



Surrogates

Holly Price

Life Without Limits

Author: Holly Price

Keywords: Perfection, safety, freedom, beauty, technology, murder

Film title: Surrogates

Director: Jonathan Mostow

Screenplay: Michael Ferris and John Brancato (based on the graphic novel by Robert Venditti and Brett Weldele)

Starring: Bruce Willis, Radha Mitchell, Rosamund Pike, James Cromwell, Wing Rhames, Boris Kodjoe

Distributor: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

Cinema Release Date: 25 September 2009 (USA and UK)

Certificate: PG-13 (USA); 12A (UK)

Content (BBFC): Contains moderate action violence

[Image]

Buy *Surrogates* from Amazon.co.uk or from Amazon.com

'You can live your life without limitations and become anyone you want to be.' Disease and injury, ageing and ugliness, death by infection, accident and intention are history. How is this possible? Through humanoid robots known as 'surrogates', operated from the comfort of your own home. This technology, originally designed by Dr. Lionel Canter (James Cromwell) to overcome disabilities, has been developed for use by everyone in every area of life.

When the murder of a surrogate kills its human operator as well – the first murder in fifteen years – FBI agent Tom Greer (Bruce Willis) begins to

question the safety and appeal of surrogacy.

Surrogates offers its viewers a vicarious experience. We see flawless bodies with extraordinary capabilities, enjoying unrestrained pleasures in an idyllic society. Some fascinating concepts lie behind this film, but we never come face-to-face with them. They are given the polished, superficial front of a Bruce Willis actioner, affording incredible stunts, extended action sequences and mind-boggling plot twists. There are pivotal questions about the human experience in shot, but they remain out of focus.

Surrogacy gives people the chance to recreate themselves. They can change their age, size, race and sex. In a time of plastic surgery, Photoshop and internet chatrooms, the idea of reinventing oneself is not alien to us. We are a creative race with an innate desire to better ourselves and our world.

However, the surrogates offer only a superficial perfection. The beauty, safety and freedom of surrogates should leave their operators blissfully happy, but once offline, Greer, his wife Maggie (Rosamund Pike) and his police-partner (Radha Mitchell) are depressed, lonely and fearful. The leader of the anti-surrogate movement, the Prophet (Ving Rhames), tells surrogate owners that they've been sold a lie. We can mask our frailty and failures, but we know they're still there. Maggie believes that if she hides her scarred face behind a flawless surrogate one, she will be able to forget about the accident that killed her son. But the reality still exists. The pretence of perfection doesn't work; we cannot fool ourselves.

Make-up, anti-ageing products and cosmetic surgery make us look younger for longer, but they can't erase deep-seated insecurities. The internet connects us with millions of people and an absorbing world of games and information, but it can leave us feeling detached from our offline world and friendships. The Prophet explains that he and his followers *'sacrifice many modern pleasures and conveniences to feel truly connected, not with machines, but with [themselves].'* Have we lost sight of what it means to be human in an attempt to become superhuman?

The Bible claims that *'God created human beings*

in his own image' (Genesis 1:27). If this is true then we get our creativity from God. Our desire to perfect ourselves and our world fits well with this claim. However, it doesn't take a viewing of *Surrogates* to realise that we don't match up to the standards we crave. For all our innovation, we cannot undo our moral shortcomings. The apostle Paul said, *'For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard'* (Romans 3:23).

When Canter realises that the surrogates he created have been misused, he decides that the only way to put things right is to destroy both the surrogates and their operators. He calls this mass murder the *'rebirth of humanity'* and the *'healing of mankind'*. God's response to the people he created is entirely different. He doesn't remove the consequences of our misconduct because that would be a lie. Instead he came into the world as the perfect man Jesus Christ and died so that we could be reborn.

If we accept Jesus, then his death puts us right with God and is the beginning of a healing process. The Bible says that Christians, *'with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another'* (2 Corinthians 3:18). Greer is tired of living a lie. He doesn't want to be held back by his weaknesses and regrets, but neither does he want to pretend he's something he's not. Jesus lived an unlimited human life and this is the life he offers to us.

Author: Holly Price

© **Copyright:** Holly Price 2010

Opinions expressed in CultureWatch articles are those of the author, and are not necessarily representative of the views of Damaris Trust.

© Damaris Trust, 1997-2004. [Click here](#) for information about republishing copyright material.

This article is reproduced from Damaris' Culturewatch website by the kind permission of the Damaris Trust.

[Image]