

time dispelling any hopes for their safety: "They are dying already. They will never make contact with another human being—and when they die, the boat will be destroyed."

In the end, the helicopters rule the film, visually and narratively. The last shots of the film proper are of the now-emptied spaces of Portland Bill and Weymouth, with the disembodied voices of the recaptured children calling out for help. But the credits run over a ghostly shot of a helicopter following Simon's boat, whose occupants may now be dead. The struggle that Losey and Jones so admired has been extinguished, and the camera collaborates with the forces that destroyed it.

Notes

- 1 Tom Milne, *Losey on Losey* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 32–33.
- 2 Ibid, 34.
- 3 Michel Ciment, *Conversations with Losey* (London: Methuen, 1985), 198.

INTONATION, PLEASE: THE CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS

Chris Fujiwara (2004)

The best known "fact" about the 1962 American science-fiction film *The Creation of the Humanoids* is that Andy Warhol called it his favorite film. No source, as far as I can determine, is known for this tidbit, but whether or not Warhol made such a statement is less important than what it means as a characterization of the film.

It's well known that Andy Warhol said, "I want to be a machine."¹ Warhol also called his studio "The Factory." And Warhol also said (about Edward Albee's play *Tiny Alice*), "I like boring things. I liked it because it was so empty. It doesn't mean anything."²

Perhaps Warhol's most complete statement on boredom occurs in *POPism: The Warhol '60s*:

I've been quoted a lot as saying, "I like boring things." Well, I said it and I meant it. But that doesn't mean I'm not bored by them. Of course, what I think is boring must not be the same as what other people think is, since I could never stand to watch all the most popular action shows on TV, because they're essentially the same plots and the same shots and the same cuts over and over again. Apparently, most people love watching the same basic thing, as long as the details are different. But I'm just the opposite: if I'm going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night before, I don't want it to be essentially the same—I want it to be *exactly* the same. Because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel.³

Whether or not Warhol even saw *The Creation of the Humanoids* (and it's likely that he did: the film was shown theatrically in New York in 1964, was seen by Susan Sontag in time to be mentioned in her 1965 article "The Imagination of Disaster," was listed by Thomas Meehan as part of the canon of Camp in a 1965 *New York Times Magazine* piece, and was frequently broadcast by WOR-TV in New York during the late '60s and '70s), the important thing is the connection established in general discourse between the film and Warhol. By being invariably mentioned in connection with him (as, for



The Creation of the Humanoids. Space-age lounge, Humanoids-style: Pax (David Cross), Esme (Frances McCann) and Craigis (Don Megowan).

example, on the back of the box of the 1985 Monterey Home Video release of the film), *The Creation of the Humanoids* has become a Warholian film.

To be a Warholian film means to be concerned with boredom and automation. And for a film to be concerned with boredom and automation means not just that the film addresses boredom and automation as themes, but that it engages with or reveals boredom and automation in presenting itself to the viewer and that through this process, "the meaning goes away." As a Warholian film, *The Creation of the Humanoids* is, then, not just a film that represents an evacuation of meaning, but one that performs it.

To show this, let's recall the story of *The Creation of the Humanoids*. After a long-threatened atomic war has wiped out 92 percent of humanity, the survivors rely on robotics to help them rebuild civilization. Alarmed by the spread of humanoid robots ("clickers"), which they fear will eventually replace humans, several survivors form a militant, racist group, the Order of Flesh and Blood, to agitate for the elimination of the humanoids. The film's

action spans a few critical hours in the life of Craigis (Don Megowan), a captain of the Order. Craigis uncovers a conspiracy among the clickers to create a race of R-96 robots, almost indistinguishable from humans. Craigis also learns that his sister, Esme (Frances McCann), has taken a clicker, Pax (David Cross), as her lover. During a visit to Esme to try to dissuade her from this match, Craigis meets Esme's friend Maxine (Erica Elliot), and the two fall in love. (Craigis and Maxine are brought to the clickers' lab, where they are told that, some time ago, they died as humans and were transformed into R-96s.) Dr. Raven (Don Doolittle), a (formerly) human scientist collaborating with the clickers, offers to upgrade the lovers to R-100s (equivalent to humans) by adding the ability to self-reproduce. (Turning to the camera, Raven concludes, "Of course the operation was a success—or you wouldn't be here.")

As this synopsis may indicate, and as any viewer of the film can confirm, the imparting of information through dialogue constitutes almost the whole of the action of *The Creation of the Humanoids*. Goal-oriented behavior—affirmed by the partisans of what Raoul Ruiz has called "central conflict theory" to be the currency of narrative cinema—forms only a minor part of the plot. In Roland Barthes' terms, the hermeneutic code (the set of signs in a narrative text that are concerned with enigmas and their decipherment) takes priority over the proairetic (the code of human actions and behaviors).

The film refuses both suspense and surprise. The coup de théâtre that the revelation of Craigis' robotic nature might be expected to provide is diminished by the film's insistence on staging the revelation twice: first for the audience—in a long passage in which Craigis, his consciousness of his human identity temporarily suspended, is interviewed by the clickers—and only subsequently for Craigis himself. What remains after the deliberate draining of surprise and suspense is a kind of detached curiosity as to how Craigis will respond to the news (previously, we're told, R-96s who had believed themselves to be human became depressed and ceased functioning on being told that they were robots), and even this gives way (in another triumph of the hermeneutic code) to the largely intellectual interest of the business of persuading the disbelieving Craigis. Something like tragedy can, however, be felt in this process (Craigis is a true Oedipal hero—one whose destiny is to achieve immortality as the first R-100 ("you'll probably be deified," Dr. Raven points out).)

The screenplay's extreme emphasis on the recitation of facts is duplicated by the *mise en scène*, which limits itself as much as possible to presenting the screenplay. *The Creation of the Humanoids* resembles Jacques Rivette's description of Fritz Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*: it is "as

though what we were watching were less the *mise en scène* of a script than simply the reading of this script, presented to us just as it is, without embellishment. Without personal comment of any kind on the part of the storyteller either." The denial of verisimilitude Rivette ascribes to Lang's film—"No concession is made here to the everyday, to detail: no remarks about the weather, the cut of a dress, the graciousness of a gesture"—is also performed in *The Creation of the Humanoids*. So is another denial Rivette mentions, that of "the picturesque" ("connoisseurs will find none of those amusingly sketched silhouettes, the sparkling repartee, or the brilliant touches due more to surprise than to invention" that can be found, he says, in films by Sidney Lumet and Stanley Kubrick). The characters in *The Creation of the Humanoids* are the descendants of those in *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, of whom Rivette writes: "The characters have lost all individual quality, are not more than human concepts."⁶

The near-complete absence of spectacle and visual excitement in *The Creation of the Humanoids* can no doubt be explained by the evidently minuscule budget of the film. But more spectacular films have been made with less



Mark (Richard Vath) and Dr. Raven (Don Doolittle). "As a rule, characters in *The Creation of the Humanoids* appear side by side on the same visual plane."

money. It's hard to avoid attributing a deficiency of imagination to the director, Wesley E. Barry. (But this lack of imagination is the source of the originality of the film and the reason for its enduring claim on our attention.)

Barry's *mise en scène* is extremely simple. Characters walk onto the set, or are discovered already within it, and arrange themselves, as if on a proscenium stage, so as to be visible side by side in medium shot. Breaking up their long dialogues, Barry uses close shots to isolate characters singly or in smaller groups. (But these close shots never—with only one exception, which I will shortly discuss—become what could be called shot/reverse shots: that is, at no point do characters fully face each other and thereby oblige the camera to deviate from its medium-shot axis to view them along the line created by their looks. As a rule, characters in *The Creation of the Humanoids* appear side by side on the same visual plane, and, in each scene, closer shots are taken more or less from the same angle as the establishing medium shot.)

Barry fails to use movement and editing as sources of meaning and as ways of directing the viewer's attention. There are very few camera movements in the film, and those few can be considered functional (pans to follow moving characters) or formal (short forward or backward tracking shots to inaugurate or close a scene). Barry's failure to enliven *The Creation of the Humanoids* amounts to a failure to imagine the world of the film as inhabited by beings who exist apart from their functions in the script.

The refusal of reverse angles, one of the most pronounced stylistic features of the film, is highlighted by a perverse excess in the only instance when the film employs them. In their love scene late in the film, Craigis and Maxine are first shown in two-shot, seated on a kind of indoor bank or platform. During their dialogue, Maxine rises, and the camera continues to hold on the couple. After Craigis' line, "I can't stop looking at you," the film cuts to a low-angle close shot of Maxine standing beside a pillar, looking down off-screen, presumably at Craigis. She repeats a dictum earlier uttered by Esme—"You fall in love when you see some part of yourself reflected in another person." Juxtaposed with this dialogue about looking, the mismatch between Maxine's eyeline in the close shot and that in the previous two-shot registers as a strong irony.

Later in the scene, Maxine resumes her seat next to Craigis, only to get up and go out of frame. The film then returns to the earlier low-angle close shot of her, creating a visual shock—not, this time, because of a mismatch, since she has been out of frame long enough that her repositioning beside the pillar doesn't register as physically impossible, but because both she and the camera have returned to the same positions as on her previous movement—a coincidence that smacks of artifice, implying—more strongly than com-

mercial American cinema is usually willing to do—that the character's movements are not spontaneous, but have been preordained to fit a certain visual pattern and certain production circumstances.

Already in this scene, Barry has gone too far—violating, in two different ways, the rules governing reverse angles. But he proceeds to violate them in a third way. As their conversation continues, Maxine again sits beside Craigis, and then again gets up. This time, the film cuts directly from 1) Maxine rising in the frontal two-shot to 2) Maxine, completing her movement, rising into her established place in the low-angle close shot, which is again repeated. The spatial logic of the scene and of the direction of her look would seem to require that, in a gap of time between the two shots, Maxine should have turned her body around, but the logic of her apparently continuous rising movement contradicts that other logic.

Throughout the film, there is a theatrical insistence on offscreen space—evident in lighting effects that denote doors being opened and closed, heightening our awareness of the inexorability of the scene of the film. Persistently, the film underlines the existence of offscreen space through what would normally be regarded as a technical error. In several dialogue scenes between an onscreen and an offscreen speaker, the offscreen speaker's lines are seemingly spoken off-mike (that is, reproduced as caught by a directional microphone dedicated to the onscreen actor), so that they take on a hollow, distant quality (as well as an aura of noise due to the boosting of the volume of the track in the sound mix). This sound effect emphasizes the distance, the offscreen status, of the offscreen speaker as purely artificial and abstract (since the dislocation is determined only by technical factors—microphone type and placement and the boosting of volume), rendering offscreen space disturbingly present.

As if instead of reverse shots, the film regularly employs pronounced pauses between lines of dialogue. These pauses take over part of the function of the reverse shot: to emphasize a change in speaker. The first close shot of the film—the clicker Acto's disquisition on what it means for a robot to become an R-96 ("He will learn how to laugh, how to cry . . .")—is bracketed off from the preceding shot by a lengthy silence (meant, perhaps, to mark the speech as uttered in the name of the film). This is only one example: the film is permeated with gaps. *The Creation of the Humanoids* must set a record for dead air.

An atonal electronic score (credited to "I.F.M.") accentuates the affectlessness of *The Creation of the Humanoids*. The dialogue seems less to rise in relief against a sonic background than to sink back into it, as if the dialogue were merely a moment in, not an interruption of, an ongoing production of

assignifying sound. The unexplained multilingual hubbub that precedes the main title perhaps has no other function—apart from the possibility that its reference to the Tower of Babel is meant to form, with Raven's final allusion to Adam's rib, a pair of Judaeo-Christian-folkloric bookends—than to prepare us to hear speech as noise. In one scene, the knocking at the door of Raven's lab, as the Flesh and Blooders try to force their way in, is weirdly protracted (the sounds continue for over a minute) and drenched in reverb, as if the film, ecstatic over the rare occasion of a sound effect, felt compelled to aestheticize it beyond realism or any dramatic point.

Often in the film, dialogue is not so much spoken as declaimed. The actors' diction is usually remarkably precise. The unnamed clicker played by Dudley Manlove (best known for playing the alien emissary in *Plan 9 from Outer Space*) speaks in the bright, clear voice of a radio announcer (which Manlove was). George Milan (Acto) has a breathy, low voice and is given to very long pauses. In the aural counterpart of the way Barry has the actors line up onscreen, the characters—not just the robots, but the humans—seem to speak for the benefit of an abstract, unspecific offscreen auditor (perhaps the offscreen "father/mother," the robots' matricial "Brain" as much as, or more than, to each other. This sense undercuts any implicit claim by the film that the dialogue is a creative interaction and turns it into the repetition of a static, ossified ritual.

At one point, the film acknowledges the existence of this abstract auditor, when Maxine, alone with Craigis, suddenly gets the feeling that someone is watching them "from out there, somewhere out there in the shadows." The cut from a close two-shot to a medium shot briefly lets us savor the chill of this moment, before the clickers come to take them away. We become aware that we are designated as the source of this watching, and the medium shot, expanding the visible space of the film, implies a further widening that would include our space (the same gesture as that made at the end of the film, when Raven includes us among Maxine and Craigis' descendants).

When the speakers are emotionless robots, one expects a neutral, colorless delivery, and at times in the film, the actors playing clickers produce something like this. But frequently the robots give an individualized expressiveness to their dialogue. How to account for the resonance in Acto's voice as he declares, "We will outnumber the humans"? Or his evident satisfaction as he pronounces the body structure of a new R-96 "excellent"? The film seems to hesitate between ascribing definite personal attitudes to the robots and imagining them as mere vehicles for referential messages.

Such uncertainty helps bring it about that humor is rarely, if ever, entirely absent from *The Creation of the Humanoids*. No doubt the film

invites condescending laughter over its presumed deficiencies or naivetes of performance, writing, and direction. But just as frequently, the film appears conscious of its humorousness. "This is some sort of a joke," Craigis says on hearing the explanation of how he was transformed into a robot, explicitly raising the possibility that the film is an intentional comedy. The scene in Esme's apartment is filled with comedy; it even involves itself in considerations of what is funny: Pax has been wired to have a sense of humor (a feature for which, Esme remarks, she paid extra) and proves especially appreciative of "irony—one of the funniest forms of humor." The final scene, with its odd mixture of cheerfulness and melancholy, reveals a strain of self-parody. Informing Maxine that she is a reconstructed robot, Acto says: "We did make you a bit thinner. You had a tendency to be plump." She replies: "That's right—after that my clothes didn't fit. Thank you."

The peculiar restraint of Barry's direction, his fervent reluctance to intervene in the film, extends to the line readings. (Seemingly undirected, the actors distribute stresses over their lines at random.) Here are a few examples. The clicker Mark says, "The Committee only gives us the money, not its origin"—but the rhetorical construction clearly calls for a stress on "money." Esme describes her "rapport" with Pax: "I just think of something and it's done, because he *thinks* of it at the same time" (instead of "*he* thinks of it"). Esme, who has something of a fatal weakness for this mode of delivery, also speaks to Craigis of those "prejudiced ostrich friends of yours," where "friends" would be expected to receive emphasis, and, when Craigis tells her that he has come to throw Pax out, replies oddly, "That *would* be a dramatic gesture."

The most consequential of the film's unexpected stresses is offered by Craigis, whose dialogue, as delivered by Don Megowan, generally one of the more skillful cast members, is usually free of gaffes. When Pax, trying to assuage Craigis' fear that the human race is losing ground to the robots, says, "We only supply means to your ends," Craigis replies, "Yeah—*our* end." By stressing "our" instead of "end," Megowan obscures the screenwriter's intended play on two meanings of the word "end" and appears momentarily oblivious to the script's often-reiterated thematic concern with "ends," in particular the end of humanity.

Such line readings have two major effects for the film. First, they give the impression that the actors—and the director—fail to understand the script. This impression is, to say the least, detrimental to our sense of a fully realized fictional world, reminding us persistently of the existence of a real world inhabited by the cast and crew of the film. The second, and more important, effect of the peculiar line readings is to focus our awareness of the script as a body—a text with a material resistance that has not been overcome

by the film. For Rivette's sense of a "reading" of a script still implies that the script is read correctly and is thus allowed to disappear behind the reading. (The line readings in the films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet perhaps exemplify this sense best.) By reading the script "incorrectly," the actors in *The Creation of the Humanoids* fail to let the script disappear, or, to put this positively, they force the script to appear.

The actors call into question the existence of their characters) and, indeed, threaten to render their own existence untenable—as anything except readers of the script. In doing so, they fulfill what the entire film seems designed to do: to reduce beings to functions (proving that it's through the failed or inadequate way it performs a function, that a being allows the function to stand out as something that might exist apart from the being.) Feeling in the film is also a function, something merely asserted, and always with a dry insistence, as if the presence of feeling were only another fact to be verified. ("I felt a sensation of exciting attraction," Maxine says, describing the onset of her love for Craigis.) In the last scene, Raven interrogates Craigis about his feelings, urging him to "search himself." For Craigis, the awareness that "I can hate" is part of what authorizes him to declare himself human.)

It's important to the film's strategy to show, first, that the robots' circuits allow them to experience quasi-emotions, and second, that real emotions are merely a matter of different circuitry.) For the mere assertion of feeling can prove nothing about the essence of beings. Early in the film, the film suggests this by ascribing something like feeling to the robots. Acto tells the clicker who has volunteered to be converted into an R-96, "You can still alter your decision, if this is against your circuits." (The volunteer replies, "My circuits are unoffended.") A little later, Acto exhibits a similar concern for the circuits of Mark, whom he invites to withdraw from the conspiracy if he is "contra-circuited." Mark replies laconically, "I'm unoffended." The clickers' circuits give them something like feelings, then, but they remain below the R-96 level, which incorporates "all the emotions of a human." Acto says of the prospective R-96 (in the portentously pause-bracketed close shot mentioned earlier): "He will learn how to laugh, how to cry. Be afraid, and hate. To become an R-96 is a real sacrifice."

As the heavy irony of Acto's conclusion indicates, *The Creation of the Humanoids* is resolutely anti-human. Mark elaborates: "A man—capable of jealousy, hatred, deceit, murder. Most, most interesting: why men, having such negative qualities, feel so superior to us." (Furthermore, humanity, we're told in another context, "is a state of mind"—and therefore thought, experience, and memory can be detached, preserved, and transferred from body to body—together with "the faith that there is a soul.")

The designation of the essence of humanity as a material property that can be alienated and transferred is part of the film's relentless critique of the humans' insistence on distinguishing themselves from robots. (Ultimately, the film preempts our own tendency to join in this insistence, by declaring us to be humanoids—a message that must have pleased Warhol.) The problem for Craigis is that the robots look too much like people. "The robots are machines," he says at the meeting of the Order of Flesh and Blood. "They must be made to look like machines!" The film sees his longing for a distinguishing trait as part of a larger obsession with the boundaries of genre and gender. Struck by Craigis' fascination with Maxine, Esme remarks, "This is the first time I've seen the Craigis react to a woman as if she were anything but a poorly designed man."

The only human to be viewed by the film with a measure of approval (which means, in this highly discursive film, to have her words earn the implicit support of the film) is Esme. Her "rapport" with Pax makes it clear that the film means us to see Craigis' hatred of the clickers as a metaphor for



"An infinity of profound boredom": Maxine (Erica Elliott) and Cralgis, flanked by Acto (George Milan) and Dr. Raven.

racism. She subjects Craigis and the Flesh and Blooders to a withering critique, mocking their ceremonies and their "ridiculous clothes." (Esme) is the exemplary being of the future: in her public life, an editor for Telefax (apparently civilization's sole media establishment), in her private life, absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure and the deepening contemplation of her harmonious love relationship.)

Esme loves Pax because he embodies a split-off part of her identity. Similarly, Craigis and Maxine love each other because they recognize themselves in each other. (Love is an encounter with the same: a feedback loop.) The two love relationships in the film promise an infinity of profound boredom.

The Creation of the Humanoids neither encourages, elicits, nor reveals many feelings (other than joy and gratitude that such an extreme film exists), but one thing that can be felt, if vaguely, in the film is a nostalgia for difference—expressed as a vague memory of its own time, to the loss of which it bears witness. The set design, decor, and costumes testify to an already out-moded futurism, as if the film had inherited them from some earlier science-fiction epic. Finally, the film's nostalgia can be sensed as a nostalgia for time as it looks forward to a future in which time will have ceased except as a cyclical renewal (robots are obliged to return periodically to their electronic "father/mother" to be recharged).

The final scene of the film is filled with melancholy, as Craigis and Maxine accept that their own deaths have already happened (but have not been experienced) and contemplate a future without death. Craigis, in particular, is a figure of melancholy here, as this combative idealist (his sister has compared him to Don Quixote) is discouraged by the realization that there will be no more battles. *The Creation of the Humanoids* is a terminal film.

Notes

- 1 This statement was made within a larger statement: "The reason I'm painting this way is that I want to be a machine and I feel that whatever I do and do machine-like is what I want to do." Quoted in G. R. Swenson, "What is Pop Art?", *Art News* 62 (Nov. 1963), 26.
- 2 Thomas Meehan, "Not Good Taste, Not Bad Taste—It's 'Camp,'" *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (March 21, 1965), 114.
- 3 Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol '60s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 50.
- 4 The story and screenplay of *The Creation of the Humanoids* are credited to Jay

- Simms. A prolific writer of TV shows, Simms was also co-scenarist of *Panic in Year Zero!* (1962), another study of life after nuclear war, and of *The Resurrection of Zachary Wheeler* (1971), which deals with cloning.
- 5 The narrative of *The Creation of the Humanoids* resembles that of *Oedipus the King*: the hero is a high-placed individual who seeks to save the state from disaster, only to learn that he himself is the criminal whom he has identified as the state's enemy. The link to *Oedipus* is strengthened by the scene in which
- 11 Craigis, stung by Esme's claim that Pax is "more of a man" than he, assaults Pax, apparently ripping out his eyes.
- 6 Jonathan Rosenbaum, ed., *Rivette: Texts and Interviews* (London: British Film Institute, 1977), 65, 66. *The Creation of the Humanoids* can be seen as a fulfillment of Rivette's article on *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, a more explicit attempt to answer the question Rivette poses about Lang's film: "Can anything human subsist in such an atmosphere? Or, more unassumingly, what part of life, even inhuman, can subsist in a quasi-abstract universe which is nevertheless within the range of possible universes? In other words, a science-fiction problem" (66). The two narratives even have equivalent denouements that apparently violate their own premises.
- 7 Barry, born in 1907, had a long career in Hollywood, first as a child star in the silent period, during which he acted for such directors as Marshall Neilan, Maurice Tourneur, and Cecil B. DeMille. As an adult, he had roles in mostly minor films through the early '40s; perhaps the most notable film of this phase of his career was John Ford's *The Plough and the Stars* (1937), in which Barry played a sniper. From 1946 to 1951, Barry worked as an assistant director at Monogram, most frequently on films directed by William Beaudine, and also on films directed by Budd Boetticher, Lesley Selander, Jean Yarbrough, Phil Karlson, and others. His association with Edward J. Kay, who, with Barry, co-produced *The Creation of the Humanoids*, dates from Barry's Monogram period, during which Kay was a music supervisor and composer at Monogram. During the '50s, Barry produced and directed several low-budget films, mostly Westerns. Barry's last directorial credit was apparently *The Jolly Genie* (1963), a 40-minute fantasy film for children. (The production company credited in *The Creation of the Humanoids* is Genie Productions.) Barry died in 1994.

SIGNIFYING MONKEYS: POLITICS AND STORY-TELLING IN THE PLANET OF THE APES SERIES

Richard von Busack (2004)

"What is the ape to man? A laughing stock or a painful embarrassment . . . once you were apes, and even now man is more of an ape than any ape."

—Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

"Oh, my God. I'm back. I'm home."

—Charlton Heston, the last lines of *Planet of the Apes* (1968)

On one level, the *Planet of the Apes* series were as essential to '70s kitsch as John Travolta's pompadour. The original 1968 film spawned four sequels, a television show and a children's cartoon series. Apart from its content, the *Planet of the Apes* series were an early experiment in entertainment franchising. The success of these ape tales paved the way for the postmodern economics of storytelling, where sequels aren't just expected, but contractually obligated. Yet the *Planet of the Apes* series was different from franchises before or since. For one thing, the series' carefree attitude toward time/space made for innovative story-telling. As the British novelist Will Self described it, what made the franchise unique was the way it explored "the alternate pathways of time . . . the idea of worlds that mutate off of our own."¹ The *Apes* films are a loop in which the talking apes have no real origin. Apparently, the ape race begins and ends with Zira (Kim Hunter) and Cornelius (Roddy McDowall) who travel back in time via spaceship to Earth in 1973. As super-apes, in the Nietzschean sense, the couple become the founders of the ape world—their own grandparents, really.

After the great success of the original film, which established the concept of an ape-run planet thousands of years in Earth's future, the first sequel, 1970's *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, seemed to bring the saga to a definitive conclusion, with the blowing up of the world by an ancient human-built