital again. Interesting to note is also the lack of diverse environmental representation, besides the large fields, within the film. Thus, all these elements point towards an anthropocentric storyline, that puts the human race first instead of acknowledging the environment as equally important to sustain. Then, the question arises if an anthropocentric approach can still be viable to deliver an environmentalist message.

Bryan G. Norton provides a different perspective on the notion of anthropocentrism, as he distinguishes between two different types of anthropocentrism. Firstly, there is the value theory of 'strong anthropocentrism', which according to him, describes the theory that something only

---

[35] Stephen Rust, and Salma Monani, "Cuts to Dissolve - Defining and Situating Eco-Cinema Studies," in *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8.

[36] Willoquet-Maricondi, "Shifting Paradigms," 45.

gains value once it has a use for humans, therefore, using nature in an "exploitive manner."[37] Secondly, Norton delineates the theory of 'weak anthropocentrism', which "(…) provides a basis for criticism of value systems which are purely exploitative of nature."[38] Thus, he says "within the limits set by weak anthropocentrism (…), there exists a framework for developing powerful reasons for protecting nature."[39] However, the lines between ‚weak' and ‚strong' anthropocentrism are quite blurry, therefore it is hard to differentiate between these two. With regards to *Interstellar*, Norton's depiction of strong and weak anthropocentrism will facilitate a clearer vision of how the film demonstrates nature in comparison to human life.

Consequently, with regards to ecocinema it is significant to have a look at the role of humanity, as well as the role the environment plays within the film and what is particularly highlighted throughout. Therefore, by applying the different ideas, as well as further distinctions within this theory, anthropocentrism will aid to interpret potential ideologies within the film, as well as its efficiency as a film that might raise more environmental awareness.

The next section will outline the method of a framing analysis, which will be used in order to investigate the film's capability within the discourse of ecocinema.

3. Methodology

George Lakoff argues that the way in which specific topics are framed is of great importance. This is due to the fact that the reasoning does not happen on a conscious level, but mostly on an unconscious one, which relies on emotions and the "logic of frames".[40] Moreover, he delineates that to construct the 'right' or a new image of a problem within a person's mind, it is necessary to "(…) build up the background frames needed to understand the crisis, while building up neural circuitry to inhibit the wrong frames."[41] Thus, in order to build a higher level of consciousness of the topic of global warming, it is important to look at how environmentalism is framed.

In relation to Lakoff's notion of framing, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson outline the different aspects that are important to consider while analyzing a film. This relates to Lakoff's understanding of framing since there are various prospects interrelated within a film that compose how certain elements or topics are portrayed to the viewer.

As within Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction*, it is delineated how a film can be understood as a whole. According to them, there are six important aspects to consider, firstly there is the film production, distribution, and exhibition, which takes a closer look at "how

---

[37] Bryan G. Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 2 (1984): 134/135.

[38] Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," 135.

[39] Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," 135.

[40] George Lakoff, "Why it Matters How We Frame the Environment," *Environmental communication* 4, no. 1 (2010): 72.

[41] Lakoff, "Why it Matters How We Frame the Environment," 74.

people create the artifact and disseminate it to audiences."[42] Secondly, the film form, which is essential to understand the content matter, hence there are fixated cues within a system, hence a film is not "a random batch of elements," but instead consists of a film form.[43] Thirdly, the type of film, which takes a look at the genre, as well as "our assumptions concerning the filmmaker's intentions and the way in which the film was made."[44] The fourth aspect concentrates on film style, thus how a film uses stylistic techniques, precisely mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound. Also focusing on how these stylistic features "contribute to a film's overall form."[45] Second to last, Bordwell and Thompson discuss how to critically analyze a film and lastly, a film's relation to its history, as well as how a film might change over time is delineated.

These different sections will be used within this research to analyze and examine how environmental aspects are framed within the film, especially focusing on one scene and its stylistic features, paired with its overall function within the film form.

4. Analysis

To understand how the film might address environmental issues, this analysis will focus on one scene specifically which is striking due to its visualization of the dystopian world represented in the film by the means of stylistic features, as well as reoccurring elements. This scene is relatively at the beginning of the film (17:06-21:25), after the viewer has already been given clues about the current situation of the the internal film world. The scene depicts a sand storm that appears during a baseball game Cooper and his family are at. Before the baseball game, the film cuts back to the interviews from the opening scene, as they talk about a specific event, that ultimately changed life on earth. After these insights, the film cuts back to the baseball game, when suddenly sirens go off and a big cloud of dirt can be seen approaching the baseball field. Cooper and his family leave immediately to escape this, what seems to be, a dust bowl. While they are driving home through a storm of dust, they start to put on masks and goggles. This scene ends by Murph finding what seems to be a code written in dust in her room.[46]

As this scene represents a monumental event within the film, focusing on this one in particular will help to understand potential prospects of the film's overall connection to environmental themes, as well as how it relates to ecocinema.

4.1. Film Style Analysis

---

[42] David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2000), XVI.

[43] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition,* 40.

[44] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, XVI.

[45] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, XVI.

[46] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

Sound

As sound is a prominent element within film nowadays, it also contributes to how a film is perceived by audiences and shapes their way of understanding the narrative. In this particular scene, the main sound that can be perceived is dialogue. However, it almost seems to be drowned out by the noise of dirt particles hitting the car, as they drive back to their house. Thus, this scene has many different sounds contributing to the overall perception. According to Bordwell and Thompson, there are three types of sound: speech, noise, and music.[47] The latter can not be detected within this sequence. Moreover, most of the sound within this scene is diegetic, such as the dialogue, the noise of the people talking, as well as the dirt particles hitting the car (See Appendix 1). The siren that appears to warn the people in the stadium, is also part of the diegetic sound, although it is off-screen. However, as the film crosscuts from the interviews to the presence of the film, the sound also overlaps. Presenting a short period of non-diegetic sound to the audience, possibly in order to avoid interrupting the continuity of the film itself. The high-pitched sound of the sirens leads the film's attention to the event happening outside the baseball game, as it appears to come from the distance rather than directly from the on-screen space. Once Cooper's family is in the car, the sound concentrates on the loud wind and how the dirt particles slam against the car, momentarily positioning the viewer directly within the scene.[48]

As has been noted, the sound is a vital part of how a scene is constructed in itself, as well as in relation to the rest of the film. Hence, this sequence seems to use sound as a means to provide its audiences a direct insight into the dystopian society of *Interstellar*.

Mise-en-Scene: Setting, Lighting, Costume and Makeup and Staging

The mise-en-scene depicts how the "director stages the event for the camera," thus they have the authority over the creative decisions that ultimately also control how a specific scene might be understood and experienced by the audience.[49] This scene is set within a small town's baseball stadium and later on moves to an almost no longer visible town street. The baseball field depicts a relatively normal, even cheerful, atmosphere, which is also highlighted by the colors used, bright green, red, and blue. Contrary to this, as the big grey cloud appears on the horizon, the atmosphere changes, what was depicted as bright before now turned into darker colors, mainly grey and beige. There are multiple props used within this scene, although there is one prop that stands out. The face mask that Cooper and his family put on in the car displays the dangers the dust bears with it (See Appendix 2).[50] As Bordwell and Thompson say, colors can create parallels,

---

[47] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, Sixth Edition, 295.

[48] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[49] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 156.

[50] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

thus "a color motif may become associated with several props."[51] Perhaps within this frame, the protection gear might be associated with the dust, as it consists of grey and dull color tones.

Moreover, the lighting is also of great importance, as "lighter and darker areas within the frame help create the overall composition of each shot and thus guide our attention to certain objects and actions."[52] At the beginning of the scene, a direct contrast of lighting is visible when the film cuts from the interviews to the baseball game. As the shot transforms from a very dark background, without natural light, to the baseball field that is flooded by natural sunlight, which is visible through the shadows of the players (See Appendix 3). As the grey cloud appears, it depicts a contrast, leading the viewer's attention directly to it. The lighting changes, as the dust cloud starts to cover the street and the car (See Appendix 1). Although the sunlight disappears, it does not turn completely dark, as the grey cloud suggested. However, the screen turns rather hazy and beige. The audience only gets a clearer view, when the scene is filmed from within the car, portraying the characters in darker shadows and the outside through the window as basically invisible, due to the whirled up dust.[53] Consequently, the lighting, as well as the colors, within this sequence, seem to be used to guide the viewers' attention through an unexpected event in a way that almost seems as though they are within the scene themselves.

The costume and make-up within this scene are very similar to the outfits in the scenes beforehand, and therefore, do not depict a particularly abstract component within the sequence. Most of the people, including Cooper and his family, are wearing casual outfits, meaning jeans, a shirt, and a light jacket (See Appendix 4).[54] This might also represent their standard of living, as well as their occupations, such as farmers and teachers.

The staging of a scene describes the movement, as well as the performance within it. Here, one of the most decisive movements for the narrative is the baseball player stopping within the game, taking off his sunglasses to look at the big dark cloud in the sky. This performance might serve as a representation of the shift between a cheerful baseball game to the sudden departure of the people within the baseball stadium due to the apocalyptic circumstances. What seems to stand out is that instead of the audience running around frantically, they stay rather calm while leaving, as if they already expected an event like this to happen (See Appendix 5).[55]

Overall, the mise-en-scene in this sequence aids to represent a sudden, although almost expected, change from a light-hearted baseball game to an ominous natural disaster. By the use of a commonly known setting, natural light, common clothing, as well as natural acting, this scene appears quite realistic, possibly making it easy for audiences to relate to.

---

[51] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 161.

[52] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 164.

[53] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[54] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[55] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

Cinematography

As Bordwell and Thompson mention "with the rise of computer-generated effects, the fusion of mise-en-scene and cinematography becomes even more seamless."[56] Therefore, in order to understand how mise-en-scene stands in direct relation to the cinematography, the most prominent aspects of cinematography within this sequence will be examined.

At first, the film cuts from the interviews, in which the event that is about to occur is mentioned, to the baseball game, displaying it through multiple shots, such as the benches with people cheering, the field with the players and Cooper and his family, thereby setting the scene, as well as the overall atmosphere.

Secondly, as one of the baseball players starts to look up, the camera switches from a medium-long shot at a straight angle aligned with the player to an extreme-long shot, from the perspective of the player, with a focus on the dust cloud nearing the field (See Appendix 6).[57] Thus, this can be understood as an "eye-line match", as Bordwell and Thompson describe it, where "(…) shot A presents someone looking at something offscreen; shot B shows us what's being looked at."[58]

Thirdly, as Cooper and his family are driving in the car, one shot depicts just the rearview mirror, it can be said to be an extreme long shot as it depicts the happenings behind the car, however, it could also be depicted as an extreme close-up, presenting the viewer with a direct look into what the characters in the film see (See Appendix 7).[59] This shot is interesting, due to the fact that it is again mobile and also a tracking shot, therefore moving away from the dust storm, which represents the disastrous situation on earth.

Altogether, the cinematography frames this scene for the viewer in relation to the narrative, as the different shots, angles, and focal points guide the viewer's attention to the different events within the scene. It appears to present the scene as realistic as possible, due to the mobile framing, which "(…) can guide and shape our perception of a film's space and time,"[60] and continuity editing, which serves the purpose to "(…) create a smooth flow from shot to shot."[61]

Baseball Scene in Relation to the Film as Whole

Concerning the film as a whole, this scene depicts the first acute visual representation of the devastating circumstances on earth mentioned throughout the film. The sounds, the mise-en-scene, and the cinematography all show the abrupt, as well as, dramatized developments

---

[56] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 207.

[57] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[58] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 266.

[59] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[60] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 240.

[61] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition*, 262.

throughout the scene. As the dust bowl steadily takes over the scene's affairs, it ultimately also takes over the narrative as a whole, making it the main theme of the scene. Consequently, this scene underlines the dystopian society *Interstellar* is set in by the means of highlighting the element of dust. The use of face masks indicates the health problems caused by the unhealthy dirt particles floating in the air, while the tracking shot of the rear-view mirror seems to predict the prospective events of the film, thus leaving the environment behind to save human life. In conclusion, the baseball scene pinpoints the turning point of *Interstellar*, as it becomes clear that the earth is indeed uninhabitable and for humanity to survive, a new planet must be found.

4.2. The Visualization of the Dystopian Society within Interstellar

The baseball scene can be considered a turning point within the film as it displays the dystopian society to its audience through visual effects, sounds, and a rather realistic representation of a natural disaster. Thus, examining how the visualization within this scene might impact the audiences' understanding of the environment within the film, as well as maybe even their own, will help to discern how *Interstellar* can be understood with regards to environmentalism. Specifically, one element stands out within this scene, which is the element of dust. As aforementioned, the dark cloud of dust starts to grow so big it ultimately affects not just the baseball game but also the perception of the situation on earth itself. Hence, representing a dystopian society to the viewer, possibly exhibiting the earth's future if climate change progresses.

In the opening scene, dust is one of the main phenomena in *Interstellar*, as it is the first thing the film portrays, as well as the first aspect that is mentioned within the interviews. Its overall function within the film can be described as the reason for the uninhabitable circumstances on earth as the dust is a result of the dying soil and also of the degradation of food resources. During the baseball game, the dust is represented by a dark cloud slowly coming towards the scene depicted.[62] Through the cinematography, as well as the mise-en-scene and sound, the film seems to direct the viewers' attention towards the cloud as it appears, using the means of lighting, color contrast, as well as mobile framing, and high-pitched sirens. Furthermore, the use of face masks and goggles add to the dystopian reality, as it shows that the environment in the film has changed to such an extent that it is not sustainable for humans anymore. As a result, this presents the fear that is introduced by the dust, which is often a typical component in dystopian films. According to Crespo and Pereira the notion of "fear-inducing representations" is to ultimately engage audiences and help to "inspire eco-friendly behaviour."[63] Additionally, as Rust and Monani mention, the visualization of the environmental "villains" who are actually "victims of systemic environmental collapse" can assist the progress of changing society's understanding of climate change.[64] Thus, something that is usually understood as irrelevant in the viewers' conception of

---

[62] *Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

[63] Crespo and Pereira, "Climate Change Films: Fear and Agency Appeals," 165-186.

[64] Rust and Monani, "Cuts to Dissolve - Defining and Situating Eco-Cinema Studies," 8.

reality, such as dust, suddenly gains a new presumption, creating a new frame. Therefore, by directing the audience's attention to the destructiveness of the dust, it might change their perception of their own surroundings.

Furthermore, the effect the visualization of this sudden event within the film might have on audiences plays an important role in itself. Brereton acknowledges this, as he says that the "(…) evocation of nature and sublime spectacle help(s) to dramatise contemporary ecological issues and debates" which play a role in reconnecting the viewers with their own eco-systems and environments.[65] Therefore, all the elements within the scene play part in the audience's perception and engagement. Sounds, such as the sirens, might alert the viewers' own affiliations with this sound and possibly connect the natural disaster from the film with their own experiences. The mise-en-scene might have a similar effect, as it depicts a scene that audiences are accustomed to at first, which suddenly changes into something they are not expecting. Relating to Parham's argument that such "inversion of iconic images" has the power to "remain with the audience," potentially raising more awareness to the possible outcomes of climate change.[66]

While the dust storm represents the dystopian society and the visualization of such might function as a wake-up call for audiences to also look at their own environment, the scene also seems to signify an ideology, which is anthropocentrism. This ideology can also be seen throughout the whole film, since instead of trying to find ways to make the earth more sustainable for human life again, the only option for human survival seems to be to leave the earth and save the human race. Thus, this notion can be understood as an anthropocentric approach, as it rejects the idea of reconstructing and nurturing the earth's environment to make it inhabitable again but instead only concentrates on human survival. As Norton distinguishes two different approaches within the anthropocentric theory, the idea of leaving, hence there is nothing left anymore that is of use for humanity, relates to his notion of "strong anthropocentrism."[67] Meaning that humans use nature in an "exploitive manner" without critically reflecting on such behavior.[68] Within the analyzed sequence, the rear-view mirror shot can be understood as indicating this ideology, thus leaving the dystopian society behind only to save themselves. Although, this might be a far-fetched interpretation of this shot, however in relation to the narrative, it could be understood as an indicator for the upcoming events and ending of the film *Interstellar*.

Consequently, the baseball scene can be interpreted by the means of an ecological dystopia, as it represents a visualization of an undesirable world caused by a natural disaster. Accordingly, the mise-en-scene and cinematography create a powerful effect and might contribute to the audiences' reflection on their own environment. However, the ideology of a human-centered world contradicts the ecological ideas that are possibly construed within the narrative. Anthough, this could potentially be seen as helpful with regards to delivering and

---

[65] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 11.

[66] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 49.

[67] Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," 131-48.

[68] Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," 131-48.

engaging audiences, as oftentimes Western society is mainly oriented towards an anthropocentric ideology and might be able to relate to this narrative more closely. Regarding the scene in relation to the whole film, it already displays many ecological motifs, as well as questions. The scene is distinct especially through its visual effects on the viewers, sketching the emerging catastrophe with mesmerizing images and sounds.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Reflection of Results

This research recognized the film's potential within the frames of environmental cinema. Applying the concept of eco-cinema has contributed to how the film might be recognized as a climate change parable. Although the film inherently does not focus on an educational approach, as Willoquet-Maricondi demands to be the main approach of eco-cinema, it rather presents its audience with a dystopian narrative that may potentially contribute to audiences' environmental consciousness through its imagery and stirring storyline.[69] Therefore, a closer relation to Parham's broader assessment of the notion of environmental cinema is visible, as the film displays not only a potential climate change disaster but also a captivating narrative based on human empathy.[70] As Stableford delineates, science fiction films often consist of the notion of exploration of possibilities and potential futures, which can be recognized by the way the film frames the imaginative environment and circumstances on earth.[71] Thus, *Interstellar* seems to reinterpret human life and the capabilities of changing the environment within the genre of science fiction.

Furthermore, the concept of dystopia contributed to this research, to understand how exactly the environment is framed within *Interstellar* and if such framing may add to convey an environmental message. Specifically, the constantly appearing element of dust within *Interstellar* acts as an indicator for the dystopian world in the film. Hence, the dust is put on the scene through multiple stylistic and cinematographic choices, it appears to have the possibility to influence audiences and consequently effect how they observe the environment not just in the film, but also in real life. Particularly, the stylistic features within this prominent scene of the film depict a trend towards a rather visual effect upon the viewer. It can be said that *Interstellar* seems to mainly rely on its images to immerse its audience into the dystopian world, whilst still coordinating these images with an underlying storyteller narrative, such as the interviews. This outcome relates to Brereton's idea that through "sublime spectacle" a long-lasting effect can be established within audiences and such "dramatisation" might even "reconnect audiences with their inclusive ecosystem."[72]

---

[69] Willoquet-Maricondi, *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film*, 45.

[70] Parham, *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 51.

[71] Stableford, "Science Fiction and Ecology," 138.

[72] Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, 11.

Lastly, by analyzing the environmental framing through the notion of anthropocentrism, it became clear that the film depicts a rather heavily human-centered world. Hence, as Norton describes strong anthropocentrism, which focuses on nature primarily as a form of resource.[73] An explicit example of this notion discussed within the analysis is the rear-view mirror shot in the car, which leads to question the film's function with regards to environmentalism. Hence, it potentially represents an outdated perspective on the relationship between humanity and the environment, considering all the components the environment entails, not merely food resources. As Willoquet-Maricondi delineates a more ecological perspective is depicted through the notion of ecocentrism.[74]

In essence, *Interstellar* portrays the potential Hollywood could have within the climate change discussion with regards to raising awareness to the problematic circumstances on earth. By framing the story world for the viewer with thrilling, as well as fear-inducing images, this film is promising in light of influencing viewers to be more aware of their own surroundings, as well as think beyond the capabilities of current science. However, as Macdonald argues, a groundbreaking film with an ecological message usually does not present itself within the frames of Hollywood.[75] Ultimately, *Interstellar* can be understood as representing notions from ecocinema, paving the way to raising more climate change awareness by the means of popular culture. Although, such ecological reception is, as Lakoff indicates, always a matter of already existing frames.[76]

5.2. Approach

This research has been conducted through the use of a framing analysis paired with a film style analysis by virtue of trying to analyze how the stylistic features within the film tie in with the notion of ecocinema. By focusing on one specific scene, it was possible to dismantle the individual prospects that are substantial with regard to the environmental framing within the film. Specifically, utilizing the concepts of dystopia, sublime, and anthropocentrism to interpret the film within the context of ecocinema. Although, potentially taking a closer look at the use of technology as depicted within the film might have added to the research, especially when looking at it from an environmental perspective. Overall, this analysis was concentrated on the actuality of *Interstellar* being a film, rather than a different medium and how particularly this might be important with regard to its potential within ecocinema.

---

[73] Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," 131-48.

[74] Willoquet-Maricondi, *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film*, 45.

[75] Macdonald, "The Ecocinema Experience," 20.

[76] Lakoff, "Why it Matters How We Frame the Environment," 70-81.

5.3. Limitations and Further Research

However, this research is limited due to the fact that it mainly discusses the film as a text itself in relation to thematic elements. To further this research, a *Critical Discourse Analysis* could be applied to gain more insights and adopt a more critical stance, as Jørgensen and Phillips discuss.[77] According to them, a *Critical Discourse Analysis* aims to "shed light on the linguistic-discursive dimension of social and cultural phenomena and processes of change in late modernity."[78] One might investigate the producers' intentions, the production itself, audiences' reception of the film, as well as what influence this film might have had on the climate change movement. The latter could be examined by the means of quantitative research, analyzing people's knowledge and perception of climate change before and after they have watched the film. Additionally, this research could be extended by comparing it to a different genre, such as a documentary, in order to define the differences in environmental framing.

---

[77] Marianne Jørgensen, and Louise J. Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2002): 60-93.

[78] Jørgensen, and Phillips, "Critical Discourse Analysis," 60.

Bibliography

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction, Sixth Edition.* New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2000.

Brereton, Patrick. *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005.

Crespo, Inês and Ângela Pereira. "Climate Change Films: Fear and Agency Appeals." In *Transnational Ecocinema: Film Culture in an Era of Ecological Transformation*, edited by Tommy Gustaffson and Pietari Kääpä, 165-186. Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2013.

Nolan, Christopher, director. *Interstellar*. Paramount Pictures, 2014. https://www.netflix.com/title/ 70305903.

Jørgensen, Marianne, and Louise J. Phillips. "Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE (2002): 60-93.

Lakoff, George. "Why it Matters How We Frame the Environment." *Environmental Communication 4, no.* 1 (2010): 70-81.

Macdonald, Scott. "The Ecocinema Experience." In *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, edited by Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt, 17-41. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Norton, Bryan G. "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism." *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 2 (1984): 131-148.

Parham, John. *Green Media and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2016.

Rust, Stephen, and Salma Monani. "Cuts to Dissolve - Defining and Situating Eco-Cinema Studies." In *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, edited by Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt, 1-13. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Rust, Stephen. "Hollywood and Climate Change." In *Ecocinema Theory and Practice*, edited by Stephen Rust, Salma Monani, and Sean Cubitt, 191-211. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Seed, David. "Introduction." In *A Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by David Seed, 1-7. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.

Stableford, Brian. "Science Fiction and Ecology." In *A Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by
    David Seed, 127-141. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.

Tol, Richard S. J. "The Economic Effects of Climate Change." *Journal of Economic Perspectives
    23*, no. 2 (2009): 29-51.

Willoquet-Maricondi, Paula. "Shifting Paradigms: From Environmentalist Films to Ecocinema." In
    Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film, 43-61. Charlottesville: University
    of Virginia Press, 2010.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:30): Cooper and his family driving through the dust storm.

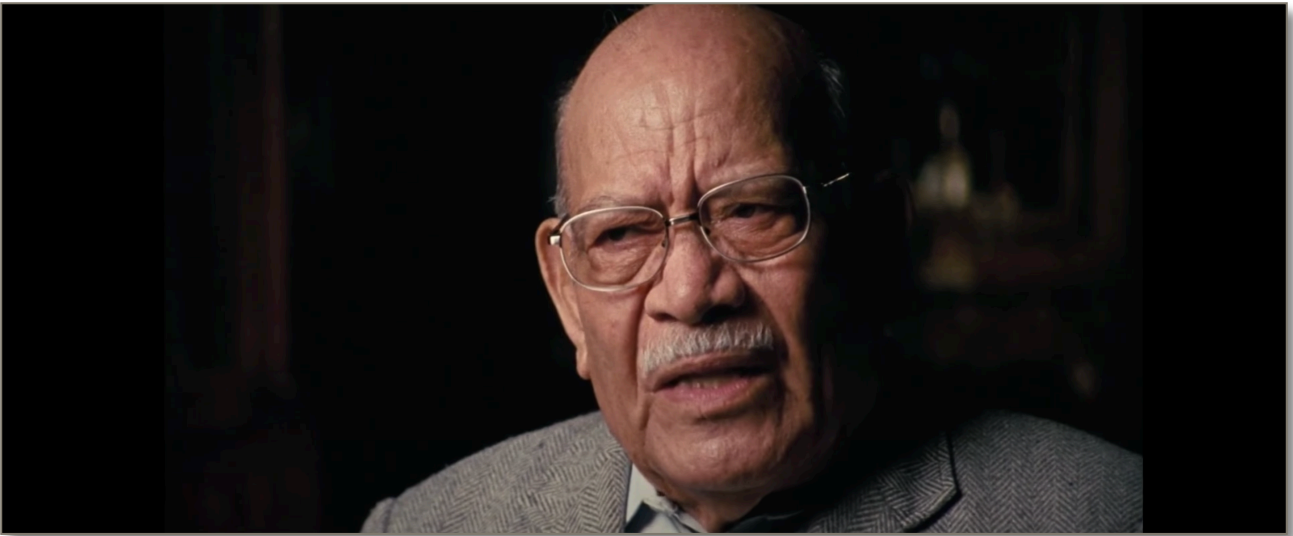(*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 2

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:25): Cooper putting on protective gear, such as a mask and goggles. This indicates the dangers the dust represents. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 3

These images portray the change of lighting during the beginning of the scene.

Film Screenshot (taken at 17:16): The image depicts the interviews with elderly people sitting in a rather dark space. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

Film Screenshot (taken at 17:19): This image portrays a very bright scene within a baseball stadium. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 4

Film Screenshot (taken at 17:44): Joseph Cooper and his son talking at the baseball game. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 5

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:15): The baseball audience recognizes the dust cloud and begins to leave the stadium. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 6

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:01): The baseball player is looking towards the cloud of dust which is approaching on the horizon. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:04): This image presents to the viewer why the baseball player has stopped to look at the horizon. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)

APPENDIX 7

Film Screenshot (taken at 18:23): The depiction of the devastation caused by the dust storm in the rearview mirror of the car. (*Interstellar*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Paramount Pictures, 2014), https://www.netflix.com/title/70305903.)