

UNCANNY AND RETROFUTURISTIC SPACE IN DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI CINEMA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE
OF ABDULLAH GUL UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
M.Sc. IN ARCHITECTURE

By

Volkan Özden

January 2020

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SCIENTIFIC ETHICS COMPLIANCE

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work.

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M.Sc. thesis titled “Uncanny And Retrofuturistic Space In Dystopian Sci-Fi Cinema” has been prepared in accordance with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of the Abdullah Gül University, Graduate School of Engineering & Science.

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ABSTRACT

UNCANNY AND RETROFUTURISTIC SPACE IN DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI CINEMA

Volkan ÖZDEN

MSc. in Architecture

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Nilüfer YÖNEY

January 2020

This study aims to provide an additional perspective to the architecture and urban expression of dystopian sci-fi cinema, by focusing on the impact of uncanny and retrofuturistic space on the image of the home and the city, while discussing how architecture communicates through space and contributes to the narrative in cinema. Retrofuturism's contribution to the concept of 'escapism' offered by sci-fi works and its role in fictional space is generally unclear. Additionally, its fictional classification and purpose are under-theorized. The thesis proposes a classification for retrofuturism and clarifies its purpose. Furthermore, it offers additional insight and references into the concepts of alienation, homelessness and modern anxiety tied to uncanny spaces.

Using the literature review method, the research examines the concepts of uncanny, alienation, and homelessness which are related to the aesthetics of architecture and space; first, from utopia to dystopia, second, from a critique of Modernism to the modern anxiety of future city. It discusses how these concepts are narrated in the sci-fi cinema. The study continues with spatial readings of selected films in the case studies using narrative research method. It compares the narrative of cinematic and architectural spaces, real spaces, set designs, or computer-generated cine-scapes, through semiotic analysis of their physical and social structures (spatial layers).

Keywords: Dystopia, Uncanny, Sci-fi, Retrofuturism, Cine-scapes

ÖZET

BİLİM KURGU SİNEMASI DİSTOPYALARINDA TEKİNSİZ VE RETROFÜTÜRİSTİK MEKAN

Volkan ÖZDEN

Mimarlık Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Bu çalışma, tekinsiz ve retrofütüristik mekan kavramlarının ev ve kent imgesi üzerindeki etkisine odaklanarak, distopik bilim kurgu sinemasının mimarisine ve kentsel görünümüne ek bir bakış açısı sağlamanın yanı sıra, mimarlığın mekan yoluyla nasıl iletişim kurduğunu ve anlatıya nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu irdeler. Retrofütürizmin, bilim kurgu çalışmaları tarafından sunulan ‘gerçekten kaçış’ kavramına katkısı ve kurgusal mekandaki rolü genellikle belirsizdir. Ayrıca kurgusal sınıflandırması ve amacı yeterince kuramlaştırılmamıştır. Tez, retrofütürizm için bir sınıflandırma önerir ve amacını açıklar. Ayrıca, yabancılaşmaya, evsizliğe ve tekinsiz mekanlarla ilişkili modern kaygıya dair ek görüş ve referanslar sunar.

Literatür taraması yöntemi kullanılarak yapılan araştırma, ütopyadan distopyaya, Modernizm eleştirisinden geleceğin kentinin modern endişesine kadar, mimarlık ve mekanın estetiği ile ilgili olan tekinsiz, yabancılaşma ve evsizlik kavramlarını inceler. Ayrıca, bu kavramların bilim kurgu sinemasında nasıl aktarıldığını tartışır. Tez, anlatı araştırmaları yöntemi kullanılarak, vaka çalışmaları bölümünde seçilen filmlerin mekan okumaları ile devam eder. Filmsel ve mimari mekanların anlatımını gerek gerçek mekanlar gerekse set tasarımları veya bilgisayar destekli imajlar üzerinden olsun, fiziksel ve sosyal yapılarının (mekansal katmanlarının) gösterebilimsel analizleri üzerinden karşılaştırır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Distopya, Tekinsiz, Bilimkurgu, Retrofütürizm, Sine-mekanlar

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Shaping the future has always been an essential desire for humankind. Many politicians, philosophers, writers, and architects were eager to realize their utopian ideals and to propose – if not to impose – their own ‘perfect’ sociocultural, political, and architectural order. In that way, they have made assumptions and projections. The most efficient way of predicting the future world goes through looking at history and analyzing the future projections of the past, in the light of social events and technological developments.

Humanity came a long way since the first industrial revolution, which began with the use of steam power in the 18th century; followed by the second industrial revolution with the discovery of electricity, the invention of the telegraph, the telephone, the light bulb, and Henry Ford’s discovery of mass production. From the breakthroughs of the 20th century, automation, computers, and the relentless Space Race of the 1970s, we have never been so close to the future. Today, with the exponential acceleration of technological developments, we are implementing Industry 4.0 in which the Internet of things, artificial intelligence, big data, and cybernetics are hot topics. Ultimately science fiction literature and cinema walked the road side-by-side with these real-life breakthroughs.

Although Thomas More has coined the term for the first time in his work *Utopia* in 1516, it has a literary history going back to Plato’s Socratic dialogue *Republic* written around 380 BCE. All the utopian works of fiction appear to be embedded in the story of a journey; in other words, “everything starts with a journey” as with the colonial discoveries of 18th century and the many adventure stories of Jules Verne; *Voyages Extraordinaires*, including *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873). In

architecture, there are many examples such as Ledoux's half-built plan of *Saline de Chaux* at Royal Salt Mines of Arc-et-Senans (1784), and Tony Garnier's *Une Cité Industrielle* (1914, Fig. 1-1), based on the concept of social and urban reform and industrial development. Furthermore, Ebenezer Howard's clean and orderly *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902) and Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City* (1932) pursued an anti-metropolitan ideology in their respective projects for garden cities, with a more libertarian architecture at the core. However, Lebbeus Woods (2009) states that in the post-modern world, capitalism and consumerist utopias of self-satisfaction appear to have taken deep roots.

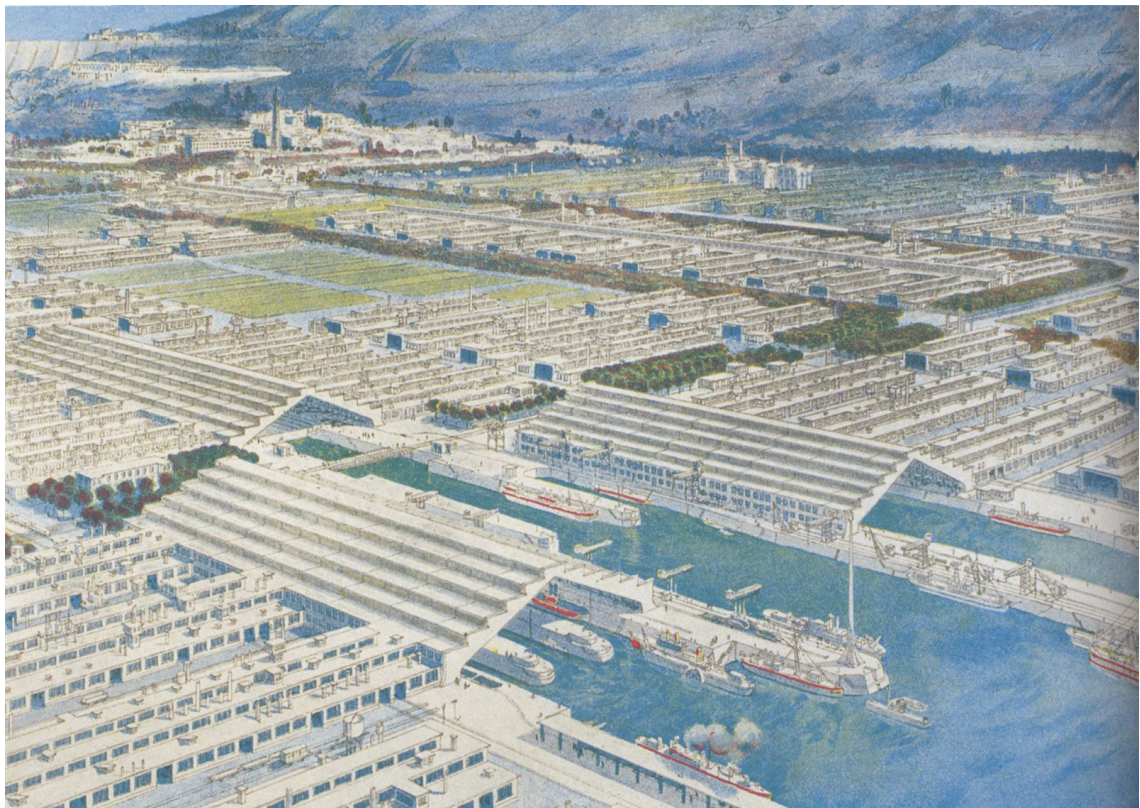


Figure 1-1 Drawing of Tony Garnier's *Une Cité Industrielle*, 1914. (Photo: Gilles Bernasconi, Archives Municipales de Lyon)

In the late 18th century, utopia, aside from being a literary genre, found its place in social sciences (Yalim, 2002, p. 11). There were two main reasons behind that. First, the maturity period of the Enlightenment was urging every researcher, philosopher and writer – whether liberal or conservative – to resist the temptations of the impulsive and sexual, to overcome the weakness, submission and dependence of the spiritual by restraining their

desires, and exerting self-control with the help of rational thinking (Roloff & Seeßlen, 1995, p. 17). The second reason was the rapid development of industry and the formation of a new society corresponding to these new production methods, along with new forms of social relations and a new lifestyle. The ensuing conditions were so adverse that some thinkers and industrialists such as Ledoux, Fourier, and Godin proposed totalitarian solutions for the proletariat, the reflections of which we often see in sci-fi literature and cinema.

Even though the mind was considered a reliable tool, it had to be purged from the obscure, mystical, and magical, so to speak: the inexplicable. It is how the Enlightenment's mind had initiated the struggle between man and nature. This phenomenon of the fight between mind and nature during the Age of Reason established the central theme of science fiction literature. In time, Enlightenment thinkers' quest for finding the truth through sheer reason was proven to be a forlorn hope; because neither the 'primitive' and 'savage' societies nor the uncharted lands could be understood or explained by rational thinking only. This notion of insolubleness has improved the fear of the unknown and inexplicable. It has changed the attitude of explorers and voyagers of the 19th century for worse, making them more cruel and violent against nature and the 'uncivilized'. They carried over their evil and nefariousness to wherever they went, especially to the virgin lands. In this sense, the colonial savage and space alien of sci-fi stories had the same degree of fiction in essence (Roloff & Seeßlen, 1995, pp. 18-23). The Romantic Movement, which came after the Enlightenment period, reflected the fear and skepticism towards the Age of Reason's utopia, by countering it with its dystopian view (Roloff & Seeßlen, 1995, p. 29). The struggle between reason and mysticism took place on many occasions, especially in sci-fi literature and cinema, reminding sci-fi fans the famous fictional character of *Star Trek* (TV series, 1966-1969): Mr. Spock.

Utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces (Foucault, 1967/1984). The utopia, which is 'ou-topos' or 'no-place' cannot exist without fiction; and since it needs a particularly scientific approach to lie on a solid foundation, it should not be a surprise that is so intertwined with the sci-fi genre. In the same manner, since the architect is a designer of forms, functions, and narratives, and not the maker of the buildings, architecture can be considered as a unity of fact and fiction.

The theme of the uncanny covers the questions of estrangement, alienation, exile, and homelessness while finding its place in the architectural speculation on the extraordinarily unstable nature of house and home. Originated from romantic thought, the uncanny has been strongly linked to architecture and the aesthetics of space throughout the modern period (Vidler, 1992, p. ix) & (Vidler, 2000, p. 1). On the one hand, the house has made a remarkable environment for all sorts of representations of haunting and violating terrors in literature and art, especially haunted houses as the most popular topos of horror stories and gothic romances. On the other hand, the modern city infused modern anxiety, as a source for revolution, epidemic, phobia, and alienation within its chaotic and mazy spaces (Vidler, 1992, p. ix).

When we look at the movies of the past carrying utopian hopes and dreams like the movie *Le Voyage Dans La Lune* (dir. Georges Méliès, 1902), the future seemed to be further away. Yet in the 21st century, it is coming towards us at blinding speed. With all the gizmos, smartphones and robots we seem to be living in the future, and we are witnessing its grand reflection in the science fiction cinema (Hanson, 2005, p. 7); especially with groundbreaking films like Wachowski Siblings' *The Matrix* (1999), with striking combat scenes and superb special effects – such as super-slow-motion – (Booker, 2010, p. 14), questioning the ambiguous nature of virtual and 'true' reality.

The dissertation claims that the uncanny is on the rise since post-modern times with growing urban sprawl, homelessness, alienation, and high technology concerns. The terms 'cyberpunk', 'dystopia' and 'retrofuturism' take part in and coincide with the concept of the uncanny, and all these terms come to life in the cinematic space of science fiction.

Research questions are:

1. How architecture communicates through space and cinema? How does it contribute to cinematic space?
2. What is the role of retrofuturism in conceptualizing fictional space?
3. What are the uncanny features of sci-fi dystopias? How are they linked to the perils of the future and the feelings of unhomeliness and nostalgia in the modern city?

Chapter 2

Utopia, dystopia, and science fiction

In this chapter, the social and architectural understanding of utopia and dystopia is discussed. Moreover, science fiction is analyzed by definition and towards its relation to utopian and dystopian designs and fiction.

2.1 Ambiguous nature of utopia and dystopia

Utopia is imagined as an idea of a perfect place and a perfect society: equal, moral, depression-free, and away from war and political struggles. Yet, it is usually authoritarian, hierarchical, and restrictive. The classical utopia is considered to have solved all problems and completed its evolution, hence closed to any innovation and progress, just like a static drawing in a fairy tale book, or a pocket plane in a snow globe. In such a world where the past, present, and future are similar, there is no place for change or progress. However, change is inevitable, and progress is the essence of civilization and modernity. In Grosz's (2001, p. 138) words: "This is the image of an ideal society in which time stops and, as Plato recognized, the timeless sets it".

In utopia, every move and motive are either designed or predicted. People are ruled under strict and unalterable laws concerning when to work, eat, or sleep. These imaginary societies usually comply with the regulations of sexual life and reproduction, and even give up on family life. Utopian community demands total homogeneity and zealously dedicated individuals with a flawless code of conduct despite its contrast with the very human nature. The terms automaton or robot can be used as a metaphor for such a person with infinite endeavor and immovable spirit. When people are bored, mentally overwhelmed, or physically exhausted under these restrictions, the conditions can no longer be considered perfect. Susan Sontag (1965, p. 220) states that the utopian society

based on perfect consensus and absolute reign of reason over emotions without causing any social conflict is absurd, thus impossible. According to Evren Yalim (2002, p. 7), the utopian individual does not dream, hope, fear, feel anxious, choose, question, win, or lose. Therefore, that person who executes all his duties monotonously will eventually begin to question his or her *raison d'être*. At that point, we can conclude that the utopia of the sleeper becomes the dystopia of the awakened.

Lyman Tower Sargent (2010, p. 8) states that utopia's purpose can be a description of a desirable society, a warning, an alternative to the present, or a model to be achieved. The utopian views humanity and their future with either hope or alarm. If viewed with hope, the result is usually a utopia. If viewed with alarm, the result is usually a dystopia. In his words: "For the utopian, human intelligence and ingenuity know no bounds. For the dystopian, human greed and stupidity know no bounds. And both appear to be right".

Even though utopianism is a philosophy of hope and changing the future society for the better, there is an excellent possibility that someone would attempt to dictate their ideas upon the others. Is it a shared dream or an imposed set of ideas? Does it bring freedom or strict control? Is it equality or the rejection of the individual qualities? Nevertheless, it could be a perfect society for the sovereign power. According to Sargent (2010, pp. 20-21), all the struggle and hope for a better life seemed to have provided an advantage to particular individuals or groups and produced dystopias.

Dystopia, also known as anti-utopia, is often used to critique the negative points of utopian thought in a satirical way (Booker & Thomas, 2009, p. 65). Based on social control, it is a place where the ruler or the oligarchy dictate their ideals over an ignorant and enfeebled society. The oligarchs use disinformation, manipulated media, altered history, programmed education, and stupefying and confusing technological devices to create a pseudo-paradise, an illusion of utopia to consolidate their base and remain in power. The society becomes stripped from its ability to think, criticize, protest, or self-organize; therefore, it is rendered powerless. 'Big Brother' which symbolizes the elimination of private life, or in other words, the unwarranted 24/7 surveillance of every move of the citizen, is the hallmark of dystopia.

Ironically, English novelist George Orwell, best known for his cult dystopian novel *1984* (1949) wherein he coined the phrase "Big Brother is watching you" was himself rumored to be the subject of intense surveillance by secret services, under suspicion for

being a member of the communist movement (Tibbetts, 2007). Along with the two other founding texts of modern dystopian fiction, Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), these three novels, suspicious of both capitalism and socialism, depicted worlds suffering from totalitarian governments, suppression of individualism, and ultimate triumph of dehumanizing capitalism (Booker & Thomas, 2009, pp. 66-67).

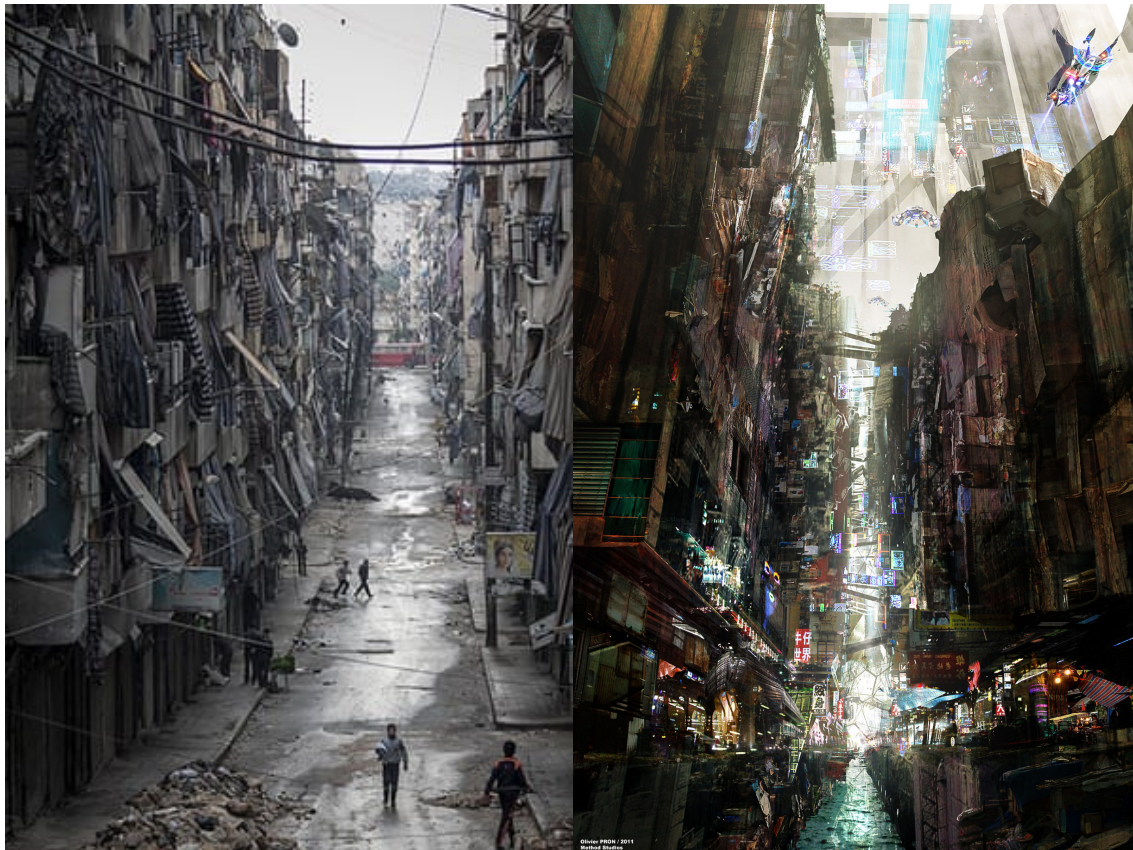


Figure 2-1 Aleppo, Syria, 2012. We need not look too far to find real dystopias. (Photo: Narciso Contreras/AP)

Figure 2-2 Futuristic cyberpunk city, 2011. (Art: Olivier Pron, Method Studios)

Another type is the post-apocalyptic dystopia which does not seem to be based on total control, but provides anonymity to the unlucky survivors along with poverty, high crime rate, pollution and urban sprawl in its dirty and labyrinthine spaces, such as the cult sci-fi movie *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982). In this kind of dystopia, humanity has fallen into decline and ruin. A powerless society is being enforced and maintained by

greater-than-country corporations, and cyberpunks¹ rebel against the machine by embracing the technology and converting its benefits to their side.

2.2 Classical utopias

Although Thomas More coined the word ‘utopia’ in 1516, the concept is much older. The best-known archaic utopia is the Socratic dialogue written by the Greek philosopher Plato around 380 BCE, *The Republic*. Other classical examples include Tommaso Campanella’s *The City of Sun* (1602) and Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627).

The Republic’s primary focus is to discuss and develop the meaning of justice and the nature of existing regimes. The dialogue takes place in a city-state ruled by a philosopher-king, wherein Socrates and Athenians present their hypotheses and assumptions to propose their version of an ideal society and city. As the discussion progresses, Socrates rejects the presented opinions, gradually turning the discussion to a monologue and provides his version of the ideal society. His version is not more than a mere approximation to perfection; because Plato himself explains that any society created by humans would have a flaw and eventually fail. He believed that there could not be a perfect society or a human being (Sargent, 2010, p. 17).

Thomas More’s *Utopia* is a work of fiction and socio-political satire, which presents a fictional island society whose religious, social, and political customs are discussed. A prince named Utopus conquers the country and shapes its institutions after his design. He establishes the commonwealth with the motto of freedom and equality. The island was originally a peninsula, but the community’s founder digs a 15-mile wide channel to separate it from the mainland. It is protected from the outsiders by dangerous rocks located inside the surrounding sea, which makes it nearly impossible to sail through without the guidance of the residents. *Utopia* is a place where the people live a simple life, no one is poor or wealthy, and everything is shared equally: a communistic organization. However, it is also adamantly authoritarian, hierarchical, and restricted. Even minor crimes can bring the penalty of enslavement. Looking from the 21st century,

¹ Cyberpunk, the name coined by Bruce Bethke, is a subgenre of science fiction in a futuristic setting that tends to focus on “cybernetics, biotech, and the communications web – to name a few” and protagonists are “... a pirate’s crew of losers, hustlers, spin-offs, castoffs, and lunatics” (Sterling, 1986, p. 12)

the practices in *Utopia*, such as slavery, may seem quite unpleasant. However, for an early 16th century reader, these were the facts of their time (Sargent, 2010, p. 23). The paradise of an era can be hell for another. In More's description, Utopia is a complex and ambivalent 16th century "treatise on the best constitution of a republic" (Grosz, 2001, p. 133). Karl Kautsky (1888/2002) argues that the island of *Utopia* is, in fact, England, and More tried to show how England would look, and how its foreign relations would be if it were communistically organized. In More's words: "However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments" (Kautsky, 1888/2002).

The philosophical work by the Italian-Dominican philosopher Tommaso Campanella, *The City of Sun* is presented as a dialogue between the grandmaster of the Knights Hospitaller and a Genoese sea captain. *The City of Sun* is an unconquerable city located on the slope of a hillside, surrounded with seven circles of large nested walls and palaces. The knowledge of humankind: science, art, and virtues depicted and recorded admirably upon those city walls and palaces. It is a place governed by men led by reason where all property is communal, and life is shaped by science and religion. Every man's work contributes to the good of the community. Wealth and poverty do not exist because no one is allowed more than is needed (Tampachii, 1623).

James Harrington, an English political philosopher who wrote the utopian work *The Commonwealth of Oceana* in 1656, made an impact on the idealistic principles of the American colonial founders and inspired the design of three American colonies: Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. These colonies were planned as utopian societies in all their physical, economic, and social aspects. Sylvia Doughty Fries describes James Oglethorpe's successfully implemented plan in Savannah (Fig. 2-3) as the most distinctive American city, which is designed as an agrarian society wherein land was distributed equally among the citizens so that it would allow them to be independent and able to develop their own moral conduct, not in religion but a well-balanced constitution (Archdeacon, 1978, p. 1332) Moreover, people were not allowed to have additional land through purchase or inheritance to maintain balance and equality.

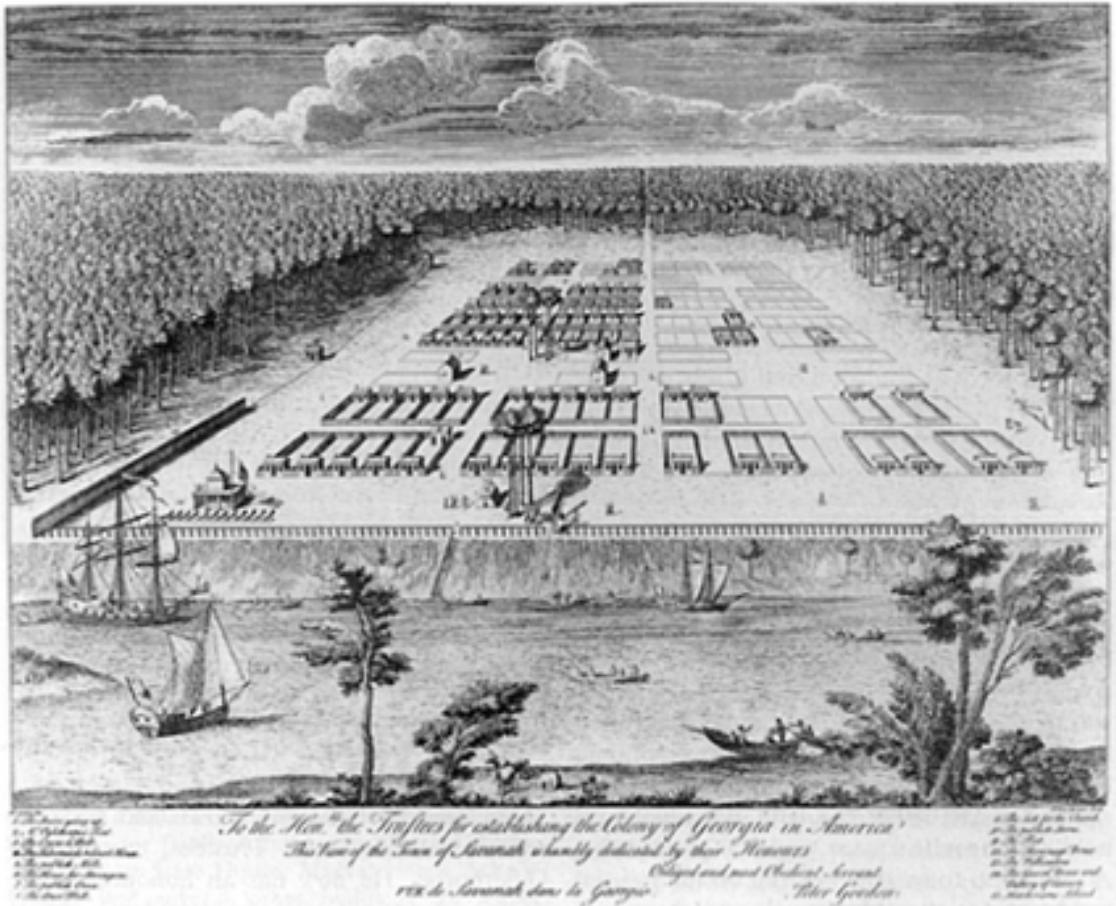


Figure 2-3 ‘A View of Savannah as it stood on the 29th of March 1734.’ Oglethorpe laid out the town in four wards, each consisting of forty house plots and four sites for public building arranged around an open space. (Home, 1997)

H.G. Wells (1905/2009, p. 19) in his book *A Modern Utopia*, states that the isolation of classical utopias with an armed-ready defensive stance like China or Japan did through many centuries in history wouldn’t solve anything; and he doubts if anyone has ever imagined himself as a citizen in the Republic of Plato, or if anyone could stand “a month of the relentless publicity of virtues planned by More”. Wells (1905/2009, p. 15) explains the naïve optimism of utopian writers, quoting from Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890)²:

“We should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect—wave our hands to a splendid anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none

² *News from Nowhere* (1890) is a classic work combining utopian socialism and soft science fiction written by the artist, architect, designer, and socialist pioneer William Morris.

pleased to do evil, in a world as good in its essential nature, as ripe and sunny, as the world before the Fall.”

Wells (1905/2009, p. 153) argues that the old utopias of Plato and Campanella seem to deny the complications of real life, the endless variety of characters and their differences, and furthermore, the cruciality of reproductive competition among individuals which is the essence of life. Sontag (1965, p. 221) states that the emotionless impersonality caused by the restrictive classical utopian structure has the same dictum of the alien invaders that they will impose on mankind if they succeed; as it may be seen in her example of the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Don Siegel, 1956): “No more love, no more beauty, no more pain”.

2.3 Anarchic utopias

Until the beginning of the 20th century, all utopists assumed that justice and equality could be established through material and social regulations (Yalım, 2002, p. 6). Consequently, the utopian commonwealth takes a terrible toll from its residents: personal freedom, which seems to be the characteristic of all social theories (Grosz, 2001, p. 133). Moreover, the idea of a static utopian society is against the concepts of transience and progress which define modernity. Hilde Heynen, giving the example from the activists of *Das Neue Frankfurt* magazine states that, a future society called ‘homogeneous metropolitan public’ capable of responding to the new architecture as a single entity was envisioned in their discourse. She explains the absurdity of their logic in her words: “When one aims to promote the freedom of every individual and to create as great a potential for change as possible, it is hardly logical to assume that all these individuals will make the same choices and will change in the same fashion. This, however, was the expectation that lay behind the supposedly homogeneous character of the metropolitan public.” (Heynen, 1999, p. 70)

2.3.1 Lebbeus Woods’ “Heterarchic City”

Lebbeus Woods (1940-2012) was an American architect of Deconstruction known for his utopian and experimental designs. His signature characteristics are dynamic compositions of splintered surfaces, broken frames, spaces full of twisted wiry forms and

poles, defying the laws of physics. His fantastical drawings of strange landscapes and eclectic buildings carry his idealism for freedom of spirit and a better alternative world.

“Architecture, as a social and primarily constructive act, could heal the wounds by creating entirely new types of space in the city. These would be what I had called ‘freespaces’, spaces without predetermined programs of use, but whose strong forms demanded the invention of new programs corresponding to the new, post-war conditions. I had hypothesized that 90% of the damaged buildings would be restored to their normal pre-war forms and uses, as most people want to return to their old ways of living; but 10% should be freespaces, for those who did not want to go back, but forward.” (Woods, 2008)

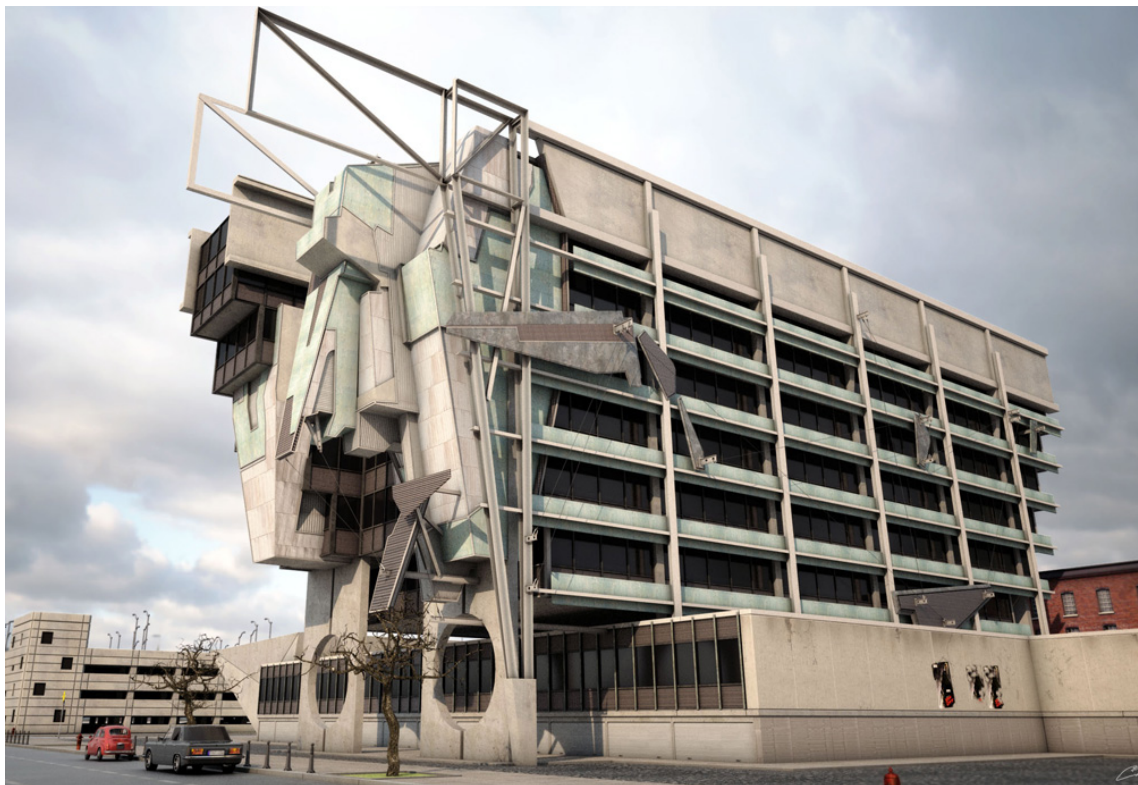


Figure 2-4 The Electrical Management (Elektroprivreda) Building in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Woods’ principle here is that reconstruction integrates people’s experiences of the destruction into needed social changes, as well as architectural ones. (Source: lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com)

Yıldız Salman (1994/2000, p. 41) argues that Woods’ designs may appear to be highly mechanical, cold and out of the ordinary, as well as architecturally nonsensical. However, they gain meaning when filled with his ideas of anarchy, revolution, and the

place of the individual in society. Woods' proposition of 'heterarchic city' in place of the historical hierarchical city overturns the societal pyramid, by putting the individual on top of the pyramid above the authority. Heterarchic cities have an anarchic structure wherein the past and the future is ambiguous, and only 'change' is everlasting. The suggested society does not have a central structure. The center of society is the culturally and socially irreducible individual. Such a society that is not looking to be permanent or universal has an existential beauty in it. The controversial notions like ownership and property harm that beauty, turning it to a dominion. With his belief in heterarchic cities, Woods suggests new urban forms and architecture for cities with deep historical pasts like Paris and Berlin; unlike the architects of our time, who create nothing of their own, and who are ignorantly the executioners of the political authority and a totalitarian ideology. 'Freespaces' describe the architect as a provocateur, an active participant and a revolutionary who proposes a change from the very beginning, breaking the chains of the present customer-architect relationship by standing against the imposed values (Salman, 1994/2000, p. 43).



Figure 2-5 Royal Ontario Museum. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Michael Lee-Chin "Crystal" building (Daniel Libeskind, 2007) brings about a new discourse and program to the old museum in terms of *Deconstruction*. The Crystal aims to provide openness and accessibility by blurring the lines between the public area of the street and the private area of the museum. (Photo: Daniel MacDonald)

However, Woods (2009) in his entry *Utopia?* states that the idea of utopia has vanished today. He argues that the avant-garde architects of earlier times were using the term utopia, but now it is forgotten with the rise and absolute triumph of global capitalism. Even the most visionary and prominent architects of the present do not ask ‘what if?’ but instead, they are only interested in the pragmatic ‘what now?’. Given that utopias look to improve the industrial and social structure of their time, Woods says: “The only possible utopias are those perfecting capitalism and its present consumerist forms of order”. He gives the example of Rem Koolhaas as the visionary of consumerist utopias, and that the utopian ideal has already been realized, as can be seen in the concept of shopping malls. Anyone can indeed get a credit card and go on a buying spree to be happy, at least until they run out of credit. Ubiquitous information is pumped over the TV channels and through the Internet every second. Even though it is not the same thing as knowledge, people tend to buy it. Thus, they get full and satisfied, so they do not feel the need to imagine another utopia:

“We might say that capitalism is a utopia of self-satisfaction and restlessness. Who, then, needs a better society? Alternative utopias would be out-of-date as soon as they would be written or drawn. Ideals and idealism can only slow us down. Utopias can only get in the way” (Woods, 2009).

2.3.2 Ursula K. Le Guin’s ambiguous utopia: *The Dispossessed*

Wells (1905/2009, p. 20) states that the world order is so rigidly structured that no one can establish a state powerful enough to defend itself from the outsiders; therefore, there is no room for a practical utopia on earth, which brings the need of an alternative planet.

The Dispossessed is an anarchist-feminist utopian science fiction novel written by American writer Ursula K. Le Guin (1929-2018) in 1974. The story is set on two different planets with the names Anarres and Urras. While Urras has earthly economic systems and social structures, Anarres is based on revolutionary anarchism which refuses any government. When there is ownership, there is an inevitable conflict of interests that leads to wealth and poverty. When there is a governing power, there is domination, and when

there is domination, there is no freedom. Le Guin (1974, p. 496) believes that beauty is not in mundane possessions but the freedom of the human soul. The one who owns is also owned, in other words: ‘imprisoned’:

“What we’re after is to remind ourselves that we didn’t come to Anarres for safety, but freedom. If we must all agree, all work together, we’re no better than a machine. ... We’ve been saying, more and more often, you must work with the others; you must accept the rule of the majority. But any rule is tyranny. The duty of the individual is to accept no rule, to be the initiator of his own acts, to be responsible. Only if he does so will the society live, and change, and adapt, and survive. We are not the subjects of a State founded upon law, but members of a society founded upon revolution. Revolution is our obligation: our hope of evolution...” (Le Guin, 1974, p. 773)

Anarres is believed to have the perfect socio-economic system by its residents. However, it does neither provide a budget nor carries interest for scientific research and development. Therefore, the story’s protagonist Shevek, decides to act and travels to Urras to accept a prestigious prize for his work. He is a scientist who works in the field of physics and the nature of relativity. The government of Urras hopes that he will discover a mathematical model for developing instantaneous interstellar travel. Shevek is quite different from the regular ‘civilized’ people of our time. He chooses not to use the title ‘Dr.’, travels on foot whenever possible, goes to Urras without any money or belongings, and does not work for payment or status; hence he is ‘not imprisoned’. Ironically, the people of Anarres live in an isolated society separated with a symbolic wall from the outer world which imprisons them on their planet, and they seem unable to live up to the above-mentioned ascetic ideals. This wall also has sociopolitical similarities with the former Berlin Wall.

The concept of social justice is only the individual’s issue, and society is exempted from it. The individual suffers for the good of the community (Salman, 1994/2000, p. 43) as in Durkheim’s notion of society working like a human body, which operates by the well-regulated rules of the division of labor. According to this understanding, the individual's problems are self-inflicted and do not concern the general public. Furthermore, society should be bound by a collective contract, which in Durkheim’s

theory, is the law. On the contrary, anarchist utopia refuses the rule of the majority or any law of the state.

“Architecture and war are not incompatible. Architecture is war. War is architecture. I am at war with my time, with history, with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms. I am one of millions who do not fit in, who have no home, no family, no doctrine, no firm place to call my own, no known beginning or end, no ‘sacred and primordial site.’ I declare war on all icons and finalities, on all histories that would chain me with my own falseness, my own pitiful fears”. (Woods, 2011)

Both Sargent (2010, p. 21) and Grosz (2001, pp. 138-139) state that utopias are reflections of the issues that were important at the time in which their authors lived, and seen as a machine capable of solving foreseeable problems through the perfection of their present techniques. Their shared vision of utopia to freeze time, whether proposed in the past or present, is embodied in their spatial arrangements and desire to realize the future in their limited model. Therefore, their solutions were relatively limited both in terms of their social theory and proposed architecture. What Plato, More and virtually every other thinker of utopia share – independently from their agenda of an ideal society described in their buildings and municipal arrangements – is that the utopia has a space with definite contours and features; usually an enclosed and isolated space like the walled city, the remote island or an agrarian self-contained community. This notion of space and place made the utopia a center of attraction for architects, as well as for political theorists, activists, and fiction writers so far. Nevertheless, these visions never got out of their containment of a definite and limited space, producing a non-progressive uniform architecture closed to innovation and expansion. They established a social structure of control and political inflexibility leading to a society of mentally unproductive automata (Grosz, 2001, p. 139). H.G. Wells (1905/2009, p. 13) explains that the modern utopia must be a kinetic and ever-ascending stage of hopeful transition instead of being a permanent state of static structures. It is indeed the main feature of modernity itself. Heynen (1999, p. 10) states that: “modernity stands for the attitude toward life that is associated with a continuous process of evolution and transformation, with an orientation toward a future that will be different from the past and from the present”. Vidler (1992, p. 5) argues as: “...which ranged from revolution to restoration, from reform to utopia, were equally caught in the dilemmas of temporality”. Grosz (2001, pp. 135,137) claims

that utopia should be a mode of temporality, therefore a mode of becoming, both in social structure and urban planning. Two large-scale ‘artificial’ cities designed and built according to an abstract plan: Canberra and Brasilia carry the evidence of failure to realize this fact: “Ironically, both cities have long been recognized as highly practical and yet largely unlivable, restricted in their capacity for organic growth and surprise”.

2.4 Science fiction and its relation with dystopia in cinema

2.4.1 Definition

We live in an age of unrest in which we are either immersed in profound banality or inconceivable anxiety. On the one hand, we struggle with the dullness of our lives, and on the other, we feel the need to escape from the fears of the present, these unbearable burdens that fantasy and science fiction helps us to cope with (Sontag, 1965, p. 224). According to Olsen (1992, as cited in Hoepker, 2011, p. 226), science fiction has the potential to distort our reality and habitual perception with the help of estrangement and defamiliarization strategies that makes us question and doubt our world, which is also strongly related to the concept of uncanny. Arthur C. Clarke explains the escapism and the reality of science fiction in the following words:

“We all want to escape occasionally. But science fiction is often very far from escapism, in fact, you might say that science fiction is escaping into reality . . . It’s a fiction which does concern itself with real issues: the origin of man; our future. In fact, I can’t think of any form of literature which is more concerned with real issues, reality.” (Booker, 2010, p. ix)

Some scholars, including the British author Brian Aldiss, think that science fiction begins with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in 1818; mainly because they assume that science itself had not obtained a universal cultural value before the 19th century. Spiritual or supernatural is not the subject of science, so to say, science is interested in understanding and explaining the cosmos in materialist or mundane ways (Roberts, 2016, p. 5). Science fiction may be considered to have begun as a self-conscious publishing

category in 1926 with the editor Hugo Gernsback's optimistic and utopian *Amazing Stories* pulp-magazine (Booker & Thomas, 2009, p. 7).

Although many critics have attempted a definition, there is no single and unique consensus about what science fiction is, apart from the agreement that it is a form of cultural discourse somewhat different from the actual world. Roberts (2016, p. 2) gives the examples from John Clute and Peter Nicholls' *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2011) of Hugo Gernsback's definition: "a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision", and Norman Spinrad's definition: "science fiction is anything published as science fiction". Christine Cornea (2007, p. 3) brings a more substantial definition from the academic Darko Suvin, who explains science fiction as a cognitive estrangement, "a literature that defamiliarizes reality and encourages the reader to contemplate upon the known world from a distanced perspective".

From another point of view, Sontag (1965, p. 213), linking the sublime and uncanny painting of the disaster with the science fiction film, argues that science fiction films are not about science, but they are more concerned with the aesthetics of destruction and mayhem, so to say: mushroom clouds, buzzing lasers and toppled cities. However, according to Cornea (2007, p. 32), Sontag's reductive approach was only pointing out the dystopian leanings of the 1950s American science fiction films and neglecting the actual sophisticated and more complex structure of the genre. Nuclear disaster movies were indeed more popular between the 1950s and 1980s during the 'Cold War' period. Rob Latham (2016, p. 365) argues that, after the Cold War era, the atomic terror seemed to have receded and no longer troubles the sleep of the younger generation. He says that they see it "nothing more than an old school retrofuturistic survival story from the 1950s".

The science fiction genre is like the testing ground for new worlds, new architecture and social structures spiced with aliens, monsters, and strange phenomena. It is hypothetical, experimental, speculative, and controversial in nature. Patrick Parrinder (as quoted in Roberts, 2016, s. 1) explains that "by imagining strange worlds we come to see our conditions of life in a new and potentially revolutionary perspective". Although futurity may help to tell a good story, science fiction is not really about the future. Science fiction's strongest feature is its potential to catch the reader with an alternative perspective on the present (Hoepker, 2011, p. 226). Matt Hanson (2005, p. 7) states that "science fiction films act as a useful cultural barometer, touchstones for the hot-button topics of

the day” and he takes sides with the fact that science fiction has always been more about our present than the predicted future. Frederic Jameson (2005, p. 345) argues by giving reference to Phillip K. Dick’s novel *Ubik*:

“Science fiction is generally understood as the attempt to imagine the unimaginable futures. But its deepest subject may in fact be our own historical present. The future of Dick’s novels renders our present historical by turning it into the past of a fantasized future ...”

Science fiction often depicts utopian or dystopian worlds, and shares the curiosity and self-assuredness of retrofuturism’s nostalgic feeling of wonder, but does not always have the “We are on the right track” optimism of the 1960s. In conclusion, it is about the sense of wonder, the uncanny, and the possible alternatives; but most importantly, it is about now.

2.4.2 Dystopia in sci-fi cinema

The history of sci-fi cinema dates back to *Le Voyage Dans la Lune* (1902) directed by Georges Méliès; the first science fiction film in the history of cinema using innovative animation and special effects.

The architecturally trained German director Fritz Lang builds a utopian world in a satirical way in his film *Metropolis* (1927). The high-rise architecture of the city partly inspired by the Modernist New York skyline carries expressionist, futurist, Art Deco, and Gothic influences. As the title reveals, the city plays a crucial role in the movie and tells us the story of an urban vision of utopia, which is practically based on the suffering and servitude of the proletariat. It shows the lifestyle of the wealthy elite who populate the skyscrapers, and the misery of the working classes who live in enslavement far underneath the city, in a squalid, soulless industrial environment (Cornea, 2007, p. 17). The movie depicts ‘the machine’ perfectly; as it should be obeyed at all cost by its cogs – which is the proletariat –, to the point of sacrificing them until the machine gets satiated for the sake of the elite capitalists who live above.

The Futurist architect Antonio Sant’Elia’s never realized utopian plan in the form of a gigantic machine, the *Citta Nuova* (1914; Fig. 2-6 and 2-7), has inspired many productions like Fritz Lang’s urban constructs in *Metropolis* (1927), ziggurat-like ‘Tyrell

Building' in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), and the urban look in Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* (1997), with interconnected buildings, a multi-level mass of aerial walkways, plazas, and towers.

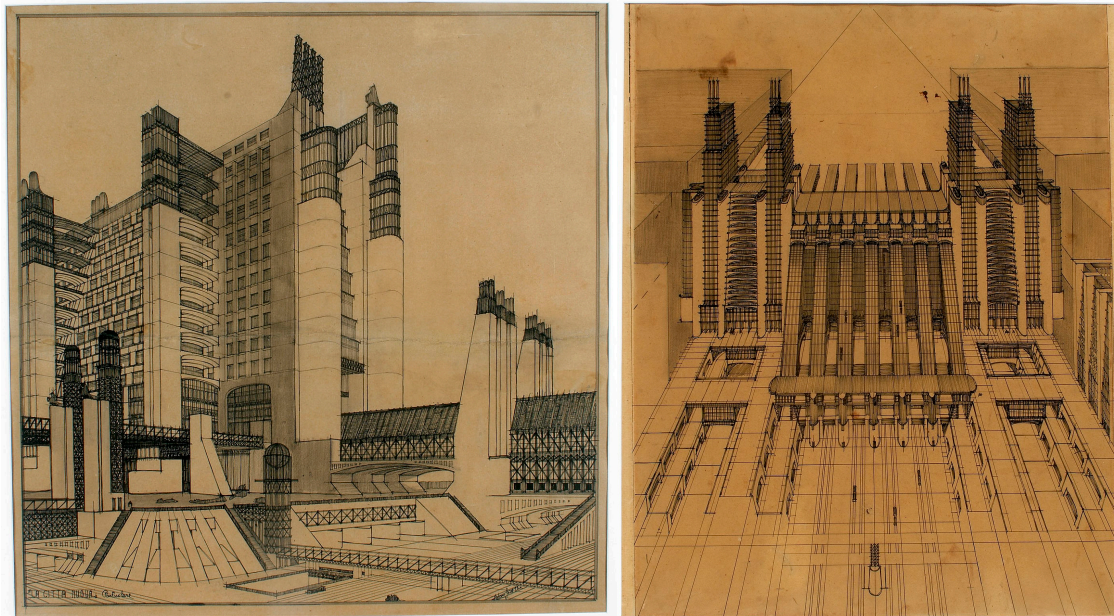


Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7 Antonio Sant'Elia's *Citta Nuova*, 1914. Interconnected residential and industrial structures with glass and metal walkways, highways and railways at various levels.

The film *Things to Come* (1936) directed by William Cameron Menzies and written by H. G. Wells is a utopian political fiction remembered for predicting World War II, that depicts a 'world state' run by a benevolent dictator to end all wars and conflict, giving no credit to either capitalism or communism for a future solution, as it has been made clear by Wells in the novel (Cornea, 2007, p. 18). The movie draws influences from the concrete work of Le Corbusier, the glass structures of Mies van der Rohe, and the more abstract designs of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (Hanson, 2005, p. 11). It can also be described as retrofuturistic in style.

Nevertheless, neither American nor Japanese cinema picked the utopian view of the early era European films like *Metropolis* (Germany) or *Things to Come* (UK) and instead stood for scientific and technological concerns with a more pessimistic postwar attitude. The original version of director Ishirô Honda's movie *Gojira*³ (1954), in which a colossal

³ Released in America in 1955 as *Godzilla*

sea monster made by atomic power and radiation wreaks havoc on Tokyo city, has direct references to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the final stage of World War II, and to nuclear tests that were held in the South Pacific. After World War II, the nuclear paranoia and Cold War-era anxieties, which have increased with the struggle between Russian and American superpowers were shifted towards a heated competition of space race in the 1960s and became a major national and international preoccupation. Following these events, science fiction cinema needed a more convincing environment, better settings and effects than fantastical space journeys of the 1930s and sometimes-ridiculous realistic elements of the low-budget 1950s films, to build a more convincing fictional world (Cornea, 2007, p. 58).

However, the 1950s and 1960s were also a period of social, economic and industrial development all over the world for both socialist and capitalist countries; and people from both political blocs carrying the optimistic hope of never-ending progress and prosperity led the writers and film designers to come up with the idea of a united future civilization, extending to the whole galaxy, overcoming all difficulties with a rational and humanitarian way, such as the multi-ethnic – and even alien (Spock and Uhura characters) – crew of *Star Trek* (TV series, 1966-1969) created by Gene Roddenberry (Wąs, 2018).

François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) based on Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel with the same name; Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) with groundbreaking visual aesthetics, and a serious narrative environment to explore the philosophical and sociological (Hanson, 2005, p. 13); George Lucas's first film, the dystopian *THX 1138* (1971); Andrei Tarkovsky's haunting movie *Solaris* (1972) based on the novel by Polish sci-fi writer Stanisław Lem, which provided the perfect spatial setting for exploring the human psyche (Hanson, 2005, p. 13); Michael Crichton's dystopian *Westworld* (1973) which makes the first use of computer animation in sci-fi film; *Logan's Run* (1976) which combines the post-apocalyptic and dystopian genres were all carrying the dystopian warnings of excessive technological progress (Booker, 2010, p. 9).

After the blockbusters like George Lucas's inspiring *Star Wars* (1977) which attracted legions of fans to the sci-fi cinema, and Ridley Scott's cult space-thriller *Alien* (1979), a period of Philip K. Dick adaptations in the cinema took over and brought dystopia back into movies.

Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), based on Dick's novel 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?' (1968) questioning humanity and the delusion of playing god, radically altered the subsequent sci-fi and noir detective stories (Booker, 2010, pp. 10-12). Booker (2010, p. 14) gives the examples of *Total Recall* (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1990), based loosely on a story by Dick; and *Minority Report* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 2002) which was perhaps one of the closest successful adaptations of Dick's writing. During the same period of dystopian cinema, two other significant examples of Orwell's or Bradbury's dystopias, *Brazil* (dir. Terry Gilliam, 1985), and *Equilibrium* (dir. Kurt Wimmer, 2002) took their place in cinema history. They were reviewed multiple times by academicians and critics.

The skepticism of the early 1980s sparked off the rise of new post-modern science fiction: the 'cyberpunk' genre, which has found its place in literature with leading writers such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. The main cynicism in cyberpunk fiction is that technology solved nothing significant about social, political, and economic problems despite all advancements in computer science and virtual reality (Booker & Thomas, 2009). Gibson reminds us of technology's issues in his short story *The Gernsback Continuum* (1981) and calls it the "near-dystopia we live in" (Guffey, 2014).

Chapter 3

Architectural and cinematic space

The film narrative and its spatial analysis are considered in contexts that include Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic, Karl Marx and Louis Althusser's political, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approaches, and the reactions of the audience being equally important (Phillips, 2012, as cited in Çam, 2016).

3.1 Architectural Space

3.1.1 Definition

Space can be defined as open or closed, and full or empty topoi where people meet all kinds of physiological, psychological, and social needs that enable them to move and perform their actions. Space directs, limits and shapes people's movements. People interact either positively or negatively with every space and environment by experiencing, observing, acquiring knowledge, and giving meaning to it. Stories to be told, messages to be given, and emotions to be experienced in cinema are conveyed to the audience mostly through space (Köseoğlu & Terece, 2016).

We use sensorial and kinaesthetic abilities of our body, and cognitive abilities of our mind to experience space in a unique and subjective basis, which is called spatial perception. Spatial perception encompasses wayfinding, orientation, direction, and cognitive mapping. Our bodily articulations and movements with the help of the sensory organs, allow us to probe the space for shapes, sizes, distances, colors, textures, sounds, kinetic and kinaesthetic changes, and transmit those data to our brain in a consistent and readable way. The reading process requires features like learning, memory, expectation, and attention. Thus, for the received information to be processed in the brain, we resort

to our previous experiences and compare them with our memories. Thanks to these cognitive skills, we can mentally reproduce and create objects or maps in two and three dimensions.

Space also has universal features. According to von Meiss (1990, p. 106), the first of these is depth, based on perspective and texture (i.e., the principle of shallow spaces formed by several superimposed layers in the façade). Secondly, there is the density of a space obtained by dense spatial discontinuities such as a ‘forest’ of columns (e.g., *The Mosque of Cordoba*); or on the contrary a deep and empty space with the absence of density (e.g., *the Bibliotheque Nationale* by Boullée).

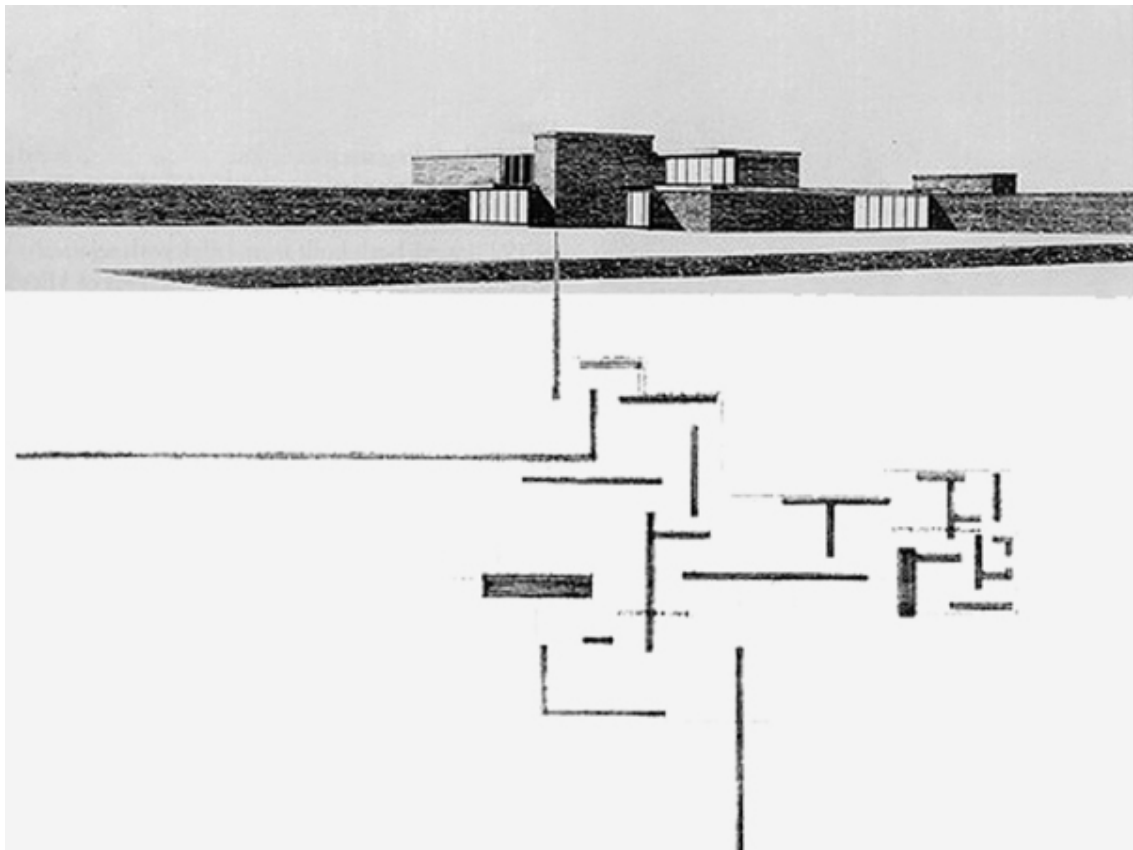


Figure 3-1 *Brick Country House*, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1924. His ideal architecture was an asymmetrical composition of free-standing vertical and horizontal planes, creating an overlapping, interpenetrating continuum of space. (Source: lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com)

Thirdly, spaces can either be closed and introvert, or open and extrovert depending on the existence of limiting planes. The orientation and comprehension occur when angles or corners intersect between limiting surfaces or meet at the edges of isolated surfaces,

which shows that particular points on limiting surfaces play different roles than the others. Therefore, the elimination of a corner or extension of a wall towards the exterior may change the opening of space by reducing its degree of definition (Meiss, 1990, p. 108). Such methods of juxtaposition and interpenetration used by architects create different senses depending on their openness and closeness; autonomy in case of a well-defined closed space such as a bedroom, or continuity in case of a shared wall or floor, both depending on their connection with other neighboring spaces (Meiss, 1990, p. 109) (e.g., *Brick Country House*, and *Farnsworth House* by Mies van der Rohe, Figs. 3-1, 3-2). Von Meiss (1990, p. 101) states that “architecture is the art of the hollow” and the components defining the hollow do not form an image but exert a field of forces.



Figure 3-2 *Farnsworth House*, 1945-1951. The famous glass house along the bank of the Fox River, designed by Mies van der Rohe. (Source: Chicago Architecture Center)

3.1.2 How to communicate through space

Up until the early modern era, the terms of proportion, balance, harmony, and symmetry, ergo ‘beauty’ has defined the boundaries of aesthetics. In this understanding,

ugliness has never had an exact image. It was merely a failure, a turning away from beauty; therefore, it was formless. Architects turned to art to explore its forms and processes to liberate themselves from the rigid codes of functionalism and formalism. From the aesthetic point, the architect designs space as a work of art, similar to a sculptor modeling in clay (Vidler, 2000, p. viii). With the late Renaissance and into the Enlightenment, the understanding of aesthetics had changed and took a more subjective and modern approach, in which beauty is subject to perception, instead of being just a property of objects (Stockwell, 2014, p. 38). According to Paul Frankl (1968, as quoted in Vidler, 2000, p. 4), we primarily perceive a building from its visual impression; in other words, its image produced by light and color. Then from that optical image, we define the form of the space by assigning corporeality to that enclosed mass. However, space, aesthetic qualities, and corporeality do not make a building by themselves; finally, we read its purpose from the spatial form.

Architecture as a work of art falls mostly within the cultural context, which requires a critical assessment and interpretation rather than a scientific one, which makes it subject to aesthetic analysis rather than semiotics. However, complex architecture, similar to a culturally sophisticated work of art, increasingly acquires the function of signifier and discourse of relationships beyond the aesthetic self, engulfing our perception with the notion of semiosis. ‘Pleasure in the perception of the form’ and ‘apprehension of meaning’ become intertwined in our comprehension (Munro, 1987).

According to Munro (1987), Modernism has praised the aesthetic value and formal qualities of the work and led to the loss of meaning by jettisoning history and adopting a cold, formal Cartesianism. In this sense, semiology has been widely appreciated by architectural theorists who want to offset the ‘loss of meaning’ brought about by Modernism which was uncommunicative, both function-wise and tradition-wise.

Umberto Eco (as cited in Munro, 1987) defines two types of meanings in semiotics, codified by cultural contexts. First, the denoted meaning which is related to the primal function of a given element in architecture and acting as a sign-vehicle. He gives the example of a stair, which is an object of culture defined within certain geometric limits. Whether it is used or not, it is a sign-vehicle that recalls the possibility of going up or down. Second, the connoted meaning, where he gives the example of a throne, which is

primarily a chair to sit upon, but also incorporating a sign of regality beyond its denoted meaning. The physical object becomes the signifier of royalty as a connotation.

According to Kristina Juodinytė Kuznetsova (2011), architecture is related to a specific kind of spatial semiotics that considers an artistic approach to architecture, just as in painting and sculpture. Architectural semiotics is interested in the context of the plastic dimension⁴ of a building, and how its form communicates and appeals to our senses. She also argues that it is maybe possible to relate the function of architectural objects as a means of communication. Manar Hammad (as cited in Kuznetsova, 2011) states that the designers or constructors of a building give various syntactic roles to it. Spaces divided into separate areas in a role-based manner will then have syntactic roles of their own, and will enable different narrative programs. Accordingly, the organization of space will provide signification as a means of communication. Of course, the discontinuities caused by the things occupying and dividing the place (road, land, city, buildings, etc.) result in a decrease in the extensiveness of the place, in exchange for the achieved signification. There are imaginary and physical boundaries associated with different competencies (i.e., private vs. public place) over the differentiated topoi, such as the home of a subject which represents a value of privacy and safety, and thereby shows that roles and competencies are topologically marked. There are also hierarchically organized programs of the topoi which help people to communicate over constructed space and determining the relationship between things and people, not only with the help of language or behavior. “Obviously, the space helps to communicate” (Kuznetsova, 2011).

Besides the script and narrative of cinema, architecture has its own narrative which can change over time with use; as well as the spatial perception, being intrinsically subjective, and prone to aesthetic experience. Despite its creative intentions, the target audience’s history and culture play a crucial role in the aesthetic value of an artwork in terms of its social impact (Stockwell, 2014, p. 35). The semiotics of architecture does not come only from the form, but from sociocultural use and function as well; which leads us to the importance of the subject who uses it, and who may change its original meaning.

⁴ The plastic categories cover chromatic (related to colors and shades of light) and eidetic (related to the shape of the different units) categories.

The portrayal of the ultramodern architecture of Robert Mallet-Stevens in the film *L'inhumaine* (1924) and Le Corbusier with Pierre Chenal in the film *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1929) have promoted a brilliant period of architectural modernism in Europe. Thence, the high-quality set design of this period attracted a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars from different industries and has revealed a new method of reading films; not only based on its textual qualities but also its rich socio-cultural, political, economic and architectural discourses (Koeck, 2013, p. 9). According to Troiani and Carless (2014), the discourse of cinematic architecture and occupied space are inseparable, for both are created through certain ideological and cultural practices: “Fictional narrative as a method of critical architectural analysis where written prose and visual images are treated equally as text, used to frame each respective argument through film...”

3.2 Cinematic space

Living by the modern lifestyle of the 21st century with an urge to generate ubiquitous digital information, we are now surrounded by and continuously exposed to digital images anytime anywhere; be it in restaurants, hotel lobbies, medical clinics, public toilets, even when traveling on buses, trains, airplanes and through our handheld mobile devices. With rapid urbanization of the industrialized world, the city and the buildings have become places for embodied visual consumption, which can be explored based on movement, light, and the body, in a kinetic, kinematic, and kinaesthetic way (Koeck, 2013, p. 3). Scott Bukatman argues that cinematic movement became an essential mode of comprehension, and is indispensable to explain and understand new spaces offered by sci-fi films, for their meaning is often found in their visual organization and their emphasis on perception. The camera often takes on the first-person point of view when encountering such alien and technologically determined environments of sci-fi cinema (Bukatman, 1997, p. 9). The legibility and understanding of complex urban structures are possible through continuous monitoring and experiencing. “*Blade Runner*, with its sumptuously complex urban landscapes, demands to be actively watched” (Bukatman, 1997, p. 10). Both Mallet-Stevens and Sigfried Giedion claim that modern architecture and cinema have filmic properties in common since the ‘images in movement’ define both (Koeck, 2013, p. 10). Moving one step forward, Giedion (1928/1995, as cited

in Koeck, 2013, p. 10) states that the essence of Le Corbusier's work cannot be captured from a static vantage point like a photograph but only by a film, emphasizing the multi-perspectival character of space embedded in the design of modern architecture.

According to Koeck (2013, p. 6), in today's world, film and architecture are not merely related disciplines, but they are almost inseparable. No matter how different they are from real architecture, regardless of their physical, social, or economic function, we temporarily inhabit the spaces seen on the screen when we watch a movie. As a film-literate population, we can interpret and relate to those spaces in our urban existence as a frame of reference. Koeck (2013, p. 8) states that films are arguably the best medium to reflect the physical aspects of a city, its simultaneity, temporality, and ephemerality:

“Projected cities can share with real cities a sense of place in an almost infinite matrix of space and time, as in the Wachowski Siblings' 1999 film of the same name; ...; in the words of Dietrich Neumann, ‘from *Metropolis* to *Blade Runner*’.” (Neumann, 1999, as cited in Koeck, 2013, p. 10)

Even though architectural space is visual, tactile, auditory, and even olfactory – as Pallasmaa (2005, p. 54) argues: “The most persistent memory of any space is often its smell.” –; a cinematic space is often considered to be only audiovisual. However, Koeck (2013, p. 6) citing from Auguste Choisy, who has laid the foundation for the concept of cinematic perception of architecture in his book *Histoire de l'architecture*, states that kinetic and kinaesthetic nature of the film which allows us to perceive the movement permits a similar experience like exploring a real city. Likewise, in our daily lives, we interact with spaces in an inherently cinematic way. Furthermore, Bukatman (1997, p. 25) argues that special effects in cinema “...can bring the visual, auditory and even tactile and kinaesthetic conditions of perception to the foreground of the viewer's consciousness.”

“Memories, either human or replicant, are linked to the recorded cinematic visions of photographs” (Bukatman, 1997, p. 10). Despite the individual nature of viewing experience, it is possible to talk about a collective movie culture. Mentally we have a separate archive of mnemonic architectural and urban images based on typologies created by a collective culture. When the cinema creates new spaces, it adds new images to the cinematic pool of imagination. These images superimpose with our daily-life architectural and urban memories whenever the convenience occurs. Thus, to increase

our richness of experience, we deliberately tend to create the illusion of having explored those places firsthand by assigning simulated memory fragments. Architects and art directors / production designers, on the other hand, can use this richness to create new designs.

We require large amounts of data and processing from our past experiences to form the ‘true’ and highly individualized reflection of our world, which shows that space is highly prone to personal knowledge and perspective, therefore, subjective and not absolute (Koeck, 2013, p. 64), which is also similar for the cinematic space. The film experience of each viewer is unique, and his relationship with the film is idiosyncratic (Phillips, 2000, as cited in Çam, 2016), which is also valid for architecture. However, audience responses are similar to form specific patterns in cultural or ideological contexts. Since the early period of film history, the movement of the film, the use of cinematic elements (e.g., staging or fiction), and created forms (e.g., sets and décor) determine the viewer’s experience and influence the relationship in between. Audience experience and cinematic meaning are two key concepts at the center of this conceptualization (Çam, 2016). Many architects were involved in production design, even as early as *Der Golem* (dir. Paul Wegener, 1920), where Hans Poelzig was the art director and designed the sets with Edgar C. Ulmer.

3.2.1 Interdisciplinary work

For the designer, the cinematic space is empirical in the context of its effects on the user (or the audience); thus, as a means of collective consumption, the cinema reaches out to millions and serves as a social, functional, emotional and aesthetic testing ground for both architects and directors. We may see a similar architect – client relationship between the film director and art director / production designer. The film director imagines and describes his overall vision and requirements for the AD/PD. Starting from this, the AD/PD reflects and implements his creativity in designing the movie’s look (color palettes, ambiance, urban look, architectural style, dresses...) to the movie set, thus creating the cinematic space, within the limits of budget and technical means. Architects may have many benefits from having a sensitive eye in cinematic works, as well as film directors being knowledgeable in architectural history and spatial semiotics. Future projections and architecture are best depicted within the great freedom and quasi-real

worlds of cinematic sci-fi works. Experimenting with cinematic tools and architectural cine-scapes may help to design and realize more impactful social and architectural projects.

3.2.2 CGI and heterotopia

Foucault (1967/1984) states that: "... the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space". Cinema and architecture are like mirror images in terms of their approach to spatial production. Architecture produces 3D spaces from two-dimensional sketches and plans; while cinema produces spaces on the two-dimensional screen by navigating on 3D architecture, miniatures, and sets. Today, they both resort to computer-generated images and 3D modeling as well. One may think that, since the cinematic space is dynamic and two-dimensional, it should be perceived differently from the three-dimensional and stationary physical space. However, very close mechanisms play a role in this perceptual phenomenon.

It is indeed true that cinematic spaces have flexibility, unlike real spaces, and they can cut and splice different spaces to form a narrative composition, creating their own reality on the screen. Foucault (1967/1984) describes the theater and cinema as heterotopias juxtaposing multiple different – mostly incompatible – spaces in one single place (e.g., the movie *The Cabin in the Woods* (dir. Drew Goddard, 2011) and *The Haunting of Hill House* TV series (2018)). The beauty of the filmic space is that it permits to create heterotopias by superimposing spaces, unrelated or very far from each other, even non-existing virtual spaces made by CGI. Those spaces are not truly reflecting the spatial reality. They are mediated and altered by-products of the film, depending on ‘when, where, what and how’ they are filmed, and targeting deliberately a unique and particular space and time. (Koeck, 2013, p. 1)

According to Troiani and Carless (2014), it is possible to employ the methods of animated architectural drawings and cinematic representations to envision a real built architectural space; for both architecture and cinema make use of CGI, VR, advanced 3D renders and digital effects. CGI plays a significant role in the movie sector of the 21st century, especially in sci-fi. Hanson (2005, p. 8) states that the use of CGI and digital effects to map and texture the environments serve only to enhance its efficacy. Half-real

and CGI enhanced sets are also frequently used in the new millennium; such as the fictional city *King's Landing* of the *Game of Thrones* (TV series, 2011 – 2019, adapted from *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin, 1996-2020) filmed in Dubrovnik; or many different places from *Altered Carbon* (TV series, 2018, adapted from the novel by the same name by Richard K. Morgan, 2002) where real buildings and/or landscapes were used, but showed in a different way. (Figs. 3-3, 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6)



Figure 3-3 UBC Rose Garden. Vancouver, Canada (UBC Media Relations). (Photo: Martin Dee)



Figure 3-4 Bancroft's Palace from *Altered Carbon*. (Source: Netflix)

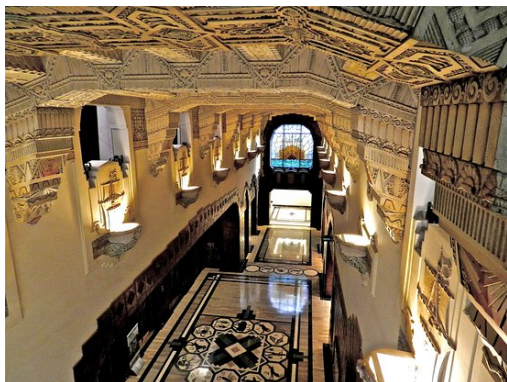


Figure 3-5 Marine Building interior. Vancouver, Canada. (Photo: stephengobi65)



Figure 3-6 Bancroft's Palace interior from *Altered Carbon*. (Source: Netflix)

Albeit the physical presence of a filmed structure, its transformation to a place as a result of real-life experience does not occur in the movies. A pseudo-life is created instead according to the script and narrative of the movie. The memories necessary for the cinematic space to be persuasive as a real place are experienced through the narrative of the story; hence, an imaginary perception of place is created in the viewer's mind. The audience compares every place and situation - either knowingly or unknowingly - with their own experiences. What is essential for the audience is not that the cinematic space

realistically matches with the material world, but whether they trust the representation they see and internalize the scene. On the other hand, we can mentally navigate in and around the places we used to live or visit with the help of cognitive mapping, for we usually remember formerly experienced spaces as discontinuous sceneries.

Peter Stockwell (2014, p. 40) states that feeling in general covers both literary and artistic aesthetics, and the aesthetics of science fiction cannot be separated from them (see Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading*, 2009):

“In essence, real emotion and literary emotion, real people and literary characters, remembered experiences and recounted experiences are processed very similarly, with the only difference being one of mere existence.”

The beauty of sci-fi generic worlds comes from their overly engineered details, rich textures, and architecture far beyond the minimum requirements of the narrative to tell the story. New technologies are invented, new civilizations and sophisticated languages are created with every single aspect thoroughly worked, named and described for better believability and richer immersion purposes (Adams, 2011, as cited in Stockwell, 2014, p. 44). (Figs. 3-7 and 3-8)



Figure 3-7 and Figure 3-8 Spaces from *Oblivion*, dir. Joseph Kosinski, 2013. (Photo: Universal Pictures)

3.3 The uncanny space and homesickness

The uncanny does not have any particular spatial property, but as a mental state of projection, it is the subject of aesthetics, because of its relation with emotional impulses and feelings. Freud (1919), in his essay *The Uncanny*, explains that the theory of aesthetics has focused on the beautiful and sublime, and neglected the aesthetics of anxiety, ergo the uncanny as in ‘beautiful and charismatic’ versus ‘fearsome yet charismatic’, which is connecting to the quality and intensity of the feeling.

According to Freud, the uncanny is at the very core of psychoanalysis, so to speak, the ‘death drive’, ‘castration complex’, ‘Oedipus complex’, repression and psychosis (Dolar, 1991). Through these deepest instincts of existence, the uncanny touches every aspect of social life with its spatiality as it lies within the nostalgia of modern times (Vidler, 1992, p. x). Freud brings about the German term *heimlich*, which means familiar, cozy, homely, and counters it with its opposite *unheimlich*, which means uncomfortable, uneasy, unhomely, disturbing. However, the word *unheimlich* does not cover the entire meaning of the uncanny. The uncanny evokes an alarming sense of restlessness and insecurity even within the supposedly secure walls of one’s house. It is also secret, "Kept from sight . . . Withheld from others" (Dolar, 1991). The short stories of E. T. A. Hoffmann and Edgar Allan Poe were the first to depict the ambiguity between a secure and homely interior, and the fearful invasion of an alien presence (Vidler, 1992, p. 3); for instance Hoffmann’s story *The Sandman* about a living doll character named Olympia, where the privacy of the interior was desecrated by the uncanny, which is the doubt that a lifeless object modeled on a human might be alive haunts us. Doppelgänger (the evil double or evil twin), split personality and self-alienation are exemplars of the theme of ‘doubling of the ego’, explained explicitly in Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, whence the basic process of the ego development occurs.

Vidler (1992, p. 4) quoting from Ernst Bloch explains that the best setting to enjoy a good detective story is in a quiet and cozy interior, sitting in a comfortable chair while sipping tea or rum along with tobacco, covered in the security of one’s home. Therefore, having a failsafe is required while immersed in sinister yet exquisite things. Moreover, as Walter Benjamin (as quoted in Vidler, 1992, p. 4) pointed out, the rapid growth of the great cities, with disturbingly heterogeneous crowds and disproportionately scaled spaces

caused loss of imageability and brought the necessity for a point of reference, giving birth to the urban uncanny:

“Individuals, lost in an isolation from nature, strangers to the place of their birth, without contact with the past, living only in a rapid present, and thrown down like atoms on an immense and leveled plain, are detached from a fatherland that they see nowhere.” – Benjamin Constant, 1814 (as quoted in Vidler, 1992, p. 4)

For Marx, the estrangement of the individual had become class alienation. He criticized the rent system for rendering ‘home’ a temporary illusion. “Here I am at home,” we say. Instead, we find ourselves in someone else’s house; in the house of a stranger who always watches us and is looking to throw us out if we do not pay our rent (Vidler, 1992, pp. 4-5).

From the beginning of the third millennium, the fixed laws of perspective have been distorted or ignored in the quest for creating the space of contemporary identity, reaching up to a claustrophobic architectural space and agoraphobic urban space. The avant-garde call for an escape from history and invention of that new space was the leitmotiv of modernity itself and most architects like Sigfried Giedion (Vidler, 2000, p. 4) and Le Corbusier. However, since the early 1930s, philosophers from Theodor Adorno to Martin Heidegger and Gaston Bachelard, Max Horkheimer to Hans Sedlmayr were highly skeptical with their critique on Modernism’s ‘progress’ and its supposed benefits, complaining of ‘uninhabitability’ of the modern house and its ‘geometric cubes’ stacked up (Figs. 3-9 and 3-10) or laid out in ‘cement honeycombs’ (Fig. 3-11) (Vidler, 1992, p. 65). They contemplated the lost nature of ‘dwelling’, concluding that the *Unheimlich* is a fundamental sense of rootlessness that everyone feels, and why everyone tries so hard to make themselves at home and secure (Vidler, 1992, pp. 7-8). Heidegger (1947, as quoted in Vidler, 1992, p. 8), wrote in his celebrated work *Letter of Humanism*: “Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world”.



Figure 3-9 and Figure 3-10 Habitat 67, Moshe Safdie Architects, 1967, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
 (Photos: Nilüfer Yöney, 2009)

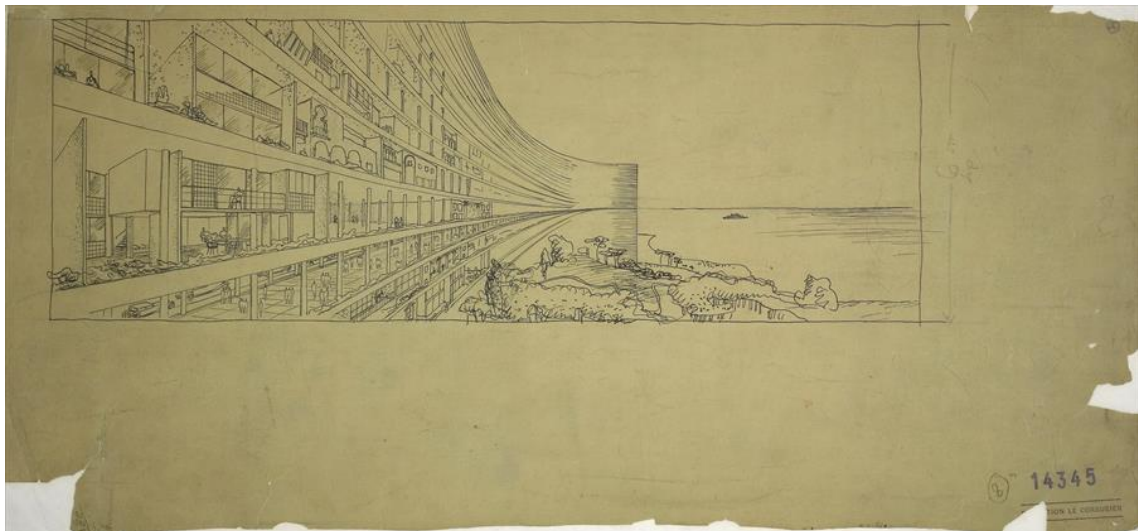


Figure 3-11 *Urbanisme, projets A,B,C,H, Algiers*. No: 14345, Le Corbusier, 1930. (Source: FLC/ADAGP)

“The hollow spaces of capitalism” as coined by Ernst Bloch, or placeless voids of postmodernism were entrusted to architecture to form a placemaking process. Nevertheless, without a lived past, the architecture was forced to search for post-historical grounds to create the authentic home, and alas, has found itself merely repeating history. Counter-modernists and nostalgic dreamers attempted to rebuild the home on more stable

foundations, as a complete set from its former historical glory with a cellar, attic and a comforting fireplace. Yet instead, they have fallen victim to the triumph of image over substance (Vidler, 1992, pp. 13, 66). The history that seemed to have stuck between the edge of yesterday and tomorrow lead the uncanny to reinforce its traditional connection with nostalgia. Hence ‘homesickness’, nostalgia for the true natal home, the desire for returning to the womb emerged in the face of the uncanny (Vidler, 1992, p. 7).

After becoming popular as a condition of modern anxiety in the metropolis, the uncanny has been described by psychoanalysts, psychologists, and philosophers as a distancing from reality forced by reality. In the city of the 19th century, the alienation of the individual treated in Rousseau’s and Baudelaire’s works was indeed the result of the real economic and social estrangement inflicted upon the majority of its inhabitants. The abandoned or haunted houses which have been seen as emblematic of the uncanny, were far from being inhabited by ghosts or evil spirits, and not essentially uncanny in themselves, but they were cultural signs of estrangement for their historical role (Vidler, 1992, pp. 4, 6, 11). Consequently, these historical roles have created labels over time, which have been consubstantiated with their architecture; that is how movies established the typology for specific places such as ‘evil mega-corporation’ buildings, totalitarian government buildings, the villain’s lair or mansion, and alienated cityscape, etc. This argument leads us to the idea that places in films indeed act as actors who play their part. According to Cezary Waś (2018), cine-scapes helped to communicate the ideological contents of cinematic productions, not only as backstage scenes but as acting performances. Buildings created by the set designers sometimes carried expressions beyond the possibilities of natural language.

3.3.1 Cyborg and the uncanny

“Things, objects, machinery play a major role in these films. A greater range of ethical values is embodied in the décor of these films than in the people. Things, rather than the helpless humans, are the locus of values because we experience them, rather than people, as the sources of power. According to science fiction films, man is naked without his artifacts” (Sontag, 1965, p. 216).

According to Heidegger (1982, p. 28), technology does not have anything demonic about it, and the potential threat does not come from the lethal machines or technological tools; the danger rather lies within its enframing, the mystery of its essence. In other words, technology opens new and revealing doors to humankind; but at the same time, the danger it causes, and the saving power to save ourselves from it grows with each frontier being crossed.

At the heart of science fiction, there is the development of the machines along with industrialism. From this point, the concept of dehumanization, the uncanny transformation of man into a machine on one side, and the humanization of the machine itself on the other, are frequently processed topics in the sci-fi genre. Mamoru Oshii (2004, as cited in Troiani & Carless, 2014), the director of animated film *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) claims that humans are always changing and that they need to change; thereby, they lose their human forms more and more with the developing technology. He argues that the human spirit must be reflected through an external body other than the altered human himself to emphasize the human nature. In his case, Oshii shoots pets as human symbols that represent the old and unchanged self: a retrofuturistic anti-uncanny icon. Waş (2018) argues about the problematic of the distinctiveness of technological creations such as artificial intelligence, and that humanity will need a new definition if it is to be determined by a specific consciousness and humanoid body parts installed in an electronic casing, which brings us to the question: “Is it okay to replicate – or imitate – human intelligence but not the feelings?”. He states that genetic interference or biological improvement could be another problem against the diversity of humankind and may even be considered a denial of humanity by the act of creating the ‘perfect individual’ (Waş, 2018).

In the utopian story *The Bicentennial Man* (Isaac Asimov, 1976), we see the protagonist Andrew Martin, a robot who starts its existence with a positronic brain, which is assumed to be operating under the author’s famous ‘three laws of robotics’. However, later, it gains consciousness and creativity as a result of an ‘error’ made by its manufacturers in its programming. In time, with the money he accumulates by selling his artworks, Andrew replaces his metal parts with organic counterparts, and gradually converts himself into a human. In the end, he becomes regarded as a human being and dies on his 200th birthday as a man (Roberts, 2016, p. 15). There are other similar characters in sci-fi, such as the character Data from the TV series *Star Trek: The Next*

Generation (1987-1994), an android who always tries to understand the human nature on every occasion. ‘The Cylons’ from *Battlestar Galactica*⁵ TV series (2004-2009) is a cybernetic race created by humankind, which has transformed themselves into indistinguishable human copies and sees themselves as the next stage of human evolution. Another example is the androids called ‘replicants’ from the *Blade Runner* movie series who are speculated to be “more human than human” and even suspected of being fertile and able to give birth.

Another major uncanny concept of science fiction cinema is the man losing his humanity by gradually becoming a machine. In *The Six Million Dollar Man* TV series (1973-1978) and its spin-off *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978), the protagonists upgraded with machine prosthetics gain an advantage over regular humans, which could be seen as a blessing. However, in the movie *Robocop* (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1987), we see the protagonist Alex Murphy being turned into a cyborg except for his human brain, with the risk of losing his humanity in exchange, which may be considered a curse. Finally, there are the all-out battles between man and machine, like ‘The Borg’ of *Star Trek* and ‘Skynet’ of *The Terminator* franchises. All of these examples carry the features of Shelley’s seminal novel *Frankenstein*. Some of them can be argued for being fearsome dystopias, and some for carrying a utopian hope for a better future.

According to Vidler (1992, p. 147), the line between nature and the machine has always seemed crystal clear due to their controlled separation in the Corbusian home. Organicism was only a metaphor for the form, and the machine was signifying the functionality of the house. However, the more the boundaries between organic and inorganic get blurred by cybernetics and bio-technologies, the body and the architecture, invaded and reshaped by technology become confused and intermingled. The preferred house metaphor for the first machine age was Le Corbusier’s Modernist – almost Futurist – expression: “a machine for living in”. Nevertheless, the second machine age’s house will probably be more cybernetic, bionic, and sterile. (Fig. 3-12)

⁵ This was a re-imagining of the 1978 *Battlestar Galactica* TV series created by Glen A. Larson.



Figure 3-12 *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017). The unornamented sterile home of the second machine age housing the replicant and his holographic 3D girlfriend. The ‘alien other’ within his own ‘haunted house’.

Troiani and Carless (2014) state that a technologically-driven and digitally drawn architectural design carries inadequacies because it can lead to the creation of meaningless architecture. Daniel Kealty, in his unpublished master’s dissertation: *Merging Realities: Filmmaking as Architectural Design* claims that science fiction has affected the nature of the home, corrupting its purpose in a visual, technological, and consumer-driven society. Contrastingly, he states that the (art) director designs his structures through the narrative, giving purpose to them accordingly (2012, as cited in Troiani & Carless, 2014). Although the aesthetic of the image may endanger the purpose or meaning of a building, architectural designs executed in digital media do not create meaningless architecture, but people do. From the beginning of the new millennium, buildings designed by a particular individual carrying the nature of their creators are indeed highly individualized in their expressions. They do not evoke a collective sense of culture, which may be causing a loss of meaning for the majority of people who did not have an artistic or architectural background. This may produce the next urban look of dystopia.

Vidler reminds us of the example of the new, anti-transparent architecture of Rem Koolhaas and many of his contemporaries in an age of modern technological and capitalist development, and their contribution to create the landscapes of fear and the

topographies of despair, by replacing transparency with the uncanny effects of mirroring, shadowing, and loss of face. He states that all the limits and boundaries “become blurred in a thick, almost palpable substance that has substituted itself, almost imperceptibly, for traditional [i.e., modern, body-centered] architecture.”, from *Metropolis to Megalopolis* (Vidler, 2000, p. 2).

3.3.2 Retrofuturism and nostalgia

The term retro describes objects, design styles, and art movements from the past; but it also refers to new things that display characteristics of the past. Retro, as a design trend, can be used for music, film, art, architecture, video games, and culture, which serve as reminders of the “good old days”. When retro is involved, it usually refers to old-fashioned things in mind, which makes it challenging to connect with technology or the future.

In retrofuturism, technological items, tools, and vehicles have retro designs that usually carry the Art-Deco style, sleek, and streamlined look of the 1950s. Sometimes technology becomes outdated or surpassed before it is realized, or simply no longer fashionable. For example, you foresee a huge, room-sized computer for a smart house, but instead you end up with a laptop or mobile phone to do the job.

German architecture critic Niklas Maak describes retrofuturism as: “Nothing more than an aesthetic feedback loop recalling a lost belief in progress; the old images of the once radically new” (Mallory, 2011). Bruce McCall (2008) calls retrofuturism a “faux nostalgia” and “looking back today how yesterday viewed tomorrow”. He states that 1930s depression created retrofuturism and that people trusted science to carry them into the future.

Elizabeth Guffey (2014) states that 20th century futurism and machine age adopted a progressive model of human development based on the principle of technological advancement. With the growing out of the Italian Futurist movement, the rejection of the past became the motto for a generation of writers, artists, and architects, such as Umberto Boccioni and Antonio Sant’Elia, who have embraced the rise of factories, airplanes, and machines, which they believed that would carry them to a better age. However, by the early 1970s, optimism and confidence for a better age began to fade with economic

recessions and a series of environmental disasters that provoked extensive discussions about surrounding technology and its benefits. “The bold, stainless steel futurism of the early 20th century never meets with diminished resources and environmental concerns of the 1960s and 1970s” (Guffey, 2014). Nevertheless, an independent group of avant-garde architects and designers founded the Archigram collective in 1961 in London. They envisioned future cities consisting of urban machines and large-scale network structures containing all sorts of underground and aerial access ways, piping, ducts, cables, and service areas. *Plug-in City* (Ron Herron & Peter Cook, 1962-4), and the *Walking City* (Ron Herron, 1964) designed by Archigram gave inspiration for later works such as the *Centre Pompidou* (Richard Rogers & Renzo Piano, 1971), which have all been influenced by Sant’Elia’s *Citta Nuova* (Cohen, 2012, pp. 385, 438).

The concept of nostalgia is strongly linked to retro. Svetlana Boym (2001, p. 19) states: “Nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed”. She argues that nostalgia in cinema superimposes the images of home and abroad, so to speak, dreams of the past, and everyday life of the present (Boym, 2001, p. 20). In the case of retrofuturism, the elusive dreams of the past become futuristic, such as the ‘semiotic ghosts’ of a utopian couple from a future that never happened, in William Gibson’s short story *The Gernsback Continuum* (1981).

As with retro, retrofuturism is also a design trend that has an active link with nostalgia, which invokes longing for a future that never happened. Common threads are dissatisfaction or discomfort with the present to which retrofuturism suggests an alternative path, and may act as a reminder of older but now forgotten ideals and hope. In a similar sense, Boym (2001, p. 22) quotes from Michael Kammen: “Nostalgia . . . is essentially history without guilt. Heritage is something that suffuses us with pride rather than with shame”.

When retrofuturism refers to World War II or the Cold War paranoia cases such as Philip K. Dick’s novel *The Man in The High Castle* (1962), it may become dark and dystopian. Thereby the alternative reality of the generic world inspires fear instead of hope, though it may still be associated with nostalgia as a reminder of a better past.

Retrofuturism differs by the intention of its creator. In this respect, there are two kinds of retrofuturism. First, the future is seen from the past (Type 1). It is the future

projections made by writers, artists, architects and filmmakers before the 1970s, such as the animated TV series *The Jetsons* (Hanna-Barbera, 1962), in which the signature elements are robotic servants wearing kitchen aprons, flying cars, Streamline Moderne and Googie architecture; or *The Monsanto House of the Future* (1957-1967, Fig. 3-13) from Disney's Tomorrowland Theme Park, a futuristic house intended to demonstrate the versatility of modern plastics, and the design trends of the future. That kind of retrofuturism carry the visionary optimism of the Futurists.



Figure 3-13 The Monsanto House of the Future from Disney's Tomorrowland Theme Park, 1957-1967. (Photo Courtesy: Disney Enterprises, Inc.)

The second (Type 2) is, recreating the past with a feedback loop that is called “The Tomorrow That Never Was” as in William Gibson’s short story *The Gernsback Continuum* (1981). That kind of retrofuturism is tinged with sadness and melancholy (Guffey, 2014), representing a lost belief in a better and prosperous age. Movie examples are: *The Rocketeer* (dir. Joe Johnston, 1991), *The Incredibles* (animated movie, dir. Brad Bird, 2004), and *Tomorrowland* (dir. Brad Bird, 2015) to name a few. Streamlined 1950s American cars equipped with ‘James Bond’ gadgets, flying homemade jetpacks along with old-fashioned leather straps and a sleek shiny metal helmet or a leather aviator cap are the tropes of this type. The architecture has a wide range from Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, Googie, or Mid-Century Modern to high-tech, and neo-futuristic architecture, which usually consists of gliding loops of monorail tracks like spiral light beams,

glittering pools, vertical greenery and rooftop gardens over ivory towers, and whitewashed skyscrapers with flying cars taxying around like beautiful worker-bees. The movie *Tomorrowland*'s (Fig. 3-15) retrofuturistic look is based after the '1952' project from Walt Disney including all sorts of models, photos, sketches and design plans for the 1955 Tomorrowland Theme Park; the 1982 EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow) theme park which was a real utopian ongoing experiment in urban development and organization; and the City of Arts and Sciences designed by Santiago Calatrava and Félix Candela (Fig. 3-14).



Figure 3-14 The City of Arts and Sciences, Santiago Calatrava and Félix Candela, 1996-2009, Valencia, Spain. (Photo: Mike Lowe)



Figure 3-15 Tomorrowland, 2015. (Source: Screenshot from Disney's Tomorrowland - Official Trailer 3)

However, the term ‘retrofitting’ in this context refers to a third concept (Type 3), which is the addition of new technology or features to older structures. *Blade Runner*’s (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982) visual futurist Syd Mead explains it as follows: “The buildings would just become surfaces on which you’d mount retrofitted electrical conduits, air conditioning ducts and all kinds of other things... a city whose discreet individual structures had been enveloped into sort of an urban machine, with people living inside.” (Shay, 2003, p. 8). It is the classical feeling in a technological world, as in Frederic Jameson’s (2005, p. 57) words: “...Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* offers an elegant futuristic melancholy...”.

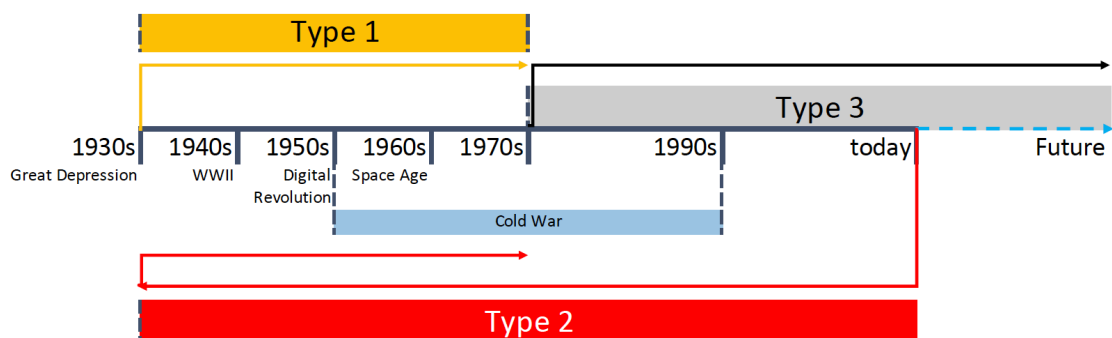


Table 3-1 Classification: Retrofuturism

3.4 Modern Architecture and Brutalism

Descendent of the early 20th century Modern Movement, with iconic designers such as Le Corbusier, Ernő Goldfinger, Marcel Breuer, Peter & Alison Smithson, and Kenzo Tange, Brutalism (derived from *béton brute* or raw/bare concrete) became one of the signature elements of dystopian architecture in occidental cinema culture decades after its first appearance in the 1950s. John Grindrod (2018, pp. 32, 33) states that the meaning of the raw concrete or *béton brute* has been lost in English, and instead evoked the violent and disturbing word ‘brutal’ in mind: “buildings that brutalize the inhabitants.”

“If brutalism has a problem, it is that for years we have been told that it cannot – no, must not – be appreciated. This view sees the buildings as ugly brutes that squat on our town centres and destroys the historic fabric of our cities. They are seen as soulless, sordid and beneath consideration, and best ignored.” (Grindrod, 2018, p. 15)

Brutalist buildings have a massive, fortress-like appearance in general, with sculptural exposed concrete structures. They are based on reinforced concrete, piled up clusters, repeated modular elements – albeit the asymmetry – and sometimes detailed brickwork, which form a vertically large and tall monolithic structure as a whole. The colossal scale infuses an overwhelming sense on the individual. (Fig. 3-16)

World War II was followed by a huge need for reconstruction and housing. The social and economic conditions necessitated swift rebuilding on a large scale, justifying Le Corbusier’s modernist mass-production and ‘house-machine’ ideals. It was also matching with an urban theory based on socialist thinking. The Brutalist Movement took hold mainly in the UK, USA, Canada, Japan, USSR, and Eastern European countries, and created some of its finest examples between the 1950s and 1970s, especially during the Space Race period. It was often associated with public buildings such as schools, museums, libraries, and social housing projects (Figs. 3-16, 3-17, 3-20, 3-23); and was also extensively used in governmental buildings all over the world (Figs. 3-18, 3-19, 3-24, 3-26). Furthermore, the Eastern-Bloc countries used it to create a new national socialist architecture.



Figure 3-16 Residential building - Bolshaya Tuskaya (Titanic), V. Voskresenskiy, V.Babad, L. Smirnova, 1984, Moscow, Russia. (Photo: BACU #socialistmodernism)

Le Corbusier states that the theme of the *Unité d'Habitation* represents a contemporary town for 3 million inhabitants: “*les Immeubles Villas* and these *Unités d'Habitations* will simply replace the town; each having 2500 inhabitants” (Le Corbusier, 2015). The *Unité d'Habitation* was perhaps the first building branded with the word ‘brutalist’ (Grindrod, 2018, p. 28).

Theodore Dalrymple (2009), a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a contributing editor of *City Journal*, describes brutalist architecture and reinforced concrete as: “... I spoke of the horrors of Le Corbusier’s favorite material, reinforced concrete, which does not age gracefully but instead crumbles, stains, and decays”. However, Le Corbusier’s concrete buildings almost always had multiple colors on the façades and were, in fact, easy to look after with regular maintenance. (Fig. 3-17)



Figure 3-17 *Unité d'Habitation*, Le Corbusier, 1945, Marseille, France. (Photo: Paul Kozlowski. FLC/ADAGP)



Figure 3-18 High Court Building, Le Corbusier, 1951-1964, Chandigarh, India. One of the three major elements in Chandigarh's Capitol Complex. (Photo: Bärbel Högner)



Figure 3-19 Headquarters for Urban Development, Marcel Breuer, 1963-1968, Washington, DC. A monolithic testament to Brutalism elevated upon massive Corbusian concrete pillars. (Photo: Ben Schnall)

Japan also had its share of the destruction of World War II. Tokyo was destroyed by the massive bombing campaign of the Americans, while Hiroshima and Nagasaki were razed to the ground by the A-bombs. In post-war Japan, Modernism, representing the displacement of the aesthetics of the old regime took root and became the ideology of Japanese reconstruction, albeit their anxiety about the disappearing past (Saval, 2018).

The sculptural form and white canvas, reflecting the simplicity and minimalist taste of the Japanese were well appreciated. (Fig. 3-20)



Figure 3-20 National Museum of Western Art, Le Corbusier, 1959, Tokyo, Japan. The only building the architect designed in Far East Asia. (Photo: Anthony Cotsifas)

Many key figures like the architects who have worked with Le Corbusier during their early careers, such as Junzo Sakakura, Kunio Maekawa, Balkrishna Doshi and Oscar Niemeyer, and the ones who have pursued his style and urban planning approach, such as Kenzo Tange, have carried forward his legacy far beyond the confines of Europe. They left landmarks and icons of modern architecture in Japan, South Asia, and Latin America (Frampton, 2007, p. 96). Furthermore, Tange and his associates, founding the Metabolist manifesto, made Japanese Modernism a force to be reckoned, and exceeded Le Corbusier's ambition by envisioning a future Japan consisting of cities in the sea and the clouds (Saval, 2018).



Figure 3-21 Yamanashi Broadcasting and Press Centre, Kenzo Tange, 1961-1966, Kofu, Japan. (Photo upload: Koh-etsu)

Kenzo Tange was arguably the most influential figure in post-war Japanese architecture. He was a pursuer of Le Corbusier's sculptural and expressionistic use of concrete and comprehensive urban planning, and one of the founding members of the Metabolist movement, who have adopted the idea to design Brutalist mega-structures that could incorporate organic growth. Tange worked in Kunio Maekawa's office, who had also worked with Le Corbusier in Paris for two years (Saval, 2018), and he was a member of *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM)*⁶. In 1960, during the Tokyo World Design Conference, Tange presented his utopian 'Tokyo Plan', in which he suggested a civic axis divided into vertebrae-like cyclical transportation elements, which would facilitate the circulation for 2.5 million people. He proposed three levels of traffic linearly along the axis, graded according to speed (Kultermann, 1970, pp. 123, 128). He

⁶ The International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM) was founded in June 1928 in Switzerland, by a group of 28 European architects organized by Le Corbusier, Hélène de Mandrot, and Sigfried Giedion.

offered it as a solution to Tokyo's rapid population boom after the war. (Fig. 3-22) Tange argued that the introduction of the automobile into urban life has changed the way people move in the city, and created a need for a new spatial order: a megastructure with multiple linear axes instead of the usual radial zoning (ArchEyes, 2016).



Figure 3-22 “Tokyo Plan 1960” and Kenzo Tange. (Photo: Akio Kawasumi)

Reyner Banham defined Kenzo Tange as the “prime exemplar of the use of Brutalist architecture”. He made a significant influence on British architects during the 1960s with his use of raw and undecorated concrete, and his civic projects such as the redevelopment of Tokyo Bay (Glancey, 2005).

David Fortin⁷ in his interview with Rick Liebling says: “... Concrete is ultimately placeless. No culture can claim concrete as a vernacular building tradition. This is crucial for futuristic imagery if the director doesn't want the audience to be feeling any baggage

⁷ David Fortin is the Director at the McEwen School of Architecture, Laurentian University in Ontario, Canada.

associated with a certain place or cultural group — like the international style, it attempts to unify.” (Liebling, 2018). In fact, Brutalist buildings can be quite distinctive as sculptural landmarks. But, having the same sculpture in every city; that would be the ultimate placelessness.⁸



Figure 3-23 Trellick Tower, Ernő Goldfinger, 1972, London, UK. (Photo: Peter Trulock. Fox Photos / Getty Images)

The cold, uncomfortable looks and repetitive patterns of Brutalism recall authority, thanks to the unadorned, exposed concrete façades and interiors, with rain-stained windows and balconies. The preference of function and economy over aesthetics, factory-like or beehive in form, and one-size-fits-all narrative with the idea of having many different functions in one place create a communicative gap and present a semiotic need

⁸ According to Relph (1976, pp. 118,121), “uniformity and standardization in places” is one of the reasons that create placelessness. This type of mass culture, or globalization in more contemporary terms, results in “kitsch” or an unselfconscious inauthentic attitude, in which “Places are treated as things”.

from a semantic point of view for the bystanders. This gap is often filled with a dystopian narrative by occidental film directors and production designers.

The depressive and closely spaced intelligence service building from *Brazil* movie (dir. Terry Gilliam, 1985); a notable example in Kate Wagner's article *The Architecture of Evil: Dystopian Megacorps in Speculative Fiction Films* (Wagner, 2016) the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building (Charles F. Murphy & Associates, 1975) (Fig. 3-24) used in *The X-Files: Fight The Future* (dir. Rob Bowman, 1998); OCP Building from the *Robocop* movie (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1987) (Fig. 3-25), which is actually Dallas City Hall (1972-1978) (Fig. 3-26), a Post-World War II Modern building by I.M. Pei, are outstanding examples of dystopian architecture with their brutalist aesthetic which became synonymous with surveillance, policing and sinister governments in movies.



Figure 3-24 J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building, Charles F. Murphy & Associates, 1975, Washington DC, USA. (Photo: I. Aude)

The unavoidable growth of city-sized multi-billion corporations, and their taking over politics led the science fiction writers and directors to the idea of ‘evil corporations’ such

as Tyrell Corp (from Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*), previously mentioned Omni Consumer Product (OCP) corporation (from Paul Verhoeven's 1987 film *Robocop*), and Umbrella Corporation (from Paul W.S. Anderson's 2002 film *Resident Evil*). For that, the writers and designers needed a new architecture: 'the evil corporation building'. Tyrell Corp produces androids to replace humans in all fields of profession. Omni Consumer Product (OCP) corporation secretly empowers the criminals to create a significant security deficiency over Detroit, to justify its cause, looking to take control over the city by military-grade security robots. Umbrella Corporation operates a top-secret genetic research facility, researching a terrible virus in addition to its commonly useful products.



Figure 3-25 OCP Building in *Robocop*. (Source: Orion Pictures)



Figure 3-26 Dallas City Hall, I.M. Pei, 1972-1978. (Photo: Kent Wang)

Chapter 4

Case Studies: *Dredd*, *Harrison Bergeron*, *Upgrade* and *Blade Runner 2049*

4.1 *The City of To-Morrow, The High-Rise City, Brasilia,* *and Dredd*

4.1.1 The City of To-Morrow, Le Corbusier, 1923

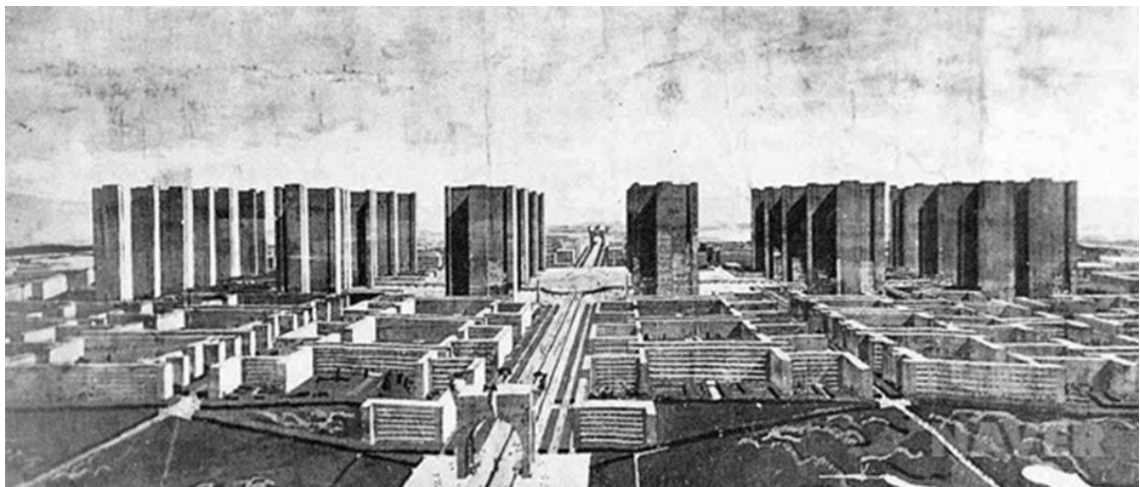


Figure 4-1 Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* for 3 million residents was designed to be an ordered metropolis of the future in 1923. (Photo: FLC/ADAGP)

Frederick Etchells (Le Corbusier, 1931/1986, pp. 4,7) states in his foreword for the book *Towards a New Architecture*, that Le Corbusier described the house as 'a machine to live inside' and called this mass production structure the 'house machine' which he has seen as a healthy and moral entity, beautiful as a working tool or instrument crucial for human existence. He argues that people should abandon all dead concepts from their hearts and minds regarding the house. Alas, his doctrine of high-modernism and his belief

in solving the global issues with it was not the ultimate solution; and those ‘dead concepts’ had just opened a never-ending debate with counter-modernists who took side with the authentic home with a historical past.

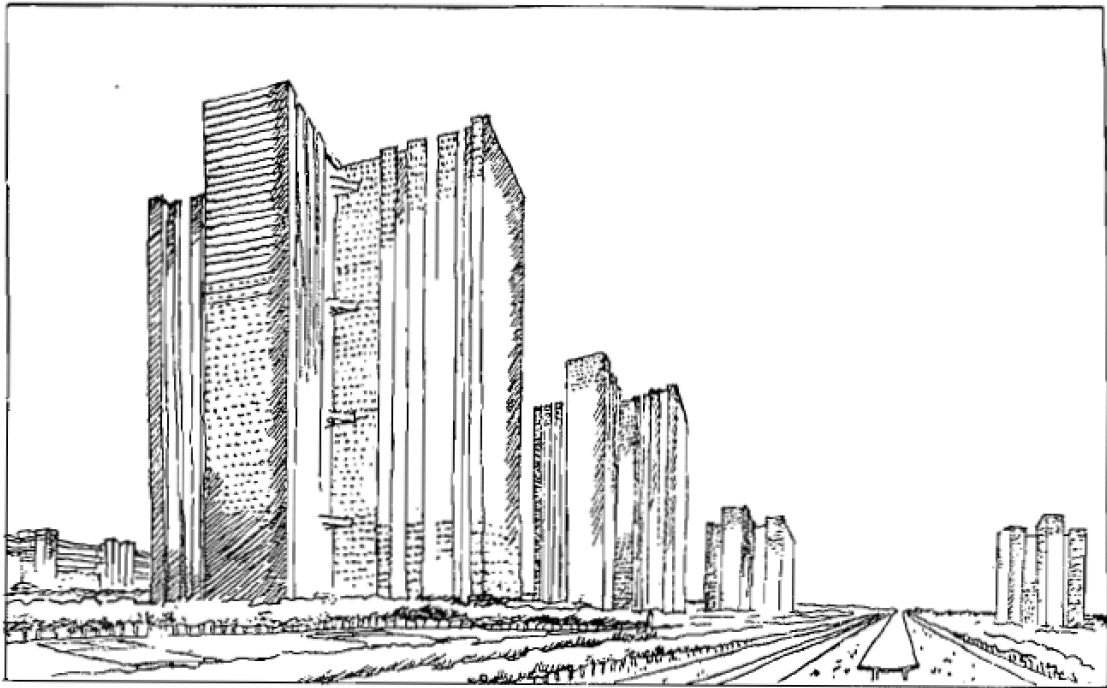


Figure 4-2 *A City of Towers*, Le Corbusier, 1923

Edward Glaeser (2012), Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, sharing a similarity with Burdett’s (see title 4.1.3 *Brasilia*) thought about Brasilia, argues that Le Corbusier’s vision of *Unité*-inspired apartment blocks and skyscrapers surrounded by vast pastoral spaces seems utterly ignorant of the street life that empowers urban interactions. He explains that cities are like complicated organisms, and they only work when they are messy and interconnected with the variety of that jumble which provides an experience of urban marvels to the citizens who roam its streets. Moreover, Glaeser (2012) states that the *Unité*-inspired apartment blocks, located on the outskirts in many slums of every major city today, have become incubators of poverty and crime. Jay Merrick (2008) who writes on architecture and art for *The Independent*, *London* magazine, *The Architects’ Journal*, *The Architectural Review*, and *Icon*, states that Le Corbusier’s vision of architecture reveals as a timeless scenography of orderly collages, where the moment of truth or a critical instance seems missing.

Le Corbusier's ideal modern metropolis was a zoned city, comprising of standardized dwellings in one place, and different areas for work, shopping, and leisure. His urban-planning masterplan *Ville Radieuse* (*The Radiant City*, Fig. 4-2), presented in 1923, epitomizes the modernist utopian approach based on extreme vertical architecture housing enormous populations, linked by freeways and underground public transportation, and set within vast parklands (Brooker, 2006, p. 206). The business district located in the center was containing 200 meters high monolithic mega-skyscrapers and accommodating tens of thousands of people (Merin, 2013). The center was surrounded by a mile long, continuous zigzag apartment blocks housing the proletariat.

Although the *Radiant City*, as well as *Plan Voisin for Paris*, and *The Plan for Algiers* have never been realized, Le Corbusier's vision of high-rise modernism has eventually seen the light of day with rebuilding, urban renewal, road projects and public housing in the post-World War II period such as Chandigarh in India and the many *Unité* blocks. Later on, their sleek futuristic-ness found a place in many cinematic sci-fi productions as they could be dressed up as futuristic cities (Brooker, 2006, p. 206).

4.1.2 *The High-Rise City*, Ludwig Hilberseimer, 1924

Ludwig Hilberseimer's project, the *High-Rise City* (1924) has occasionally been framed as a counter to Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine*. Their main difference is their zoning axis. Le Corbusier's city is zoned horizontally into functional areas (commercial center, cultural inner-ring, and residential edge), while Hilberseimer's traditional strategy was to zone vertically, locating the commercial areas at the base and the residential at the top, in order to provide a higher density (McEwan, 2018). Although he had renounced it later, Hilberseimer has imagined a society where residents work and live in a single unit by traveling up to apartments and down to factories in elevators on a vertical axis (Art Institute Chicago, 2018), in a manner, reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927).

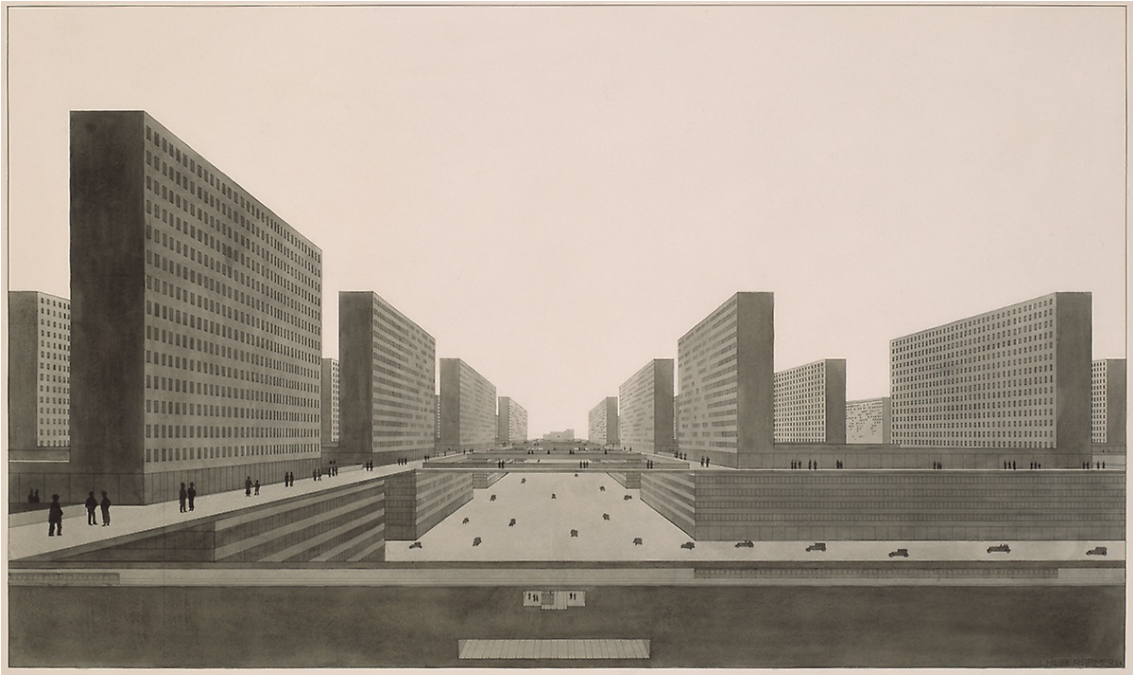


Figure 4-3 *The High-Rise City (Hochhausstadt)*, Ludwig Hilberseimer, 1924. (Source: Art Institute Chicago)

“Thus, the present form of the metropolis owes its appearance primarily to the economic form of capitalist imperialism, which, for its part, developed in close collaboration with science and technologies of production. Its powers extend far beyond national economies and increasingly into the global economy... Since production for one’s own needs is no longer sufficient, aggressive overproduction is encouraged; the focus is on stimulating needs rather than satisfying them. Thus, the metropolis appears first and foremost as a creation of all-powerful capital; as a feature of its anonymity; as an urban form with its own economic, social, and collective psychic foundations that enable the simultaneous isolation and tightest amalgamation of its inhabitants. A rhythm of life amplified a thousand times displaces the local and the individual. Metropolises share a certain resemblance with one another; one finds an internationalism in their appearance.” (Hilberseimer, 1927/2012, as quoted in McEwan, 2018)



Figure 4-4 The Lafayette Park apartment complex, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer, et al., 1956, Detroit, Michigan. (Photo upload: Mikerussell)

4.1.3 Brasilia, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, 1956-1960



Figure 4-5 Brasilia, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, 1956-1960, Brazil (Photo: Eraldo Peres/Associated Press)

The capital city of Brasilia was designed by the urban planner Lucio Costa and architect Oscar Niemeyer as a communal structure to house both the rich and the poor. Now it serves only the rich, and the poor have been shunted out to ‘more convenient’ satellite cities (Banerji, 2012). So much for the utopian ideals, we may say. Vertical architecture is only built on the urban edge, thus highly expensive to be used by the poor. Moreover, the high-rise, albeit its beauty can be seen as a threat to the architectural history of a city’s past and collective urban memory (e.g., Le Corbusier’s plans for Paris and Algiers). Ricky Burdett (as quoted in Banerji, 2012), Professor of Urban Studies at the London School of Economics, describes Brasilia as: “The problem is that it’s not a city.

It's that simple. The issue is not whether it's a good city or a bad city. It's just not a city". He explains that messy streets and nearby multi-purposed home-offices and shops where people living above are the genuine ingredients of a city. He argues that Brasilia's utopian over-planning lacks the complexity of a healthy city, and is a sort of office campus for the government. "People run away on Thursday evenings and go to Sao Paulo and Rio to have fun".

The story of Brasilia raises the question whether planned utopian cities and/or campuses and estates could acquire a real life in time if the society chooses not to conform to the expectations and ideals of the designers. Brasilia has become unlivable, and Le Corbuier's Chandigarh highly degraded, while Carl Christoph Lörcher and Hermann Jansen's Ankara (1924-1925 and 1928-1932) has developed into a living capital city with the architectural designs of Ernst A. Egli and Clemens Holzmeister for the government district. The difference may also lie in the flexibility and adaptability of the designers' ideals.

4.1.4 *Dredd* (dir. Pete Travis, 2012)



Figure 4-6 Mega-City One in *Dredd* (dir. Pete Travis, 2012). (Source: *Dredd-The Making Of*. YouTube)

Judge Dredd is a British fictional comic book character created by writer John Wagner and artist Carlos Ezquerra in 1977. The first screen adaptation of the character was in the movie *Judge Dredd* (dir. Danny Cannon, 1995) portrayed by Sylvester Stallone; the second one was *Dredd* (dir. Pete Travis, 2012) portrayed by Karl Urban.

Dredd is a member of futuristic law enforcement called 'Judges', who operate on the streets as judge, jury, and executioner. The story takes place in a dystopian post-

apocalyptic future, where Earth has become a radioactive wasteland after a series of international conflicts. Mega-City One is a vast megalopolis, an enormous conurbation populated by 400 million citizens, which covers most of the East-coast of North America stretching from Boston to Washington DC. Violence is ordinary in its chaotic streets and mega blocks ruled by crime gangs, wherein most people live in fear and poverty (Figs. 4-6 and 4-8).

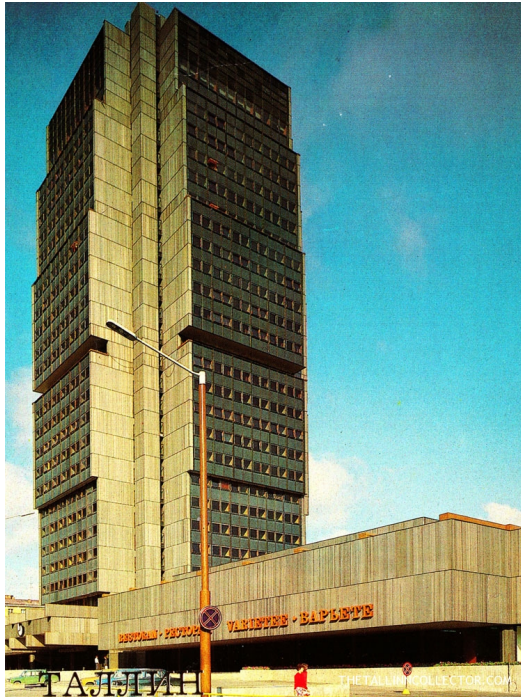


Figure 4-7 Olümpia Hotel, E. Gavrillov, 1987, Tallinn, Estonia (former USSR). (Source: thetallinncollector.com; postcard.)

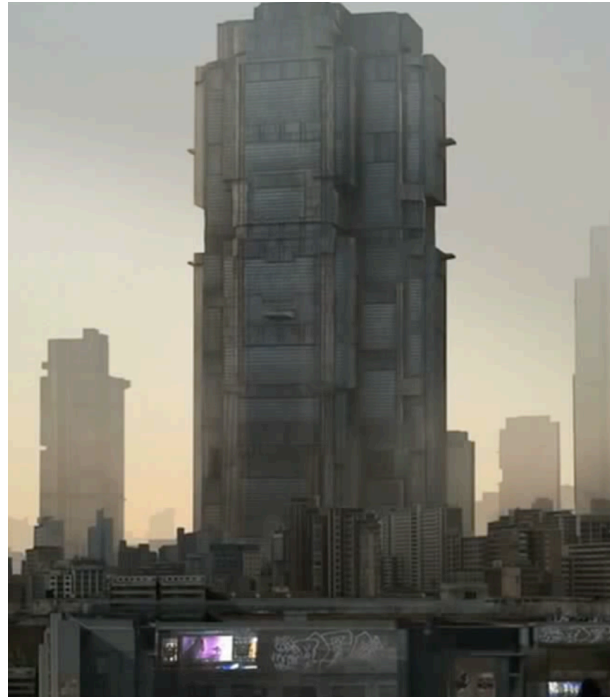


Figure 4-8 Mega-tower from the movie *Dredd* (dir. Pete Travis, 2012) (Source: *Dredd-The Making Of*. YouTube)

The producer of *Dredd*, Alex Garland explains that they envisioned the city with old Modernist and functionalist concrete tower blocks of the 1950s and 1960s, designed to house as many people as possible in the most economical way. Therefore, no architectural decoration or variety can be seen in any positive way, due to an apparent economic recession dictated in aesthetics.

During the post-production, the team has encountered an issue while designing the layout of the mega tower blocks: the proximity of the blocks among themselves. When they were located too close to one another, the sense of scale was dramatically lost, and

they appeared shrunk, for those massive mega structures have eclipsed smaller buildings in the surroundings. Therefore, the team decided to place them further apart so that the cars and roads became visible, and the scale got extrapolated outwards. By spreading the blocks wider in a symmetrical layout, they also created a cityscape which looked like a graveyard from an aerial-wide shot. Garland states that they did not want to make the buildings look like they belong to the very distant future but rather to a close and acceptable one (Figs. 4-7 and 4-8) (Young, 2012). Visual Effects Supervisor Jon Thum described their vision in the following words:

“For Mega-City One, we looked at brutalist architecture, big cities like Sao Paulo, and Eastern European tower blocks ... We employed logic to our technology in Mega-City One, which was based on the gritty realism we wanted. We figured most of the technology they had was old but still functional, so not that different from what we have now; they might have a touch screen, but it would be behind thick glass to be vandal proof. The holograms would be basic and not always work. This was a world with massive poverty and unemployment.” (Hogg, 2012)

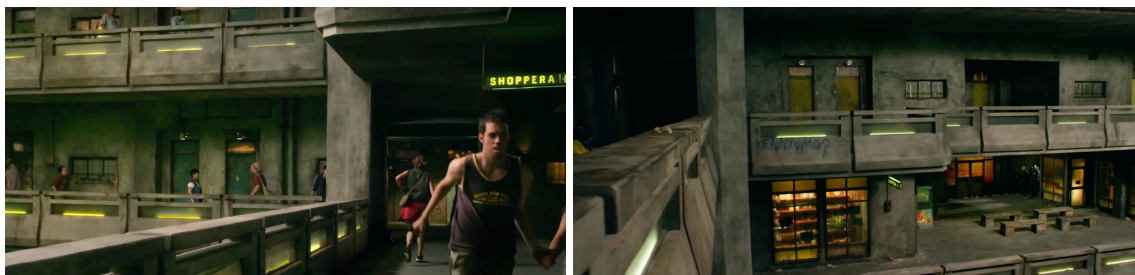


Figure 4-9 and Figure 4-10 Floors from Peach Trees Mega-Tower from the inside
(Source: Dredd-The Making Of. YouTube)

From the outside, a mega tower block looks like a product of high-tech engineering with its mechanized armored façades. However, it is nothing more than a vertical, decrepit and dirty slums district from within, which is a very close example of what tremendous overpopulation and unemployment rate can do to a city and its inhabitants. The level of technology does not look advanced, for most of the vehicles and buildings look like they have been carried over from the 20th century. The towers neither carry any historical significance nor have any ornament. The architecture focuses only on economic and

functionalist purposes and disregard both form and aesthetics beyond being imposing and dominant in the cityscape. Apart from being built of reinforced concrete, and having as many as 200 stories, it is highly arguable that these mega tower blocks from *Dredd* (2012) do any justice to Le Corbusier's plastic forms and liberated façades. However, from the functional point, they seem to have attained his 'house-machine' ideal, albeit the poverty and misery of its inhabitants (Figs. 4-9 and 4-10). From the point of layout and division of spaces, a mega tower is a self-contained mini-city and has a vertical zoning axis, which bears similarities to Hilberseimer's model.

However, the utopian/dystopian city does not live to its fullest meaning and ideal. The movie, itself, fails to deliver a believable story and becomes the example of an unreal and unsustainable socioeconomic structure, ignoring social life, spirit, a need for security, earning a living, and education. People die on the streets every second, yet they manage to live as if nothing happens. There is an unemployment rate of over 90 percent; somehow, they still can buy food and medicine from the shops. The traffic outside runs without a problem as if there is an abundance of gasoline. Moreover, the absence of any apparent outrage or riot on the streets cannot be rationalized by the presence of a dozen machine-gunned and motorcycle riding techno cowboys who provide law and order for tens of millions.

4.2 *Upgrade* (dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018)

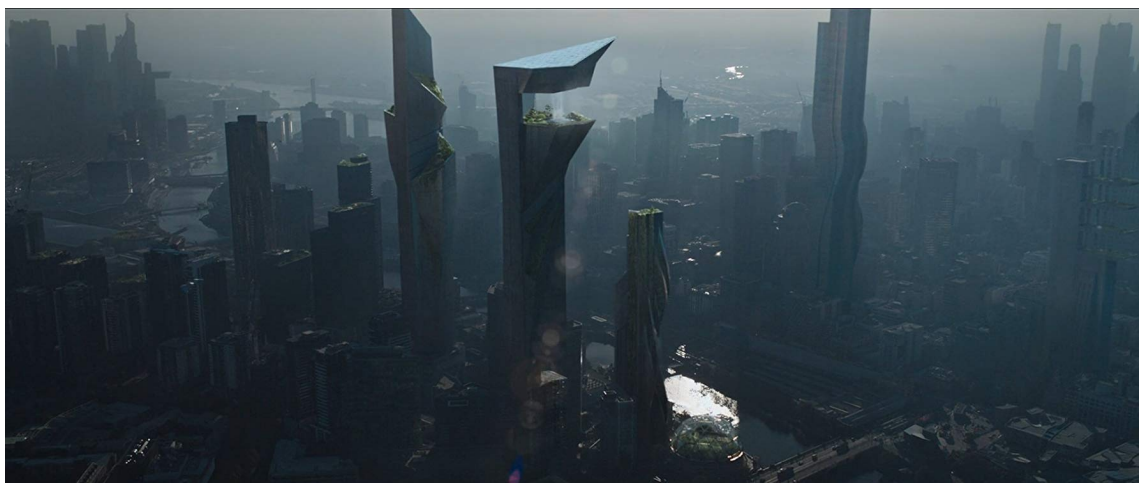


Figure 4-11 Neo-futuristic but surprisingly dark city skyline from *Upgrade* (dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018) looks like it was caught in the middle of a power shortage. (Source: *UPGRADE* (2018) Full Movie Trailer. YouTube)

Upgrade (2018) is a cyberpunk-thriller science fiction film written and directed by Leigh Whannell, which presents a vision of a utopian future with ubiquitous information and advanced technology. However, surveillance, high-technology concerns, and enslaving virtual worlds bring in the gloomy dystopian feel of the cyberpunk genre. The story takes place in a city where sustainable mega high-rises with vertical gardens, buildings with indoor or rooftop greenhouses, and biospheres are depicted in a neo-futuristic skyline. Fully autonomous cars, smart houses, and high-tech devices define the new lifestyle of the rich (Fig. 4-11).

The film follows Grey Trace (Logan Marshall-Green), an old school man in a future high-tech world, who fixes and customizes vintage cars in his garage. His wife Asha (Melanie Vallejo) works as a high-rank executive in a cybernetics company, and seems to be the one who earns their living. Unlike Grey, she is very fond of intelligent systems surrounding every corner of their daily life. She criticizes Grey for being skeptical and apprehensive of high technology.



Figure 4-12 Digital vs. analog. A windowless, fully-computerized, autonomous car and the 1970s American muscle cars in front of the mid-century modern style home of the Trace family. (*Upgrade*, dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018) (Source: UPGRADE (2018) Full Movie Trailer. YouTube)

One day, Grey asks his wife to help him deliver a customized car to a client named Eron Keen, the head of another famous high-tech company. During their visit to his house, Eron presents them with his latest groundbreaking invention, a bio-chip named STEM. On their way back home, Asha's autonomous car gets electronically hijacked and crashes.

Hired by Eron, four men under the guise of muggers attack the couple. The staged incident leaves Grey paralyzed and his wife dead. Months later, Grey returns home a quadriplegic, with the loss of his wife in his mind. Vain efforts of the police to find his wife's killers drive him into depression and despair.



Figure 4-13 Grey's house with dark and grey Brutalist interiors. (*Upgrade*, dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018)
(Source: UPGRADE (2018) Full Movie Trailer. YouTube)

The crucial part comes when Grey succumbs into despair in his house, sitting on his wheelchair paralyzed, where the dark and 'grey' Brutalist interior signifying his psyche dominates the scene. His incapable, technology-dependent state is emphasized with the gloom of the poorly-lit interior space. The supposedly smart coffee machine does not work as expected, and the scene creates an irony of the machine mocking with the helpless man that is taken-part of his abilities. As a handicraftsman, his inability to using his hands leaves Grey hopeless.

Upon a suicide attempt by Grey, Eron pays a visit and suggests him to accept a STEM implant treatment to cure his quadriplegia. Eventually, he convinces the desperate man to have the surgery. After gaining control of his limbs, Grey discovers a mysterious presence speaking to him in his mind, which is the STEM implant itself, signifying the uncanny, the perils of high technology, defilement of home's security, and even worse, the violation of personal thoughts and freedom. STEM says that it can help Grey avenge Asha's death. Acting as an ill-whisperer demon on the shoulder, the AI convinces him to hand-over the control for small intervals to help him beat his enemies, gradually having total control at the end.



Figure 4-14 Grey makes use of augmented reality despite his distaste of high technology when it comes to finding his wife’s killers. (*Upgrade*, dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018) (Source: UPGRADE (2018) Full Movie Trailer. YouTube)



Figure 4-15 Grey’s retro garage. (*Upgrade*, dir. Leigh Whannell, 2018) (Source: UPGRADE (2018) Full Movie Trailer. YouTube)

The retro look of the garage, old fashioned tools, lamps, a radio, and a 1977 Pontiac Firebird create a familiar sense to help the audience shrug-off the estrangement imposed by the future technology and connect with the protagonist (Fig. 4-15). The video game-

like third-person camera angles of the cinematographer, and the exceptional performance of Logan Marshall-Green playing a disabled person who is not supposed to lift a finger, yet moving like an automated killing machine contribute significantly to the feeling of uncanny. The contrast between spaces, former and future technologies and colors become supporting elements.

4.3 *Harrison Bergeron* (dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995)

The movie *Harrison Bergeron* (dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995) adapted from Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s short story takes place in a dystopian future in the year 2053; although the timeline of the story is unimportant and insignificant, as timelessness is a common feature of dystopia.

According to the plot, the adoption of egalitarianism after the so called Second American Revolution appears to have created an equal state and social structure. Even though the aim is to bring people to an equal level, the price is quite subversive. Everything that makes people unique and wonderful such as intelligence, literature, and art has been sacrificed. An authoritarian state always watches and handicaps people by having individuals with higher intelligence wear mind-numbing headbands, and stronger or faster ones attach heavy weights. The state arranges marriages between mismatched persons to debilitate the resulting genes, and broadcasts only low intelligence trivial shows on television. Also, it is encouraged to take C instead of A from exams. Thus, the citizens are reduced to dull and mediocre biological lifeforms.

The story's protagonist Harrison Bergeron is a brilliant high school student who suffers from the nonsensical and unintelligent behavior going on around him. He eventually gets noticed and recruited by a secret organization that turns out to be the shadow government who rules the state behind the scenes. This totalitarian government consists of highly intelligent and capable people who are entirely isolated from regular citizens. Harrison later joins them and thrives in this new environment. He learns about many wonderful things like music and movies. Meanwhile, he falls in love with Phillipa – the girl who introduced him to the organization – who also happens to be the Director's daughter. While Harrison and Phillipa seek to escape the organization and live in a free country, Phillipa finds out that she is pregnant. Government agents learn about it and

lobotomize her. After the incident, Harrison comes to see the actual social structure as unethical and wrong. He finally rebels against the elite by trying to show their true nature to the people. As a last-ditch effort, he makes the ultimate self-sacrifice, yet he fails to make any meaningful difference.



Figure 4-16 Public executions on TV. (*Harrison Bergeron*, dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995) (Source: Screenshot from Harrison Bergeron)



Figure 4-17 Classroom full of students wearing handicapping headbands. (*Harrison Bergeron*, dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995) (Source: Screenshot from Harrison Bergeron)

The invalidity of the individual is emphasized by a grotesque narrative, depicting an old lady who has committed shoplifting, or a man who has not paid his taxes, being considered as criminals and getting executed one after the other in live broadcast shows. Pathologically, people watch them like any other television program without showing any alarming reaction.



Figure 4-18 and Figure 4-19 Shadow government authorities in their uniform and uniformitarian architectural space. (*Harrison Bergeron*, dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995) (Source: Screenshots from Harrison Bergeron)



Figure 4-20 The Andrews Building in the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, John Andrews, 1964-1966, Canada. (Photo courtesy: JasonParis. Flickr)

However, those who rule the state behind the scenes have access to everything deprived of the people; or it appears to be that way at first. Living in monochromatic dark spaces, having to wear dull uniforms, being separated from their families, and most

importantly, prohibited from having any children show that the so-called governing class is living in their own dystopia of self-alienation and homelessness (Figs. 4-18 and 4-19).

The places where the elites live are in the Brutalist style, which symbolizes the authoritarian government. These scenes were filmed at the Andrews Building at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus in Canada, designed by John Andrews in 1964-1966. (Fig. 4-20).

The 1950s are considered as America's happiest times, as mentioned in the film. Therefore, televisions, furniture, fashion, all look like they belong to the 1950s. In order to improve this utopian illusion, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne architecture, which symbolizes a better age of humanity, progress and prosperity are used in the background imagery and interiors where citizens live (Figs 4-21 and 4-22). Furthermore, secret government spaces possess retrofuturistic screens, phones, and compact discs (they still use compact discs in the year 2053). Thus, Brutalism and Retrofuturism becomes two faces of the same coin, representing dystopia and utopia respectively.



Figure 4-21 Flo's Diner from the movie Harrison Bergeron. (*Harrison Bergeron*, dir. Bruce Pittman, 1995) (Source: Screenshot from Harrison Bergeron)



Figure 4-22 Streamline Art Deco dining car restaurant built in the mid-1980s, called initially 4D's Diner, later Flo's; demolished in 1998. (Source: woodsjesse, uglyhedgehog.com)

4.4 *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017)

Blade Runner (1982) is a cyberpunk genre sci-fi film based on Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* directed by Ridley Scott. It is commonly cited as a seminal postmodern film with its multi-generic texture of visual elements, the hybridity of fundamental science fiction movies, and typical detective film-noirs of the 1940s, such as *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941), and *The Big Sleep* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1946). As Vivian Sobchack calls it, *Blade Runner's* confusing but compelling patchwork look of retrofuturistic sci-fi and film-noir labels it with a unique style named 'future noir', a style that updates the urban dystopia, chaos, and sprawl (Hanson, 2005, p. 8). Cluttered and 'retrofitted' dystopian cityscape of the film merges with the Art Deco and noir interiors, while questions of being human within a postmodern, post-industrial environment emerge.

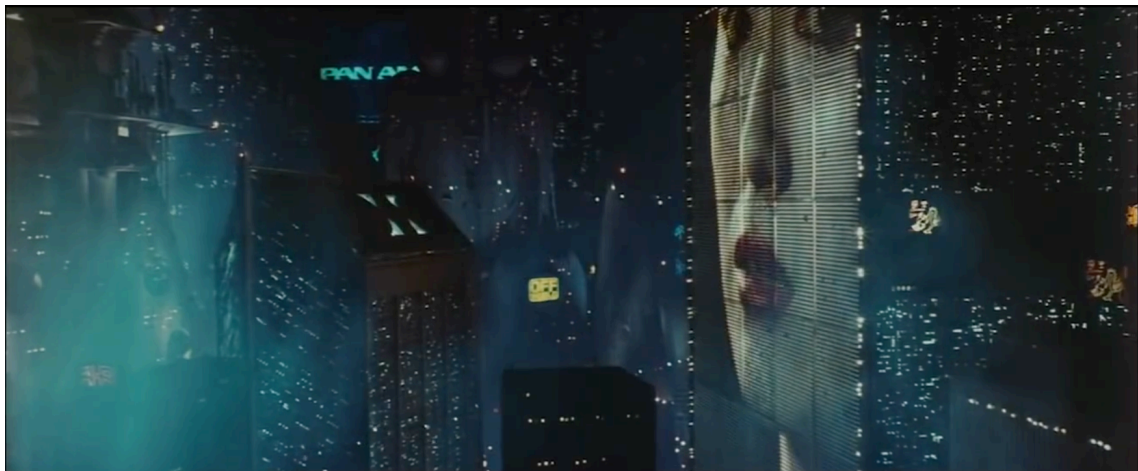


Figure 4-23 Giant advertisements that take up the whole sides of buildings are a symbol of capitalism, literally becoming the city itself. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), Warner Bros.)

The visual representation of a 2019 Los Angeles is composed of a complex mixture of architectural styles from different periods and various cultures (Booker, 2010, p. 61), both in the urban and individual building scale, especially seen in building interiors with the look of the 1940s America, and neon sodden façades of the 1980s Hong Kong and Tokyo (Figs. 4-25, 4-26 and 4-27). Ridley Scott, along with production designer

Lawrence G. Paull and the film's Visual Futurist Syd Mead, have retrofitted old buildings to build (in Scott's words) "a film set forty years hence, made in the style of forty years ago", in order to bring it into the future L.A. of *Blade Runner* (Hanson, 2005, p. 19).

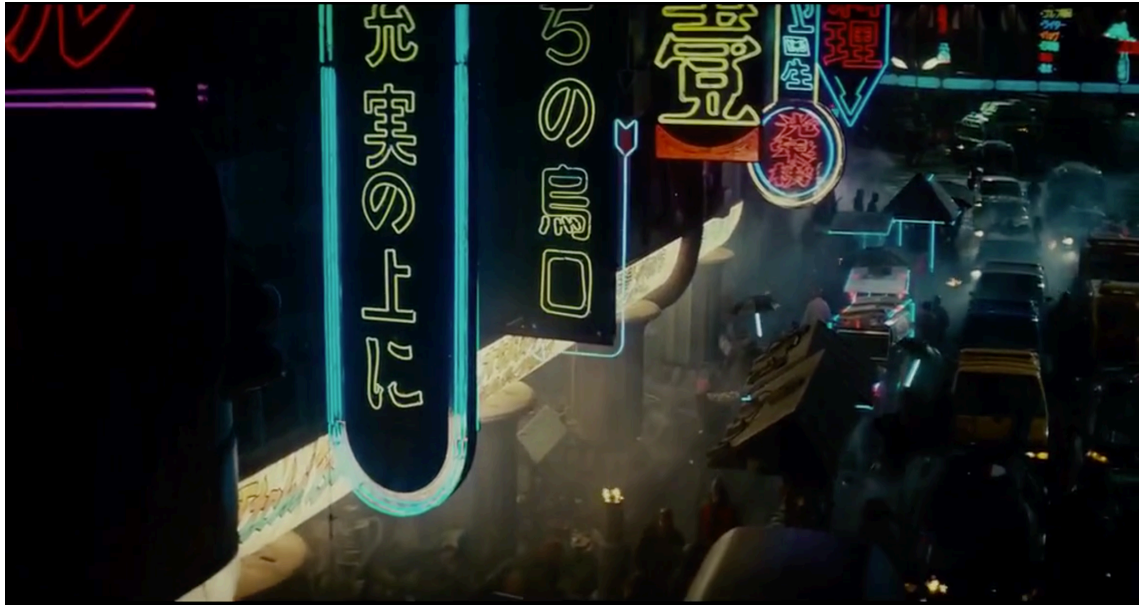


Figure 4-24 Top: A street-level view from *Blade Runner*. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), Warner Bros.)

Figure 4-25 Bottom: Yurukacho-Izakaya. (Photo courtesy: iStock.com-aluxum)

The team decided that the 21st century will be too expensive to tear down aging buildings to build new ones, and future designers would instead repurpose and equip existing structures with new high technology (Ostrow, 1982). They have built layers over layers with pipes, tubing, and neon signs, which Hanson calls: “the flotsam and jetsam of the future”. Paull explains that they used many different architectural styles and “went from Egyptian to Deco to Streamline Moderne to Classical, from Frank Lloyd Wright to Antonio Gaudi” (Hanson, 2005, p. 19), which sums up to a convincing alternate future. Furthermore, the ambiance is set by a faint image of the sun during twilight daytime, endless acid rain, thick smog on dirty streets, and cigarette smoke inside the rooms. (Figs. 4-23 and 4-24)



Figure 4-26 Nakagin Capsule Tower, Kisho Kurokawa, 1972, Tokyo, Japan. (Photo from Tom Blachford’s *Nihon Noir* photography.)



Figure 4-27 Shizuoka Press, Kenzo Tange, 1967, Tokyo, Japan. (Photo from Tom Blachford’s *Nihon Noir* photography.)



Figure 4-28 Top: Deckard's retrofuturistic kitchen recreated in Warner Bros. Studios after Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis-Brown House, 1924, L.A. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), Warner Bros.)



Figure 4-29 Bottom: K's kitchen has similar aesthetics with Deckard's from Ennis Brown House, especially with the Mayan motifs on its textile wall blocks. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)

Blade Runner was entirely filmed in Los Angeles Burbank Studios, with a few iconic real-life locations, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's fascinating Ennis Brown House (1924) in Los Feliz, which is used for filming Deckard's apartment (Figs. 4-28 and 4-29); Sebastian's home in the Bradbury Building (Sumner Hunt and George Wyman, 1893,

Los Angeles) with its Italian Renaissance filigree iron stairs (Fig. 4-30); and Los Angeles Union Station (John Parkinson and Donald B. Parkinson, 1939) to create the Art Deco-tinted Police Headquarters (Hanson, 2005, p. 20). These well-known architectural designs from the Los Angeles area contribute to the feeling of urban reality in the movie.



Figure 4-30 Sebastian's home in the Bradbury Building, L.A. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), Warner Bros.)

At the heart of the story, androids – more like human clones – play the most important role by getting antagonized, reminiscent of the aggression in Lacan's mirror stage: the alter ego. They are presented as the enemy of humans by being “more human than human” in the middle of a long-standing humanitarian crisis. The house becomes once again a source of uncanny by harboring the human-looking android inside. (Fig. 4-31)

Cornea (2007, p. 154) argues that the replicants, despite the presence of the father figure Tyrell who has made them, are seeking their lost mother who will give them their childhood memories and provide them with a secure historical lineage. In this sense, the replicant is a signifier for placelessness and architecture without history.



Figure 4-31 Brutalist interior with a retrofuturistic reference of a housewife of fifties made of a hologram; a happy and heartwarming pin-up icon inside a cold, grey, undecorated home. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)

Blade Runner 2049 (2017), directed by Denis Villeneuve, takes from where Ridley Scott has left, 30 years after the events of the first *Blade Runner* (1982). Society does not look better or worse in the new film; people live in poverty, misery, and artificialness. However, the authorities still fear that the news of a replicant who gave birth would drive the dystopian society into chaos. The question is: how would a collapsed society with more pressing concerns like finding food, shelter, and job, might care for another twisted genetic byproduct? Furthermore, people are somewhat wrapped with technology, where replicants are known and common, and may even carry their holographic companions inside their pockets.

Both films have references to a totalitarian environment emphasized with a complex network of images involving eyes (Booker, 2010, p. 62). However, people seem to have more flexibility over their freedom than the surveillance societies of Orwell's or Bradbury's dystopias. Heads of dystopian mega-corporations Tyrell and Wallace play god in both films in the absence of an effective government. However, their only goal is perfecting the replicants to build their utopia. They have no interest in civic affairs. The hall inside Wallace's mega-corporation building has a striking resemblance with the Great Temple of Abu Simbel in Egypt, a connotation of the pharaoh Ramesses II, who reigned in the 19th Dynasty between 1279 and 1213 BCE. Wallace's office is the center of his psyche, the way of saying that he is different – somewhat superior – than the rest

of the world. The space is the isolated island from More's utopia in a sense, embodying knowledge and virtues, but not of humankind, only Wallace's.



Figure 4-32 Director Dennis Villeneuve in Wallace's headquarters. (Source: *Blade Runner 2049* Gallery. Warner Bros.)

The film was shot mostly at Origo and Korda Studios in Hungary, using highly-detailed and meticulously built miniatures and CGI, in addition to a few Soviet-era Brutalist buildings, an old powerplant, and Budapest's old Stock Exchange Palace (Ignác Alpár, 1905) for filming the kitschy interior of the abandoned Vegas casino. Moreover, flyover shots of Iceland for the remote maggot farm, Valley of Fire in Nevada for the orange and sandy outskirts of Vegas, thermo-solar plant, and polythene greenhouses in Spain (The Worldwide Guide To Movie Locations, 2019) make the film a literal heterotopia.



Figure 4-33 Top: The hall inside Wallace's mega-corporation building. (*Blade Runner 2049*, dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017) (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049*. Warner Bros.)

Figure 4-34 Bottom: The hypostyle hall of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel (c. 1264 BCE) in Egypt with eight Osiris pillars. (Source: anonymous)



Figure 4-35 Top: The Brutalist building at Szalay Street Budapest used for filming K's apartment. (Photo: The Worldwide Guide To Movie Locations, Google street view)

Figure 4-36 Bottom: K's apartment. (*Blade Runner 2049*, dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017) (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)

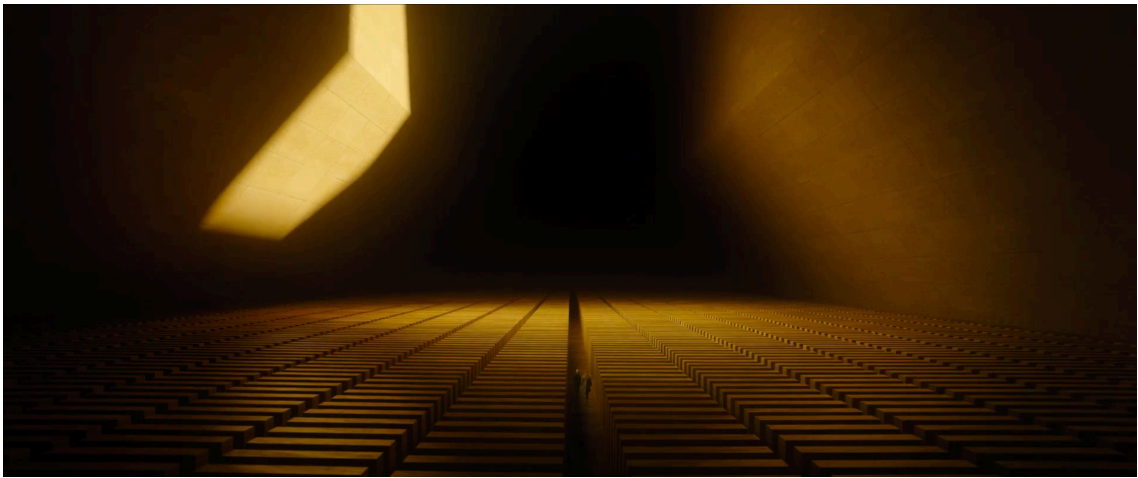


Figure 4-37 *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017) has a monochromatic palette as if color is a stand-in for architecture and changing psychological modes. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)

In *Blade Runner 2049*, the retrofitted and future-noir styles are missing from the urban scenes; the distinctly eclectic architecture of the futuristic L.A. is gone. The cultural and historical jumble is turned to a cold-gray concrete forest, shifting from one setting of

placeless environment to another. The city is practically unrecognizable, and locations lack identity. Both the monochromatic and unwelcoming architecture of Brutalism, along with the occasionally shifting snowy ambiance with the never-ending black rain, dominate the urban look and dictate the visual aesthetics for the first half of the film. For the second half, Villeneuve sets an environment on an orange palette that looks like it has been filmed during a sand storm, just like a similar event that has happened in Sydney Australia in 2009 (Fig. 4-38), adding the missing element: the place, ‘the good old days’ retrofuturism in the following Vegas casino scenes. (Figs. 4-39, 4-40 and 4-41)



Figure 4-38 Sydney central business district skyline during the 2009 dust storm. (Photo: Tim Wimborne. REUTERS)



Figure 4-39 Vegas outskirts. (*Blade Runner 2049*, dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017) (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)



Figure 4-40 Vegas casino filmed at Budapest’s old Stock Exchange Palace (Ignác Alpár, 1905) with CGI add-ons, orange lighting for the sand storm effect, and Korean letters for a change from the previous film’s Chinese and Japanese ambiance. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)



Figure 4-41 A Miesian architecture with glass façade and fifties interior, retrofitted with high-tech devices, and a retrofuturistic jukebox that allows having an à la *Star Wars* 3D holographic video of the singer: Frank Sinatra. (Source: Screenshot from *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), Warner Bros.)

Blade Runner 2049 (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017) becomes the most complex example so far in its amalgamation and creation of the most complex urban and architectural background for the dystopian story it tells. The Brutalist and retrofuturistic as well as ancient historic elements combined with a future vision of deprivation and high technology contribute to the narrative in beautiful screenshots. Thus, the spatial designs play the major role in the spectator's understanding of this fictional world.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Future Prospects

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 What is the role of retrofuturism?

The hallmarks of both utopia and retrofuturism are the motto “We have the right stuff” and the sense of wonder. Utopias are usually nostalgic within their yearning in looking back to an idealized past, biased in terms of truth, in terms of usually creating a perfect version rather than depicting the way people had actually lived, which is where nostalgia – the coveting for the 1950s utopian ideals – gets involved. Dissatisfaction, insecurity, and frustration from today’s world attract people to the hopeful dreams and safe harbors of the past; lead the designers to create images and spaces with retro properties and elements for more secure, guilt-free, and satisfactory places.

Retrofuturism helps soften the dose of estrangement in an alien world, acting as a safety belt or as an anchor to the hopeful or moral past, keeping the audience from being lost in a meaningless technological and architectural environment.

5.1.2 What are the perils of the future unhomely and nostalgia?

Historical roles have created labels over time, which have been consubstantiated with their architecture; that is how movies established the typology for specific places such as ‘evil mega-corporation’ buildings, totalitarian government buildings, and the villain’s lair or mansion.

Architecturally, Brutalism, predominantly keen edge forms, dark and monotonous color palettes, reflective surfaces, and multi-colored neon lights of cyberpunk’s high-tech and retrofitted architecture refer to mass production, robotization, and the rise of

corporations, along with the simultaneous isolation and downfall of humanity: a dystopia. Retrofuturistic spaces offer round edges, spherical forms, and more vivid colors of Googie, Populuxe, and Streamline Moderne styles. Moreover, symmetrical forms and patterns, and shiny and expensive materials of Art Deco bring a feeling of hope, success, prosperity, and luxury to the observers.

In many examples, the human labor seems to be replaced by androids or robots. However, in the American dream of the Atomic Age, no one had seemed to be bothered by the replacement of human labor; all the good citizens would still go to work – whatever that is – and return to their Mid-Century Modern villas within well-ordered garden suburbs. In the dark and gloomy world of cyberpunk, overpopulation, unemployment, and poverty are skyrocketed. Placelessness is wrapped around the city because of uncontrolled urban sprawl, over-complexity, and chaos. Since everyone is for himself, and the hunter-gatherer concept is making a comeback, meaningful architecture and public services are only available for the rich. Ultimately, the house becomes a vessel and turns to a source of modern unhomely.

In the uncanny, there is a sense of ‘not belonging anywhere’, merged within homelessness and homesickness; a ‘heimatlos’ state as Bloch would put it. The immigrant, the alien other, or the android are therefore seen as vagrant outsiders, even as invaders looking to take over man’s home. Aliens have human-like features; new Cylons and replicants look human, but they are not; ‘resleeved’ people from the *Altered Carbon* series can be anybody or nobody at all.

Cities become estranged because they have extreme complexity, thus, reduced legibility. A total decrease in the extensiveness of the place in exchange for the maximum signification, which makes the modern city nothing more than a gigantic billboard made of pieces and bits; with lots of patchwork and building portions with ‘retrofitting’ from an earlier era, skylines are taken over by colossal high-rises, corporate buildings, giant screens, neon and billboards. Urban designers and architects emphasize technology and global forms, coupled with involuntary repetition or the compulsion to repeat (*Wiederholungszwang*), gradually turning every city to look the same, causing the loss of urban memory and leading to placelessness, so that, eventually nobody belongs anywhere anymore. Moreover, inescapable ads over the social media track our movement, collect data and report information on us.

Woods has similarities with the residents of a cyberpunk city. He says that he is one of the millions who do not fit in, who have no home, no family, no doctrine, no firm place to call his own, no known beginning or end, no sacred and primordial site.

Corporate capitalism and consumerist dystopia are not persistent in *Blade Runner* films contrary to popular criticism, for there is only one apparent mega-corporation (be it Tyrell or Wallace), which is uninterested in governmental affairs, and there are poor people who cannot buy and consume a lot. It looks like the end of all systems, and a return to hunter-gatherer mode. There is a state of temporality in effect on the urban image with continuous retrofitting after an apocalypse in socioeconomic life – although not the exact image Woods had dreamed of – and an absence of governmental body which justifies the preference of the audience for such an environment, exasperated of authority and surveillance. The only people who are oppressed and ostracized are the replicants.

The replicant is a signifier for placelessness and architecture without history. Nevertheless, the retrofitted looks of the street level, Art-Deco, and mid-century building interiors carrying the familiarity of the 1900s makes the missing historical connection, which implies the necessity of a safety belt against the unavoidable change of the human being in the future. So, the city has both the historical connection and progressive human development based on technological advancement. Vidler's (1992, p. 7) statement about history's state of being stuck between yesterday and tomorrow leading to 'homesickness' indicates that the uncanny house of *Blade Runner* should be fueling the nostalgia to its peak. Nevertheless, social media reviews and comments show that people find living in such an environment somehow appealing. Therefore, it can be presumed that people identify themselves with the homeless replicant and cyberpunk outcast of the stories dipped in nostalgia to express themselves in the freedom of chaos, and inside the shoes of self-sufficient cyber-pirate, which is at least offering more hope than the dull and ever-tracked lives of our time. Moreover, having both historical context and future life superimposed is leading to a favorable singularity. It is like the finalized version of the global world and the united cultures, the ultimate heterotopia of having everyone and everywhere in a single place.

5.1.3 Will the future bring a utopia or dystopia?

Technology is portrayed in dystopic films and writings as a concept that enslaves society rather than facilitating human life. Nevertheless, the history of slavery is much older than that of high-tech. In this sense, technology can only be defined as an effective means of the sovereigns who desire total obedience. Society is not a slave to technology but to those who control it. It is not the weapon that kills the man, but just another human being. Capitalist utopias feed consumerism and endless dissatisfaction. The individual feels the need to own and accumulate property; instead, he becomes owned by the capital. As with the main cynicism of the cyberpunk genre, technology did not solve anything significant. It only made life lazy, and greatly facilitated the surveillance and redirection for the persons in power. Tech-gurus and cyberpunks turn this means of inertia into a useful resource and locomotion. They are “fighting fire with fire”. While some films and writings can be propaganda tools of the sovereigns, others can be considered as a means of warning and awakening. The utopia of the sleeper is the dystopia of the awakened as in the ‘red pill / blue pill’ dilemma of *The Matrix*, which makes them interchangeable concepts.

It may be concluded that neither the restrictive and inhuman ‘perfect order’ nor the anarchic utopia based on the freedom of the individual could be the solution for the prominent problems of humanity. Remote islands, isolated planets, socialist, anarchist, altruistic, or objectivist societies, “laissez-faire” capitalism, all the hopes and possibilities for a better world seem to have stuck in despair within a never-ending stasis of dystopian anticipation. Transience and temporality of modernity and anarchy is identified with rapid-consumerism. Utopias cannot go beyond putting the individual in a golden cage while making him believe that he is the ruler of his own heterarchy. However, they only serve to maintain the status quo and economy in the existing order. Make the cage invisible, and you will have the perfect utopia.

5.2 Future Prospects

“Will the future really bring a dystopia?” The current situation in the world as of 2020 can be seen in the ‘17 Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs) implemented by the UN. The goals show precisely where we are and to which direction we are headed as

human beings in the current world order. The future looks dark unless humanity attains these goals at some point. There is extreme poverty and hunger because the world is 'owned' by a few wealthy capitalists, and the capital requires absolute obedience, irresponsible production and consumption, so to speak, flagrant waste of resources, and never-ending wars. People's health and well-being, employability, environmental conditions are all in decline. There is inequality in all areas of life. Quality education is not available to everyone. Peace and justice are only for the powerful. Meanwhile, despite its many manifestations, climate change still remains disputable, justifying over consumption and waste of our planet's resources.

So, the answer to this question remains inherently and extremely possible yet debatable.

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