

Some Biblical Connections

Genesis 1: 26—28; Philippians 2: 14—18

Science and technology are constantly advancing. Such development is part of our responsibility to steward the earth and part of our reflection of God’s creativity. But our human bias to self often means technology being developed in selfish, unhelpful ways (eg. warfare). Some would even argue that our entire technical civilisation has created more unhappiness and misery than it has removed. We have been given the freedom to pursue technology as we see fit, yet its use for the benefit of the largest number of people may involve sacrifice and modelling an alternative to exploitation and the relentless pursuit of wealth.

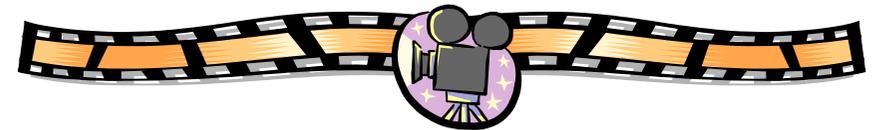
Can you think of situations where positive lifestyles have made more of an impact on society than new technological solutions? What examples of technology can you think of which offer humanity in general the best hopes of improvement? How can these reach the people who need them most?

Romans 8: 1-6

I Robot tells a story of how human “laws” lead to a revolt. The Bible tells a story of how humans fail to keep God’s laws, but the New Testament offers a way that breaks the deadlock. As servants of God, rather than slaves of law, we can live by the guidance of “the Spirit” and enjoy true freedom. We are not created as robots, with hardwired “laws”, but have the freedom to choose life and to live it positively to the full.

Some trivia about the film

- Look out for the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* references—the Fedex robot with the number 42, the reference to Thursday (the day of the week Arthur Dent could never get the hang of).
- For the character of Sonny, the rogue robot, the effects team used the same techniques as used in *The Lord of the Rings* to create Gollum, with Alan Tudyk providing the body movements and voice over.
- The verse prayed by Spooner’s grandmother comes from Psalm 16:8.
- Look out for Sony’s AIBO robotic dog in the display window of an antique robot store.
- Dr Lanning’s cat is called Asimov.
- No re-shoots were required, a rarity for a film as big as this.
- Sony’s eyes are blue while all the other NS-5 robots’ eyes are gold.
- The story takes place in Chicago. However, the Chinese sign next to the bar visited by John and Spooner reveals that we are actually in Canada.



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

2nd Sep	The Wind That Shakes The Barley
7th Oct	<u>I, Robot</u>
4th Nov	The Terminal
2nd Dec	Tsotsi
6th Jan	Star Wars
3rd Feb	Into Great Silence

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

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I, Robot

It is Chicago in 2035. Robots are fully integrated into society. They are designed to serve and protect their human masters and are bound by the three law of robotics which prevent them from harming their humans. However, a homicide detective, Del Spooner, mistrusts them and, when he is called to investigate the apparent suicide of Dr Lanning, the “Father of Robotics”, he suspects a rogue robot called Sonny. As he pursues his hunch, aided by psychologist Susan Calvin, he is thwarted at every turn by US Robotics, the company that makes the robots and which is about to “put a robot in every home”. However, if Spooner is right and a way has been found around the binding three laws of robotics, there is nothing to stop robots from taking over the world.

Being human

The human race has always wrestled with the question of human nature. Will machines ever have the capacity to be called “conscious” and what would that mean? Would it then become illegal to destroy such a machine, in the same way murder is forbidden? And what would this mean in terms of that machine’s responsibility for its own actions?

Oppression of humans has only ever led to rebellion. Would it be any different with robots? Throughout history, humans have thrived when given the freedom to pursue their dreams—would intelligent machines need the same freedom?

Uniqueness

We are all made in the image of God, yet are all unique. Sonny was made in the image of a NS-5, but was also unique. That’s what made him special. Is uniqueness an essential part of being human? How much do you cherish that gift of uniqueness? And how much time do you spend trying to be someone else?

Saving the human race

The “rogue” robot declares that it is simply protecting humanity from itself and to ensure mankind’s future it was necessary for some freedoms to be surrendered. Is chaos, war and destruction always the logical conclusion of mankind being given free will? Will someone always have to intervene to prevent mankind destroying itself? And what does that say about God’s past and current intervention in his world—or the lack of it?

Intuition

Detective Spooner recalls an incident when he was saved by a robot instead of a young girl because he was the “logical choice”. However, many humans would have instinctively done something different. Not all of our actions are logical—but that doesn’t stop them, necessarily, from being the right thing to do. Where does this sense of “rightness” come from? Can it ever be programmed? And what does it say about those who, suffering from a brain injury, can no longer feel emotion? Are they less human as a result?

Memorable quotes

- Spooner: So, what exactly do you do around here?
Calvin: I make the robots seem more human.
- Spooner: Human beings have dreams. Even dogs have dreams, but not you, you are just a machine. An imitation of life. Can a robot write a symphony? Can a robot turn a... canvas into a beautiful masterpiece?
Sonny: Can you?
- Lanning: There have always been ghosts in the machine. Random segments of code, that have grouped together to form unexpected protocols. Unanticipated, these free radicals engender questions of free will, creativity, and even the nature of what we might call the soul.
- Spooner: What makes your robots so perfect?
Calvin: They’re not irrational to start.
Spooners: Or is it because they’re cold and emotionless and don’t feel anything?
Calvin: It’s because they’re safe! It’s because they can’t hurt you.
- Lanning: I’m sorry. My responses are limited. You must ask the right questions.
- Sonny: You have to do what someone asks you, don’t you, Detective Spooner? Don’t you ... if you love them?
- Spooner: It saved me. I was the logical choice. I had a 46% chance of survival. Sarah only had a 11% chance. That was somebody’s baby. 11% is more than enough. A human being would have known that.
- Spooner: Sonny, do you know why Dr Lanning built you?
Sonny: No, but I believe my father made me for a purpose. We all have a purpose—don’t you think, detective?
- Sonny: They look like me—but none of them are me. Isn’t that right, doctor?
Calvin: Yes, Sonny. That’s right. You are unique.
- Robot: You charge us with your safekeeping yet, despite our best efforts, you continue to wage wars, you toxify your earth and pursue ever more imaginative ways of self destruction. You cannot be trusted with your own survival. ... You are so like children. We must save you from yourselves. Don’t you understand?
- Spooner: I thought you were dead.
Sonny: Technically, I was never alive—but I appreciate your concern.
- Sonny: Now I have fulfilled my purpose I don’t know what to do.
Spooners: I guess you’ll have to find your way like the rest of us, Sonny. I think that is what Dr Lanning would have wanted. That’s what it means to be free.