ANALYSIS OF URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS IN RECENT SCIENCE FICTION FILMS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES
OF
THE MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

APRIL 1997

Approval of the Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

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April 1997, 128 pages

This study aims at exploring the science fiction genre, which has been frequently brought up in recent theoretical discussions, from an architect's point of view. Science fiction artist carries the social, ideological, and scientific discussions of his age to a brand new time and context, in which their presumable outcomes are hypothetically sketched out. This sets the remarkable characteristic of the genre: science fiction creates worlds. An architectural analysis attempt toward the science fiction genre, in which text and context exist interdependently, cannot escape the overt or covert ideological discourse of the designs.

Current outstanding examples of the science fiction genre in the field of cinema constitute the main material of the discussion. These popular culture products,

depict identical themes and produce similar representations, constructing a collective visual rhetoric which can be called as the "iconography of the genre". These iconic images, in time can flow into daily life without problems of adaptation or ideological questioning; and furthermore, do influence future expectations and world-views of the society.

This study analyses and discusses these industrial dreams, which we confront in everyday life, to decipher societal dynamics and explore the strategies of science fictional world building. Recent science fiction films are analysed within three categories in respect to their visions of the future. The first category discloses that, myths, which reappear at times when rationale fronted perplexing problems, still plays a significant role in shaping future visions, despite the cognitive approach of the genre. In the second category future images appear as metaphors of our present condition. These films carry the discussions on late-capitalism, postmodernism and post industrialism into new contexts. The last category analyses the representation of cyber space as a promising future. These visions argue that this new environment will alter whole human perception and capability, turning them into godlike creatures; and also, critically discuss the idea that such a case would be a total submission to technology and late-capitalist ideals. The study also demonstrates that methods of science fictional world building can be applied to architectural experimentation.

Keywords: Architecture and Science Fiction, Architectural Imagery, Science Fiction Films, Worlds of Science Fiction, Blade Runner.

ÖZ

GÜNÜMÜZ BİLİM KURGU FİLMLERİNDEKİ KENTSEL VE MİMARİ VİZYONLARIN ÇÖZÜMLEMESİ

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Master, Mimarlık Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi, Doç. Dr. Aydan Balamir

Nisan 1997, 128 sayfa

Bu çalışma, son yıllarda teorik tartışmalarda sıkça gündeme gelen bilim kurgu türünü mimarlık gözüyle araştırmayı hedeflemiştir. Bilim kurgu yaratıcısı zamanının sosyal, ideolojik ve bilimsel tartışmalarını, bunların olası sonuçlarının hipotezlere dayalı olarak çizildiği yepyeni bir bağlama taşır. Türün en çarpıcı özelliği de budur: bilim kurgu dünyalar yaratır. Bağlam ve metnin birbirlerini beslediği bilim kurgu türüne mimari bir çözümleme girişimi, tasarımların açık veya örtülü ideolojik söylemlerinden bağımsız gerçekleşemeyecektir.

Bilim kurgu türünün sinema dalındaki yeni ve çarpıcı örnekleri tartışmanın ana malzemesini oluşturur. Bu popüler kültür ürünleri benzer konuları benzer

tasvirlerle işleyerek "tür ikonografisi" olarak adlandırabileceğimiz ortak bir görsel dil oluştururlar. Bu ikonik imajlar, zaman içinde adaptasyon problemleri yaşanmadan ve ideolojik yönden sorgulanmadan gündelik yaşama taşınabilir; ve daha da önemlisi toplumun gelecek beklentilerini ve dünya görüşlerini etkilerler.

Bu tez, toplumsal dinamikleri anlamak ve bilim kurgu dünyası yaratma stratejilerini araştırmak üzere, gündelik yaşamda karşılaştığımız bu endüstriyel düşleri çözümleyip, tartışmaktadır. Yakın tarihli bilim kurgu örnekleri, içerdikleri gelecek vizyonları bakımından üç kategoriye ayırılarak incelenmektedir. Birinci kategori, rasyonelin zor sorunlarla karşılaştığı zamanlarda yeniden ortaya çıkan mitlerin türün bilişsel yaklaşımına rağmen, gelecek vizyonlarını biçimlendirmede hala önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. İkinci kategoride gelecek imgeleri bulunduğumuz durumun mecazi yansımaları olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu gibi filmler geç kapitalizm, postmodernizm ve postendüstriyelizm tartışmalarını yeni çerçevelere taşırlar. Son kategori siber uzayın umut vaad eden bir gelecek olarak tasvirini çözümlemektedir. Bu vizyonlar, bu yeni çevrenin insanın algılarını ve edim gücünü bütünüyle değiştireceğini savunmakla beraber, böyle bir durumun teknoloji ve geç kapitalist ideallere tümden boyun eğmek anlamına geleceği düşüncesini eleştirel biçimde tartışırlar. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda bilim kurgu dünyası yaratma metotlarının deneysel mimarlıkta da uygulanabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimarlık ve Bilim Kurgu, Mimari İmgelemler, Bilim Kurgu Filmleri, Bilim Kurgu Dünyaları, Bıçak Sırtı.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express sincere thankfulness to my supervisor, Aydan Balamir and to the academic staff for encouraging my study on an unfamiliar subject and for being open-minded.

I thank all my friends for everything. To my family, I thank them for the support and faith in me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Under the pressure of latest technological developments and the end of the second millennium, rethinking the way we live and perceive is almost inescapable. As a personal means of interpreting the outer world, dreaming will serve as a tool for overcoming this obscure period. However, the Communication Industry —or the "Conscience Industry" as Oskay (1981) calls it— interferes in this personal means, with its colourful dreams for sale. The anxiety, enthusiasm and alarm toward the new is relieved no more by tales or stories as it was in old times, but by fantasies which can be viewed as industrial products of the Conscience Industry.

The popularity of science fiction (SF) genre in this industry is apparent. Especially at our age when one cannot easily tell if the thing he/she witnesses is a fact or a science fictional fantasy (clone animals, genetic decoding of the human body, computers victorious over the chess geniuses, micro-technology, and many more). The accelerated technological progress and its radical effects on the human society are continually discussed in various platforms. Beyond its extrapolative function, SF should be read as a form of fiction.

Fiction speaks our unspoken dreams, fears and desires; and in some way helps us to know ourselves or teach us something about the way we live now. Steven Marcus argues that, fiction gives us "an adequate notion of what it is to be alive today, why we are the way we are, and what might be done to remedy our bad situation" (cited from Malmgren, 1991). SF is an effective form of fiction for communicating ideals. It is predicated upon a world-view which takes for granted that the future will be different from the present, that there exists a spectrum of possible futures, all with their germs in the present, and that articulation of one of those possibilities can be of real value. Ideal SF stands against mythical perception of the problems with its cognitive approach. It often concerns itself with politically volatile issues—human survival, the integration/alienation of the individual into/from the community, global destruction, the potential effects of present practices on future generations, and so forth—the genre is particularly suited to political interpretation (Abbott, 1994). SF is a genre of estrangement and cognition, and is interpreted by Le Guin (1969) as thought experimentation. These works mirror the social crises the world experiences; and obviously some of them are also meant as warnings. Besides, they have the potential to transform the society. Suvin (1976) says:

> **The aliens -utopians, monsters or simple differing strangers- are a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. But the mirror is not a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one, virgin womb and al chemical dynamo: the mirror is a crucible.**

Science fiction artist carries the social, ideological, and scientific discussions of his age to a brand new time and context, in which their presumable outcomes are hypothetically sketched out. This sets the remarkable characteristic of the genre. SF creates its worlds by means of "representational discontinuity" and the surface of a SF product combines the alien with the familiar. The artist who inscribes a SF

world is cut loose from some of the exigencies of mimesis; he/she is free to speculate, to fabulate, to invent. Once the artist has posited the representational discontinuity, the discursive rules dictate that the artist adhere thereafter to the laws of Nature and the assumptions of the scientific method (such as validity of cause and effect, or the irreversibility of time). The SF artist must provide a scientific rationale for the discontinuities that he/she introduces into the fictional world. McHale (1992) notes that, SF is preoccupied with questions such as: "what is a world? How do different worlds, and different kinds of world differ? and what happens when one passes from one world to another?" SF worlds are the society's representations of itself in or for itself. Constructing and deconstructing fictional worlds and images will empower us to be more critical about the modes of how we live and how we perceive.

The occupation of SF in creating worlds exposes the basic connection with architecture: both create worlds. Consciously or not, architectural images influence SF imagery. SF transforms them for providing consistency with the particular future vision; and these images return to the sphere of architecture as inspirations. The architectural images used in SF constructs a collective visual rhetoric which can be called as the "iconography of the genre". Pulp SF products repeat the icons produced by imaginative examples. These codes are effortlessly interpreted by the viewer, feeding certain images for our collective future. This resembles the relation between innovative architecture and mainstream architectural practices. Images may transcend ideas by eclipsing them, but they do not live long if they lack a conceptual background.

Every design, either original or pulp has a hidden or explicit scenario. Klotz (1988) opens his paragraph on postmodern architecture with the title *Architecture as Fiction,* which describes the transition from modern to postmodern, to the basic functional architecture of modernism, he suggests, is added a collection of historical narratives which aim to promote architecture to an "imaginary world", a fictional representation. Modern architecture in all its purity is socially meaningless as devoid of fiction and stripped to its bare facts. Fictional architecture is of our time, but where does the inspiration for the fiction comes from? Probably the referential source for most architects is popular culture (Palmisano, 1991). In the postmodern era, image, either original or borrowed, appears as a criterion to judge the aesthetic value of the design. Today's architecture features imagery and symbolism and this is accentuated by the aggressive capitalist society which is evolving. It is highly likely that one of the things which helped plant the seed of imagery in the minds of Archigram or pioneer High-tech architects was the SF imagery of their childhood.

Cinema appears as the most appropriate form of art to discuss architecture in SF worlds. Because cinema today is so realistic in its four dimensions that it is a total experience, a false reality, (although still only playing on two senses) so deceptive with its virtual subliminal mind massage (Palmisano, 1991). This, combined with accessibility makes it the most important social art form of our time. It has a power to influence the collective behaviour of people. Furthermore, Grigor argues (1994) that, at their most basic level, architecture and cinema have natural built affinities. Similarity of their procedure (plan, construction; script, production) shows that architects and film directors proceed down parallel routes to create their works. In

cinema, every scenario needs a space to take place. But SF film producers have to show more attention to create expressive spaces within the self contained imaginary worlds. Architecture and representation of the city completes the SF world, by setting the context for the plot.

This study aims at analysing worlds and world building strategies of these industrial dreams from an architect's point of view to disclose societal dynamics and explore the methods of science fictional world building. Franklin (1983) says:

> If archaeologists can infer something of the character of a society from a few shards, certainly visions of the future created by large groups of highly skilled people armed with advanced technology, financed by millions of dollars, on behalf of giant corporations, intended to make handsome profits by enticing the cost of expensive tickets from masses of consumers, must reveal something about the character of our own society.

The analysis of the worlds of SF films will decipher the cross-influences between SF worlds and contemporary social and ideological trends, which will be helpful to attain a critical and resourceful insight into contemporary future visions in architectural design.

It appears that one of the most significant shared characteristic of recent SF films, is presenting an attitude towards *technology*. Mazlish (1972) points that humans are continuous with the technology they create. Put another way, technology is what makes humans human. The great searching for an alternative human habitat is usually a response to social problems or technological advancements or a combination of both. Techno-centrism, which is a major constituent of our current condition, dominates this quest at our age. Different opinions on how technology may effect our future habitat will also be discussed within the analysis. Another

shared characteristic of these films that determine the shape of the future worlds is the *power,* and will definitely act as an important theme in the analysis.

The study focuses on recent SF films which are produced approximately between 1980 and 1995, by following a current literature survey method. Nevertheless, a few significant films of the genre history are also referred for comparisons and further clarifications. The case study film, Scott's *Blade Runner*, is an outstanding example of the genre, which has been frequently referred to by theoreticians of cinema and architecture throughout the last 15 years. The effort and attention in detailing of the scenario and iconography has been appreciated by the critics. High standards of the intellectual material produced on the film definitely certify its significance.

The study covers five chapters, including the introduction and conclusion chapters. Following the introduction, the second chapter explores the emergence and evolution of the SF genre as a branch of utopia, and discusses methods, cultural instrumentalities, common themes and world building process of SF genre and recent SF films. The information provide the means to analyse the films in categories. The third chapter covers the analysis of the worlds of recent SF films, disclosing messages and visions. The worlds of SF films are evaluated in three categories in reference to the world-views which their story and design reside. These categories indicate essentially different trends in creating SF worlds. Science fictional visions may explore alternative futures by extrapolation; represent metaphorical representation of the present; or reveal unchanging, cyclical essence of humanity by utilising a mythical approach. This chapter constitutes the basis for

the comprehensive case study in the fourth chapter, in which the current condition is discussed within the analysis of *Blade Runner*. In the conclusion, SF films will be discussed as both mirrors of the present condition and locomotives to feed architecture with their images and methods in creating worlds.

With this study I hope to contribute intellectually to experimentation in architecture, which has a significant role in architecture's leading function for the society.

CHAPTER 2

UTOPIA AND SCIENCE FICTION

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF UTOPIAS

Utopia is a developed form of mankind's fascination by future within a sociological frame. Produced through the fantasising powers of the imagination, utopia opposes the affirmative culture maintained by dominant ideology (Moylan, 1986). Although it has ancient roots —including the *Garden of Eden*, the Buddhist *Western Paradise*, Plato's *Republic*, and popular song *The Land of Cokaygne*— the specific Western tradition of the literary utopia is generally agreed to have originated with Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516. Developed within the context of early capitalism and the European exploration of the new world, the literary utopia has functioned within the dominant ideology that has shaped the capitalist dream and within the opposition ideologies that have pushed beyond the limits of that dream.

More's *Utopia*, written at a time of rapid change, drew on the contradictions of the time and anticipated a response to the conflicting needs of dominant and subordinate classes. The new space in the world reinforced the faith in ideal worlds in which dreams could be lived. The brave new world provided a sense of

alternative space for the emerging utopian form just as the developing capitalist and national structures supplied a sense of an alternative system. Since the time of More, utopian narrative has been linked with the broad changes at work in the modern social order and with the dreams and desires set in motion by the opening up of human existence promised in a growth and profit oriented economy. Utopia has both reinforced the emerging economic order and attacked it as the official promises failed to meet the real needs of people's lives. (Moylan, 1986)

On the eve of the French Revolution, ideal architectural forms, disquisition on sexuality, property, and equality cropped up all over the place in a utopian format. A Babel of utopias trumpeted in the Revolution. Its many tongues were the education of party chiefs, but however radically the visions may have differed from one another, into the eighteenth century utopia was still framed in terms of an agrarian society. (Manuel and Manuel, 1979)

By the second half of the 1800s, writers who opposed to what existed could no longer look to an alternative located in the present time; therefore —instead of islands— their visions were located in a future time when the process of revolutionary, historical change brought about the utopian society. Moylan (1986) states that,

> [f]aced with this shift to a concern for everyday values and consideration of the revolutionary process, the number and influence of utopias increased immensely at the turn of the century, at a time when a variety of social movements were forging a common opposition to the fast developing power of industrial capitalism and imperialism.

Farmers, industrial workers, women, racial and ethnic majorities, intellectuals, feminists, socialists, communists, anarchists, syndicalists, populists, free love and

temperance advocates, spiritualists, and many others shared a general rejection of the dominant system. (Moylan, 1986)

However, by the 1920s the corporate power structure had succeeded in securing control over industrial society and in repressing and coopting most forms of opposition. Radical utopian visions and political practice failed in the battle to control the direction of the developing economic, political and ideological systems. Utopia has been absorbed into the totalizing systems of Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, and the corporate United States. Each of these formations has contained and coopted utopia into the maintenance of the given system. Stimulated but unfulfilled desires are deleted and channelled into the service of the state or the consumer paradises like Disneyland or shopping malls. Longing beyond the commodity-defined needs was suppressed and indeed questioned as being psychologically or socially aberrant. (Moylan, 1986)

On the other hand, as the socialist state or the consumer society claimed to have achieved utopia, a more radical critique emerged as dystopia, the narrative that images a society worse than the existing one. Nevertheless, if dystopian vision shocks or frightens, it may also help imagine the future in a fresh and original manner, beyond the possibilities sketched out in the plot. Dystopia is, therefore, a counter image of utopia, now compromised and distorted, and at the same time, a generator of new utopian speculations (Klaic, 1991). As Manual and Manual (1979) argue, "[i]f in the background of every utopia there is an anti-utopia, the existing world seen through the critical eyes of the utopia-composer, one might say conversely that in the background of many a dystopia there is a secret utopia."

Unfortunately dystopian narrative has been recruited into the ideological attack on utopic expression. The open pastures of alternative possibilities were enclosed by the steady encroachment of state and corporate control. Utopia became a residual literary form, and dystopia was re contained and enlisted as proof of the uselessness of utopian desire. The experiences of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the gradually revealed horrors of the Gulag, a whole chain of sinister events, political processes, wars, famines and mass terrors, all together created a feeling, shared by many, that utopia is an absurdity, that it does not make sense even as an abstract concept (Kateb, 1966). Blueprints that once seemingly projected happy, harmonious, and affluent communities of the future were reinterpreted as the models of authoritarian and hierarchical societies—not only static and uniform, but boring and oppressive (Klaic, 1991). The moral critique of utopia culminated in Popper's (1989) stance that an implemented utopia would be a model totalitarian state, that every utopian dream contains a nucleus of totalitarianism. However, after the social upheavals of the 1960s, by the influence of SF and experimental fiction, utopian writing was given new life as "critical utopia"; a new form that preserved both the subversive imaging of utopian society and radical negativity of dystopian perception (Moylan, 1986).

The critical utopia became a part of the political practice and visions shared by a variety of autonomous oppositional movements that reject the domination of the emerging system of transnational corporations and post industrial production and ideological structures. Moylan (1986) notes that the new opposition is deeply infused with the politic of autonomy, democratic socialism, ecology and especially feminism. Whatever the particular set of social images each writer sets forth, the

shared quality in most of them is a rejection of hierarchy and domination and the celebration of emancipatory ways of being, as well as the very possibility of utopian longing itself. (Moylan, 1986)

The apologists of capitalism who see it as the most rational system in both its material and spiritual dimensions attempt to extend this rationality to the future and the predictive imagination, turning utopia into a scientific problem that can be solved with the right kind of know-how. Thus the scientization of the future becomes one of the last twists of utopian, or rather pseudo-utopian, thought. Fred Polak defends the status of the future as a meaningful project. In *The Image of the Future* (1955) he argues that the West is losing the future orientation that has for centuries been its main engine for development and change.

In the last decades of this century, the debate on the human future has been expanded from the traditional and exclusive realms of arts, literature, philosophy and sociology, and has been thrown into the interdisciplinary arena of future studies —futurology and futuristics. Futurologists, with sweeping predictions of major trends, offer a rosy picture of unarrested growth, based on new technologies, while at the same time ignoring or subterfuging its social and cultural consequences. (Klaic, 1991)

In addition to scientific debate about the shape of the future, its image remains determined for many by religious beliefs. As Manual and Manual argue (1979), two ancient beliefs moulded and nurtured utopia —the Judeo-Christian faith in a paradise created with the world and destined to endure beyond it, and the Hellenic

myth of an ideal, beautiful city built by men for men without the assistance and often in defiance of the gods—were deeply embedded in the consciousness of Europeans. Old eschatological concepts cohabit in the contemporary consciousness with notions of scientific progress. The collective suicide in the Guyana jungle by members of a religious commune, instigated by its leader, is convincing proof that the millenarian idea of the future has not been defeated by secular alternatives. While utopia could not be sustained as an idea, credible concept, or project, millenarian scenarios had a chance—with their "characteristic mix of catastrophe and salvation, suffering and bliss" (Klaic, 1991).

Every utopia, rooted as it is in time and place, is bound to reproduce the stage scenery of its particular world as well as its preoccupation with contemporary social problems. Utopias avail themselves of the existing equipment of a society, perhaps its most advanced models, prettified and rearranged. As Manual and Manual claim (1979), often a utopian foresees the later evolution and consequences of technological development already present in an embryonic state; he may have antennae sensitive to the future. If utopias are classified by the style of their furniture, sociological and historical, and the style is related to a contemporary social reality, the utopia can be studied as a reflection of the specific crises that it presumes to resolve. Present day utopians are trying to cope with the anxieties and potentialities of what has been called post industrial society.

2.2 EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF SCIENCE FICTION

> SCIENCE FICTION IS DEFINED MANY WAYS , BUT AS LONG AS WE RETAINED THE NAME, IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO INSIST ON SOME RELATION TO SCIENCE: THAT IS, THE MAN'S WAYS OF COMING TO KNOW HIMSELF AND HIS ENVIRONMENT THROUGH OBSERVATION, HYPOTHESIS, AND EXPERIMENT.
>
> BRIAN ATTEBURY, IN *SCIENCE FANTASY*, 1981

Most critics agree that SF was born in the nineteenth century, indicating the appearance of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818 as the birth date of the new genre. Besides this strong thesis, there also are some other critics who argue that prototypes of modern SF was originated by the Enlightenment. In order to identify the discursive features of SF genre, we need to explore the culturological matrix from which it sprang.

The Industrial Revolution changed the face of Europe; technology became an object of fascination, a guarantor of a happy future of abundance and comfort, of wealth to be made and multiplied. Technology acquired the status of a millenarian agent. Scientists, journalists, politicians, and literati were tirelessly promising a future of bliss made possible by the technological application of scientific discoveries (Klaic, 1991). The future of gadgets and mechanical trinkets was, surely, to be a future of harmony, health, happiness, and sufficient nutrition.

In Edward Bellamy's *Looking Forward* (1888), Boston in the year 2000 is primarily shown to be a civilized and dignified place where all the squalor, malaise, and suffering of the nineteenth-century city life have been replaced by simple comfort,

and the most rational life-style of all. Klaic argues that, with Bellamy, there is an awareness that the industrial progress in itself does not bring human happiness, but that a major readjustment of society is necessary in order to capitalise, in human terms, on the technological progress achieved and the ensuing industrial productivity. Technology was not a goal in itself but rather a means to achieve a well-ordered and enlightened community of the future. In the nineteenth-century, images of the future came mainly from scientific circles and from science-inspired literature (Klaic, 1991). In *Foundations of Science Fiction* (1987), Pierce declares:

> Just as the inner ear provides a sense of physical balance, so an integrated world-view seems necessary to a sense of spiritual balance. Once, religion had offered such a world-view; once, science sought the same.

The 1880s witnessed a deep crisis in England, which was named "Great Depression" —a fitting label for the general state of malaise and pessimism. The profound changes in the social structure, the violent process of urbanization, the effects of the Industrial Revolution on the countryside, the damage wrought on the ecology, the new means of production being implemented and, above all, the absolute triumph of technology —all of these played a part in creating a sense of unease and fear. In this climate of profound certainty, of a loss of faith in the automatic process of capitalism, the myth of apocalypse began to be re-thought and re-utilized, and by all means has undergone in the SF genre.

As Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) have shown in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one of the distinguishing characteristics of Enlightenment thought is the wholesale alienation of humanity from Nature, the reformulation of Nature as something threatening "out there", that needs to be analysed rationally and systematically

and thereby mastered. The whole idea of "natural law" represents one way to domesticate and harness Nature. The Industrial Revolution, itself in part a production of the Enlightenment, remade the everyday world in the nineteenth century. The ever-more-apparent evidence of social and technological change necessarily registered on humanity at large, which saw in these developments an ever-increasing command over Nature and natural forces (Malmgren, 1991). This new view of the relation between humanity and Nature is one of the preconditions for SF. James Gunn (1986) states:

> Not until the facts of change created by man through his growing control over nature and the possibility of controlling change became apparent to perceptive men and then to most men...did science fiction become possible, that is, somewhat after the Industrial Revolution, generally dated around 1750.

McConnell (1981) argues that, besides its far-reaching effects on Western man's whole sense of time, the growth of scientific historiography had an immediate and decisive effect upon social analysis, and revolutionary theory. "If the future could be extrapolated from the structures of the past, it could also be planned, and planned in accordance with the "true", "natural", or "ideal" shape of a human society as discerned beneath the failed experiments of previous cultures" (McConnell, 1981).

SF is predicated upon a world-view which takes for granted that the future will be different from the present, that there exists a spectrum of possible futures, all with their germs in the present, and that articulation of one of those possibilities can be of real value. SF, in Suvin's (1976) definition, "sees the norms of any age, including emphatically its own, as unique, changeable, and therefore subject to a cognitive view". Because this world-view was not firmly in place until the nineteenth century, SF is a relatively modern phenomenon (Malmgren, 1991).

We have to articulate the narrative assumptions and discursive features entailed by a world-view predicated upon scientific rationalism, linear time, and the inevitability of historical change. The genre as a whole accepts the validity of scientific epistemology and the applicability of the scientific method to the study of the external world. In the world of SF, thinking about the future, whether in the form of historical planning, scientific forecast, or futuristic fiction, is a kind of protest against being time-bound in the present, and it expresses humanity's determination to control its environment and direct its own destiny. (Malmgren, 1991)

2.3 DISCUSSION OF SCIENCE FICTION

SF, which was born as a literary genre, spreaded to other forms of popular culture, and has become a substantial mode of thinking in daily life. Cinema, comics, commercials, video clips, employ SF motifs and images. At our age one can not easily tell whether the thing he/she witnesses is a fact or a SF fantasy. Clone animals, micro-technology, genetic decoding of the human body, artificially intelligent computers and such developments in science and technology embody the potential to originate radical changes which will transform the ways we live.

Before going into the analyses of SF films, it is beneficial to discuss various aspects and methods of SF. Suvin argues for a definition of SF as the *literature of cognitive estrangement* (1976). He points that the use of estrangement both as underlying

attitude and formal device is found also in the *myth*, a ritual and religious approach looking its own way beneath the empirical surface. However, SF sees the norms of any age as unique, changeable, and therefore subject to a *cognitive* glance. Suvin (1976) notes:

> The myth is diametrically opposed to the cognitive approach since it conceives human relations as fixed, and supernaturally determined. The myth absolutizes and even personifies apparently constant motifs from the sluggish periods with low social dynamics. Where the myth claims to explain once and for all the essence of phenomena, SF posits them first as problems and then explores where they lead to; it sees the mythical static identity as an illusion, usually as a fraud, in the best case only as a temporary realisation of potentially limitless contingencies. It does not ask about The Man or The World, but which man? in which kind of world? and why such a man in such kind of world?

SF is, then, a genre of which necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and of which main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the artist's empirical environment (Suvin, 1976).

Both SF and mainstream postmodernist fiction possess repertoires of strategies and motifs designed to raise and explore ontological issues (McHale, 1992). While epistemologically oriented fiction (modernism, detective fiction) is preoccupied with questions such as: what is there to know about the world? Who knows it, and how reliably? How knowledge is transmitted, to whom, and how reliably? etc.; ontologically-oriented fiction (Postmodernism, SF) is preoccupied with questions such as: what is a world? How is a world constituted? How do different worlds, and different kinds of world, differ, and what happens when one passes from one world to another? etc. (McHale, 1992).

SF is a tool for demystifying myths of the modern life. It attempts to deconstruct the moulds of the human mythology, which remain untouched for thousands of

years. According to Suvin (1979), this stand is highly important for the liberation question of mankind. He opposes to the sociologists who approve myths because of their pragmatical functions, and philosophers and theologists who embrace myths as an aggregate that binds the society. He argues that such an attitude will cause humanity to degenerate culturally. Most SF products attempt to make people aware that, despite all problems, mankind has the capability to convert itself into a better nature. It is absurd to expect prophetical forecasting from SF genre. SF can only offer new perspectives to change conventional perceptions towards our lives and the world.

2.3.1 THE METHODS OF SCIENCE FICTION

Malmgren (1988), suggests that an account of the genre's history in the twentieth century might be structured around the swaying between two modes or types of SF world-building: "extrapolation" and "speculation." Extrapolative SF begins with the current state of the empirical world, in particular the current state of scientific knowledge, and proceeds, in logical and linear fashion, to construct a world which might be a future extension or consequence of the current state of affairs. Speculative world-building, by contrast, involves an imaginative leap, positing one or more disjunctions with the empirical world which cannot be linearly extrapolated from the current state of affairs. Worlds constructed by extrapolation stand in a metonymic relation to the current empirical world, while worlds constructed by speculation stand in a metaphorical or analogical relation to it. Naturally, these two modes of SF world-building are not mutually exclusive. That

is, extrapolation and speculation can coexist in the same text, and certainly in the same period of SF history, though in every case one of the two modes is likely to be relatively more salient or central than the other.

In generating a SF world, the artist may proceed by extrapolation, creating a fictional novum by logical projection or extension from existing actualities; or he/she may rely on speculation. Extrapolation is basically a logical and linear process. The artist accepts the current state of scientific knowledge, projects from it either in time or space, and tries to imagine and articulate the resultant situation and conditions. The trouble is, scientific "facts" won't stay put. Extrapolative SF has sometimes been labelled the "if this goes on" variety, while speculative SF is contrasted as more of the "what if" variety. Speculation is a more creative or freer mental operation in that, the artist who chooses to speculate is cut loose from the current state of affairs. A speculative artist can assume new scientific principles or make innovative hypotheses as long as they do not contravene existing scientific principles or laws and are inscribed within a naturalizing discourse. The limits of a speculative SF world can also be defined as Patrick Parrinder points:

> **Any meaningful act of defamiliarization can only be relative, since it is not possible for man to imagine what is utterly alien to him; the utterly alien would also be meaningless. To give meaning to something is also, inescapably, to humanize it or to bring it within the bounds of our anthropomorphic world-view (Cited in Malmgren, 1991).**

The extrapolative model is based on direct, temporal extrapolation and centred on sociological (i.e. utopian or dystopian) modelling. Suvin (1976) notes that, this is where the great majority of the "new maps of hell" belongs for which post-war SF is justly famous, in all its manifold combinations of socio-technological scientific

cognition and anti-cognitive social oppression (global catastrophes, cybernetic take-overs, dictatorships).

Whatever its ostensible location (future, other planets, alternative universes), extrapolative modelling is oriented futurologically. SF can be used as a handmaiden of futurological foresight in technology, ecology, sociology, etc. For Suvin (1976), "[w]hereas this may be a legitimate secondary function the genre can be made to bear, any oblivion of its strict secondariness usually leads to confusion and indeed danger." Ontologically, art is not pragmatic truth nor fiction fact.

The analogical model (speculation) in SF is based on analogy rather than extrapolation. Its figures may but not have to be anthropomorphic or its localities geomorphic. The objects, figures, and up to a point the relationships from which this indirectly modelled world starts can be quite fantastic, as long as they are logically, philosophically and mutually consistent.

Another classification may appear in reference to the sciences in which the fictional novum is grounded. That is, we understand by "hard SF" that species rooted in the hard sciences —those dealing with "objective" data, whose results or findings are predictable, repeatable, and verifiable, such as physics, chemistry, or biology— and we understand by "soft SF" those fictions based on the "soft" sciences —those whose findings are more "subjective", probabilistic, less subject to predication and verification, such as anthropology, sociology or psychology. Hard SF, relying on the extrapolative mode, tends to endorse wholeheartedly the basic premises of the physical sciences, "that the universe could be understood by an organized

application of observation and thought." Whereas Soft SF tends to deal with the problems of human consciousness and identity and that it not frequently locates itself in alternate worlds and dimensions and therefore relies more on visionary or speculative modes of world building (Malmgren, 1991).

2.3.2 THE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION

The first step in defining the worlds of SF, is to determine the components of a fictional universe in general. We can say that a fictional universe invariably consists of two major components or systems, a world and a story. The former includes the total repertoire of possible fictional entities, that is, the characters, settings, and objects that occupy the imaginal space of fiction. The story connects and combines the various entities that make up the world (like the time-travel story, the post-holocaust story, the gadget story, or the alien-encounter story). But the generic distinctiveness of SF lies not in its story but in its world. In order to understand the nature of SF and its cognitive possibilities, we must examine the unique configuration of its worlds. A SF world consists of a number of actants who populate, occupy, or exist in certain implicit or particularized topoi (Malmgren, 1991).

Realistic or naturalistic fiction, Samuel Delany (Cited in Malmgren, 1991) says, exists at a level of subjunctivity defined by the phrase *could have happened.* Other forms of fiction exist at other levels of subjunctivity: the mood for fantasy fiction, for example, is "*could have not happened*" - he identifies the mood of SF as "*has*

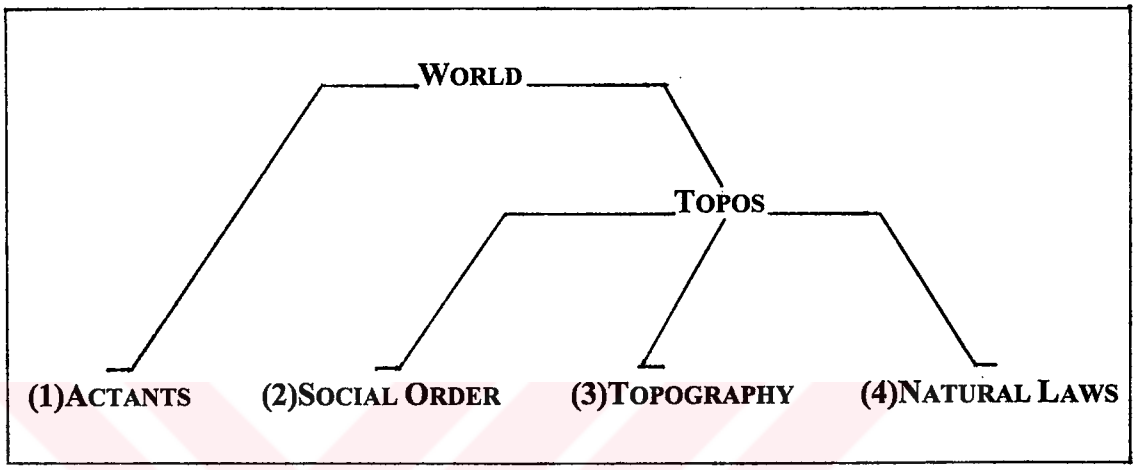
not happened". Ursula LeGuin (1969), in the prologue for *The Left Hand of Darkness*, refers to the disjunction between SF and basic narrative worlds as the product of a "thought experiment", and Robert Scholes (1977) asserts that SF creates its worlds by means of a "representational discontinuity". The artist who inscribes a SF world is cut loose from some of the exigencies of mimesis; he/she is free to speculate, to fabulate, to invent. Once the artist has posited the representational discontinuity, the discursive rules dictate that the artist adhere thereafter to the laws of Nature and the assumptions of the scientific method (such as validity of cause and effect, or the irreversibility of time). The SF artist must provide a scientific rationale for the discontinuities that he/she introduces into the fictional world. As Bester, a SF author, puts it, "You cannot contravene a known and accepted principle of science unless you have a logical explanation based on other known and accepted principles" (Cited in Malmgren, 1991).

2.3.3 A MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF SCIENCE FICTIONAL WORLDS

Drawing on the principles and distinctions made in the previous section Malmgren (1991) constructs a model for SF worlds. A fictional world consists of a set of "actants" who exist continuously in an implicit or particularized "topos". The latter includes both the topography, through which actants move, and the social system, which structures their interactions and inform their behaviour. In addition, both the configuration of those topoi and the morphology of the actants presuppose an operative system of natural laws. A world, then, is composed of four

interlocking and inter-animating sets of systems, as shown in the following diagram (Table 2.1):

Table 2.1 Sets of systems which shape SF worlds



SF is characterized by the introduction of a novum into one of these four systems, a factor of estrangement which transforms the basic narrative world into a SF world. This factor may be introduced into any of the four systems. For that matter there might be more than one such factor; a particular fiction might be characterized by actantial, societal, and topological transformations. Within a SF world one set of transformations, by virtue of its precedence, instrumentality, or centrality, takes priority over the others (Malmgren, 1991).

The transformation of the system of actants involves the introduction of an alien entity into a system that is totally human in realistic fiction. The story paradigm for fiction using this transformation would be an encounter with an alien. In general, the fiction tends to broach the question, "what is it to be a human" and the

cognitive thrust involves a better understanding of Self and Other (Malmgren, 1991).

SF presents the reader with a societal novum when it locates its story within an estranged or alternative social order. The story paradigm here typically entails the excursion to a utopic or dystopic elsewhere, a "brave new world" or a "new map of hell" and the reader is invited and encouraged to make comparisons between the fictional society and the originary one and to establish normative frameworks. The basic thrust of this SF type is toward better understanding of the dialectic between Self and Society. It is also true that the majority of these fictions are extrapolative in function, perhaps because it is difficult to imagine a social order that is essentially Other (Malmgren, 1991).

The third type of transformation involves the insertion of a novum into the topological domain of fiction. Here we must distinguish between possible levels of transformation. If we understand the topos of a fiction to include the physical settings and the objects then a topological estrangement can be effected at either level. At the local level, the estrangement occurs when a new and revolutionary object (gadget, invention, discovery) is postulated. In general gadget SF takes as its basic subject the possibilities and dangers of the products of technology. By its very nature, it explores the relation between man and machine, between Self and Technology. For the purpose of the topology, we must distinguish between a simple gadget story and what might at first be mistaken for a gadget story, namely, one which introduces an invention or process which in turn catalyzes a metamorphosis in a society or in the human condition. There is, however, another level of possible

topological estrangement which corresponds to that of gadget SF, the global level of an imaginary landscape, a new planet, or an alien topography. Here the artist posits, not an innovative object within a familiar world but an entire world itself. The world may be our own Earth, transformed by catastrophe or cataclysm or into a strange and foreboding environment, or it may be a totally natural imaginary world. In general, alternate world fiction addresses questions dealing with the relation of humanity to its physical environment, such as how the environment shapes and conditions all forms of life, how humanity adapt itself in order to accommodate new environments, or how humanist might remake or modify alien environments in order to make them amenable to human existence (Malmgren, 1991).

Actants, social system, and topography all presuppose a system of natural laws which in general remain consistent and universal in all SF property. The final world-transformation, involving as it does the universal natural laws which subtend the genre and inform its discourse, results in an "impure" SF form called "science fantasy". Science fantasy is created when a novum is inserted into the system of natural laws or into the scientific epistemology. It assumes an orderly universe with regular and discernible laws but allows at least one violation of the laws derived from the current state of science. A science fantasy world is predicated on the violation or contravention of five different kinds of "scientific givens": the epistemology of the science itself, an accepted scientific theory, an accepted scientific fact, a given historical fact, or "natural" actantial possibility. A science fantasy violates the epistemology of science when it presumes that magic is the operative discipline in humanity's relation with the external world; it violates

scientific theory when it explicitly ignores basic scientific principles (such as the unidirectionality and irreversibility of time); it reverses a given scientific fact; finally it violates actantial possibility by introducing a counter natural into the system of actants, an entity whose morphology, powers, or existence itself contravenes scientific possibility. In taking on the laws and principles which we take for granted, it tends to ask ultimate philosophical questions having to do with the nature of reality itself, and about the discourses in which we inscribe reality (Malmgren, 1991).

The model, presented above, can accommodate the seemingly inexhaustible and admittedly multifarious forms that SF takes, because it is rooted in an elaboration of fictional worlds. The model lumps together SF motifs which are elsewhere treated as separate storylines or "icons". For example, SF worlds featuring computers, aliens, robots, monsters, mutants or clones are uncovered to have as a common denominator a structure involving the encounter between Self and Other (e.g. Other-as-Enemy, Other-as-Object or Other-as-Other). The model also enables us to specify differences that were perhaps indistinct. While one of the stories having similar themes, may focus on the extrapolated society, examining the relation between Self and Society, the other may focus on the extrapolated world itself, foregrounding the interplay between Self and Environment. The distinction, thus, helps us to analyse these SF works. Table 2.2 (Malmgren, 1991) shows the typology of SF literature constructed according to this model:

Table 2.2 A typology of SF Literature

WORLD COMPONENT	NOVUM	SF TYPE	REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES		THEMES
			EXTRAPOLATIVE	SPECULATIVE	
ACTANT	Alien/ Monster	Alien Encounter	Shelley, Frankenstein	Lem, Solaris	Self/Other
SOCIAL ORDER	Utopia/ Dystopia	Alternate Society	Zamiatin, We	Dhelany, Dhalgren	Self/Society
TOPOS:					
OBJECT	Invention/ Discovery	Gadget SF	Asimov, I, Robot	Strugatskys, Roadside Picnic	Self/ Technology
PLANET	Catastrophe/ Alien Landscape	Alternate World	Niven, Ringworld	Dick, Ubik	Self/ Environment
NATURAL LAW:					
SCIENCE	Magic/ Occultism		Leiber, Conjure Wife		
THEORY	Time Looping		Heinlein, All You Zombies		
SCIENTIFIC FACT	Reversal/ Denial	Science Fantasy	Bradbury, Martian Chronicles		Epistemology and Ontology
HISTORICAL FACT	Reversal/ Denial		Dick, Man in High Castle		
NATURAL ACTANT	Counternatural Actant		Sturgeon, More Than Human		

This model can be carried into architectural experimentation. The architect may insert likely or unexpected variety in the design scenario, which will induce design decisions. The aim of the experiment determine the selection of the type of variety out of SF world components listed above. For example, cyberspace can be articulated as a bodily transformation of the actants, as a societal transformation, or as an alien topography in which natural laws are totally altered. The combinations of the components seem inexhaustible.

2.4 THE CULTURAL INSTRUMENTALITIES OF SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

How do the narrative and spectacle, in their transformation and their interrelation, intersect with the cultural instrumentalities of SF cinema? How, in other words, do changes in the textual conventions of the genre relate to broader socio-cultural contexts? According to Kuhn (1990), the cultural instrumentalities may be classified fivefold:

1. **SF Films are *reflections* of social trends and attitudes of their time, mirroring the preoccupations of the historical moment in which the films are made. In this reflectionist model, films are treated as, in a sense, sociological evidence.**
2. **SF Films relate to the social order through the mediation of *ideologies*, society's representations of itself in and for itself —that films speak, enact, even produce certain ideologies, which cannot always be read directly off films' surface contents.**

3. SF Films voice cultural repressions in *unconscious* textual processes which, like the dreams, associations, and bodily symptoms of psychological patients, require interpretation in order to reveal the meanings hidden in them.

4. What SF films do to and for their *spectators* —the sorts of pleasures they evoke and the fantasies they activate.

5. SF Films are actively involved in a whole network of *interests*, of cultural meanings and social discourses.

2.5 THE COMMON THEMES OF RECENT SCIENCE FICTION FILMS

Franklin (1990) states that SF is a central organ of Anglo-American imagination, pumping its content into many cultural forms. Therefore fluctuating visions of the future in SF films can directly be associated with the sociological, technological or political transformations that the West undergoes. Radical technological transformations which may alter human perception and ability is knocking on the door. Whereas some SF films envision these developments as a progress that would change mankind's destination in a positive direction by transforming man into a godlike creature who will have the power to control his destiny; most SF films discuss pessimistic pictures, which argue that mankind will become slave of the beast (the technology oriented socio-political megastructure) he/she has created.

1980s witnessed a growth in apocalyptic future visions. Ever since the influential *Blade Runner,* identical films has not ceased cropping up. The pessimism, brought

about with the economical crisis, anxiety of the cold war between two main ideological blocks (and then, the failure of communism as a viable alternative), rise of the New Right politics, unrelenting inventions on weapon technology industries, new wars, ever-increasing destruction of the Nature, cruel late-capitalist plans, rise of new religions and sects, was naturally reflected into the SF cinema. Where the rationale is incapable of generating alternative secular type of visions, myth and religion would instantly intervene. Myth of Apocalypse is once again on the scene. Not as a pure form, but as a mixture of both rational-secular and mythical-religious elements. Fortunati (1993) claims that this mixture can be examined as the basis of utopian thought. He outlines the recurring characteristics of Apocalyptic paradigm, which seem quite relevant for the evaluation of recent SF films:

1. Apocalypse is an elastic, flexible myth that has been modified in successive periods of history. (i.e. Multiple and various recurrence of Antichrist figure)
2. Apocalypse is a dual-myth with a bipolar internal structure of positive and negative elements. (i.e. Death vs. Birth, Terror and Decadence vs. Hope and Regeneration)
3. Apocalypse has three basic elements: Destruction, Judgement, and Regeneration.
4. The *End* may take on various nuances: total (end of the world), curving back upon itself, or a liberating one (real regeneration).
5. Apocalypse lays bare deep-rooted, timeless fears such as, the fear of the powers of the Nature or the fear of death.

6. **Apocalypse functions internally rather than externally, as something at hand rather than *other*.**

7. **Apocalypse exposes the aesthetics of the sublime.**

Fashionable catastrophism, the mass-marketed apocalyptism, the horror/fear/ danger supermarket of the mass culture (i.e. Sci-fi myths and iconography, earthly disasters) which are run by a vulgar pseudo-utopia, are just part of the repertory of themes and motifs that occur incessantly in popular fiction, film, and television programs. Their impact is to strengthen the status quo; these popular themes compare the present state of affairs, as bad as it might be, with the dangerous, threatening otherness of tomorrow. Fortunati (1993) says, "The Apocalypse is no longer feared; it is desired. It is no longer fought against; it is embraced. It has become a goal, an ambition, a means to fulfilment." From the purifying function of the apocalyptic vision, we pass to the terrifying hopelessness and nihilism of a total end, or of the apocalyptic cycle that negate the possibility of motion in space or time.

As was discussed earlier, the ideas of the future in twentieth century are expressed in more dystopian than utopian terms. Some utopian fantasies, often of a trivial and simpleminded sort, remain in SF, where mythologies of conquest, of technological and military triumph on earth and far out in space, still abound. But even in this branch of fantasy genre, dystopian developments prevail (Klaic, 1991).

Glass (1990) places most of the recent SF films in "New Bad Future"(NBF) trend. NBF films tell stories about a future in the grip of feverish social decay. While some

posit a post-nuclear barbarism (as in the Mad Max trilogy), most (e.g., Blade Runner, Alien/s) envision the world without such an apocalyptic break with history. The NBF scenario typically embraces urban expansion on a monstrous scale, where real estate capital has realized its fondest dreams of cancerous growth. The heroes by themselves, or with rebellious groups, go up against the corruption and power of the authoritarian corporations, which exercise a media-based velvet glove/iron fist social control. Human/machine interfaces figure prominently, often through androids or cyborgs didactically presented as characters who are "more human than human". Indeed, central to the question of what is human, moral, political and philosophical discourses prevail. (Glass, 1990)

Kuhn (1990) declares that new themes are referred to in writings on recent SF cinema. For example the genre's long-standing preoccupation with narratives involving masculine mastery over Nature and creation currently manifests itself in stories involving the "birthing" of human substitutes by corporations rather than by the Frankenstein/Mad scientist villains of earlier films (*Alien*, 1979; *Blade Runner*, 1982). The old SF exposition of human and non-human is also transformed when boundaries between the "one" and the "other" or as "potentially monstrous" (*The Thing*, 1982; *The Fly*, 1986): it is no longer assumed that human beings are superior to humanoid machines or alien creatures. To this extent, the human technologies which create humanoids, and discover and investigate alien creatures are revealed as dreadfully flawed (The *Terminator*, 1984): in such circumstances aliens, far from menacing humankind may hold out a promise of redemption (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 1977). Other familiar themes taken up and reworked in recent SF films include the structure and

organization of future and other societies; power in these fictional worlds is typically constituted as invisible but all-pervasive, institutional rather than personal, corporate rather than governmental (*Alien*, 1979; *Aliens*, 1986).

Visions of the future that extrapolate contemporary trends to envision their possible consequences have long been a part of cultural and political discourse and debate. Computers, genetic engineering, corporate capitalism, high tech industry and new ways of production, dehumanization and helplessness are inevitable key words to carry on contemporary SF speculations. No matter how various the visions may be, technology always remain right in the centre of the discussion as the determining factor. Whether smooth or radical, technology is always presented as an inevitable component to shape humanity's future. Hollywood's attitude to technology can be very well summarized in the words of the *Blade Runner*'s protagonist: "Replicants are like any other machine. They can be a benefit or a hazard". When the film concludes with the happy marriage of humans and machines, it suggests that there should be a mediation between technology and human values (Ryan and Kellner, 1990).

Nevertheless in some other films like the new series of the famous *Star Trek*, technology never is a burden, but a master that helped humankind to overcome racial, national, class or gender conflicts. The crew of the glossy tech spaceship are uniformly assimilated into a white Anglo-American heterosexual male that obeys the rules and orders of his master to save the universe that needs megalomaniac values of these perfect creatures. In many regards, what films like *Alien* and *Blade Runner* criticize, *Star Trek* mythicizes and justifies by representing an entirely

different vision of the capitalist future (Byers, 1990). In films like Mad Max series, the absence of technology after a holocaust is represented as a desert-like place where you have to kill to survive. A place where technological trash is the only source that they can utilise. As has always been a basic element of the genre, technology, keeps on fortifying its kingdom in SF, at the current condition that ideologies keep disengaging with the current agenda.

The great majority of recent SF films utilise the means to portray the present. This approach may appear either as myth-empowering or cognitive manners. Besides the absolute apocalyptic visioning, some partially pseudo-apocalyptic visions also exist. Another approach, which is called cyberpunk, celebrates what others criticise. They usually view the latest technology as a tool for overcoming our fundamental dilemmas. As long as these stay away from simple techno-romanticism, they constitute the mere cognitive glance into the future. They argue that, beyond personal heroic opposition, we may possess a united power to fight against abuse of technology and enslavement, with the help of new technologies. Cyberspace is viewed as a brand new landscape of freedom and growth, as long as people keep on resisting against its misuse.

Further discussion of these themes stated above will reappear in the following chapter where recent SF films will be analysed within categories to decipher visions and messages they reside.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS IN RECENT SCIENCE FICTION FILMS

3.1 REPRESENTATION OF URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS IN SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

> ARCHITECTURE FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, HAS HAD TWO PURPOSES: ON THE ONE HAND, THE PURELY UTILITARIAN ONE OF AFFORDING WARMTH OF SHELTER, ON THE OTHER, THE POLITICAL ONE OF IMPRESSING AN IDEA UPON MANKIND BY MEANS OF THE SPLENDOUR OF ITS EXPRESSION IN STONE.
>
> BERTRAND RUSSEL
>
> ARCHITECTURE IS A FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE
>
> GOETHE

Where is the future? How will it be built? One way of taking up these questions would be to follow the representation of architectural within the films that seek to project the future. The primordality of relation means that, what will remain as an ineliminable part of any built future is its architecture. From the architectural perspective, the difficulty of thinking the future does not lie in a lack of imagination or capacity for futural projection, it is rather that the future and therefore its being thought will always need to be undertaken in relation to the

present and, furthermore, to be seen as a condition of the present (Benjamin, 1994). Therefore, alterity here will always be different from projected utopias. On this account, the possibility of a pure utopia, a place outside of all relation, is an impossibility.

Sobchack (1988) draws attention to another remarkable point, that becomes a substantial concern in evaluating the iconography of SF films. She argues that, as a result of mass production, the accretions of time, and the dialectics of history and archetype, characters, situations and actions can have an emblematic power. Since these elements of visual content appear again and again in film after film, they become visual conventions or icons, pictorial codes which are a graphic shorthand understood by both filmmaker and the audience. For example, we can say that aliens—or simple differing strangers— are a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. This mirror is not merely a reflecting one, but it is also a transforming one.

Sobchack (1988) argues that the visual connection between all SF films lies in the consistent and repetitious use not of *specific* images, not of *types* of images which function in the same way from film to film to create an imaginatively realized world which is always removed from the world we know or we know of. The visual surface of all SF films presents us with a confrontation between mixture of those images to which we respond as "alien" and those we know to be familiar.

Yet another inspiration to be considered in an architectural evaluation of SF films is the depiction of the "body" (Benjamin, 1994). The presence of the body —the

body within the architectural body as well as within the body of the film— will need to be taken up. The question hinges on what it is that is being maintained and how the analogy between architecture and body is structured by this change. These questions constitute a focal discussion especially in evaluation of cyber-space films. As architects we have to keep in mind that, the body and the physical laws frame our profession.

Albrecht (1986) declares that architects have long been involved in the world of cinema; in particular, in the 20's and 30's when architects were trying to promote the Modern Movement through the pictures. Future cities, whether utopias or dystopias, appeared infrequently in films —and only in the context of the fantasy genre— then; but when they did, set designers not only had to prepare the usual interior and exterior decors, but had also to develop a complete urban environment, including plans for streets, large scale buildings, and public transportation systems. Most important, the design had to reflect the ideology of the future society that was the film's subject, whether that of a peaceful, rational civilisation or of a cruel, mechanised autocracy. Whether conservative or progressive, their alternatives represented, in essence, popular culture's own hopes and fears of the technological present: How the city (and consequently humankind) would evolve would depend on how carefully its growth —and the growth of technology itself— could be controlled (Albrecht, 1963). Nowadays we are going through a similar radical technological (and subsequently sociological) transformation which will justify the popularity of the genre.

Although SF genre immediately brings stars and space-ships to mind, the City is the only appropriate landscape for SF. Because they are the birthplace and motivation of technology; they are the most artificial of landscapes. As Mumford (1966) argues, the city itself was the first Utopia. Yes there is life outside of the city, but it is eventually subservient to it. In other words, that landscape is human-shaped as well. That is not much different from the reality of the European landscape. Escape from the city will not be easy after all. The claustrophobic feeling in European SF has geographical roots, which Thomas sees deeper than the political ones (1989). He declares:

> Cities share a basic dilemma for human condition: we need language to understand the world, and yet resent the limitations to our thought imposed by its categories; we need cities to inhabit the world, and resent the power implicit in their structures... Throw away the city, and rationality disappears altogether.

Cities represented in SF films have to introduce both a complete urban environment that should reinforce the vision of the hypothetical future, and spaces that would be compatible with the requirements of the scenography.

We can argue that the first major film in SF film genre in that sense was *Metropolis* by Lang. Lang exposed a reaction to modern art and architecture in Germany. He defined himself as a visual person. His influential film *Metropolis* manifested significant architectural statements. Albrecht (1986) states that the city of *Metropolis* expressed all the magic and romance that modernism's most visionary architects and theoreticians had foreseen for an urban setting (Fig.3.1). Never before had the future of architecture been represented in such a powerful and realistic way. For the first time, not only did the set designers have to design the usual interiors and exteriors, but also had to develop a complete environment which as well as being practical, had to portray the ideology of the future

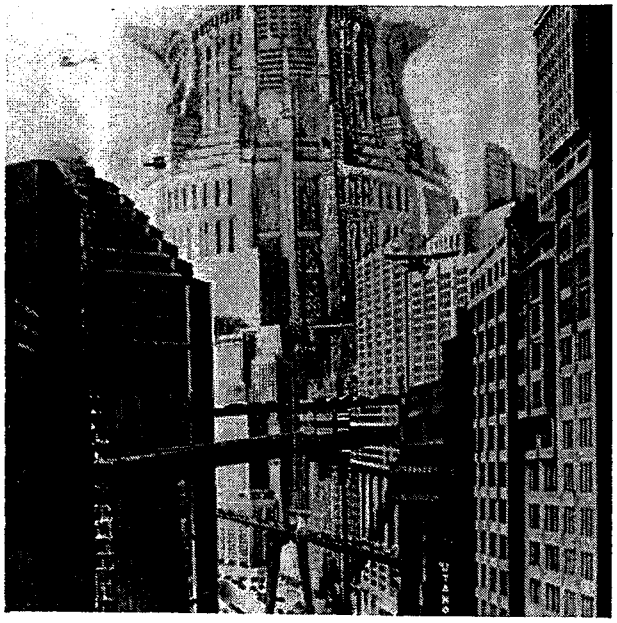


Figure 3.1 City of Metropolis. *Metropolis*, 1927.

civilisation. *Metropolis* embodied the modernist visions such as, multi-layering of the city with skyscrapers or innovative traffical solutions, as well as the social illustration of a possible future world (Fig.3.2). The technocrats were living in splendour on top in towers while the proletariats toiled underneath in the subterranean world. Technology which ran the city above, effectively reduced its operators to subhuman mechanistic levels (Fig.3.3).

Figure 3.2 Muti-layered traffical solutions and skyscrapers. *Metropolis*, 1927.

After the considerable success and influence of *Metropolis* (Fig.3.4), American (*Just Imagine*-1930) (Fig.3.5 and Fig.3.6) and British (*Things to Come*-1936) versions followed. The latter, instead of being anti-technological like the prior ones, was adamantly for it. Its producer, Alexander Korda, first offered Le Corbusier and Fernand Leger as designers of the film's futuristic sets. After they both refused, he turned to a former Bauhaus professor Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who would design a

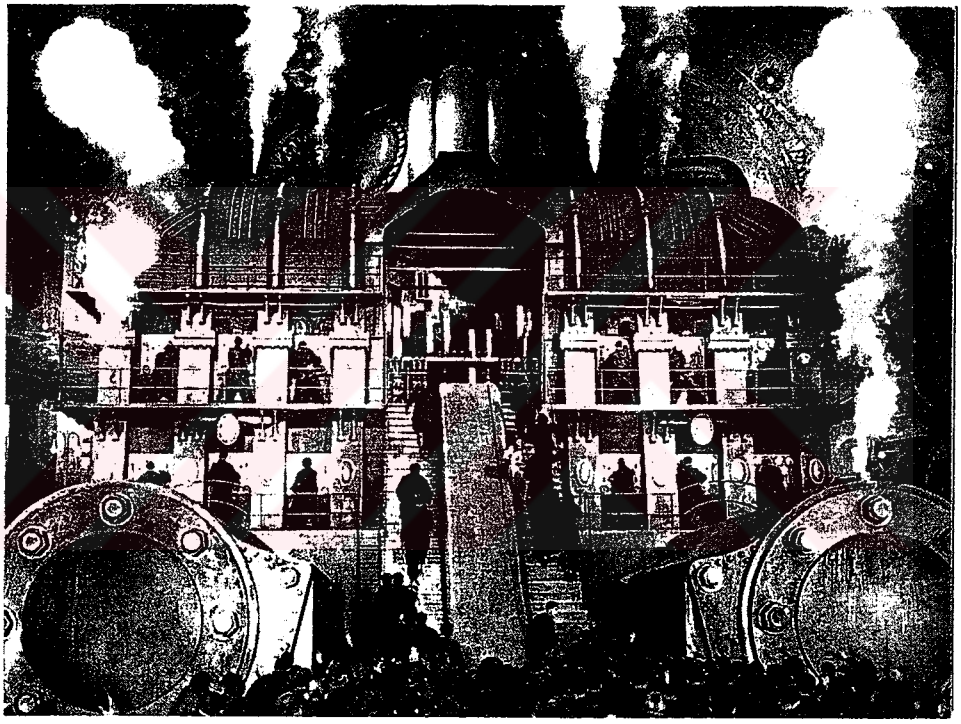


Figure 3.3 Machine enslavement and its aesthetics. *Metrpolis*, 1927.

utopia in which technology,

> would eliminate solid form. Houses were no longer obstacles to, but receptacles of, man's natural life force, light. There were no walls, but skeletons of steel, screened with glass and plastic sheets. The accent was on perforation and contour, an indication of a new reality rather than reality itself (Cited in Albrecht, 1986).

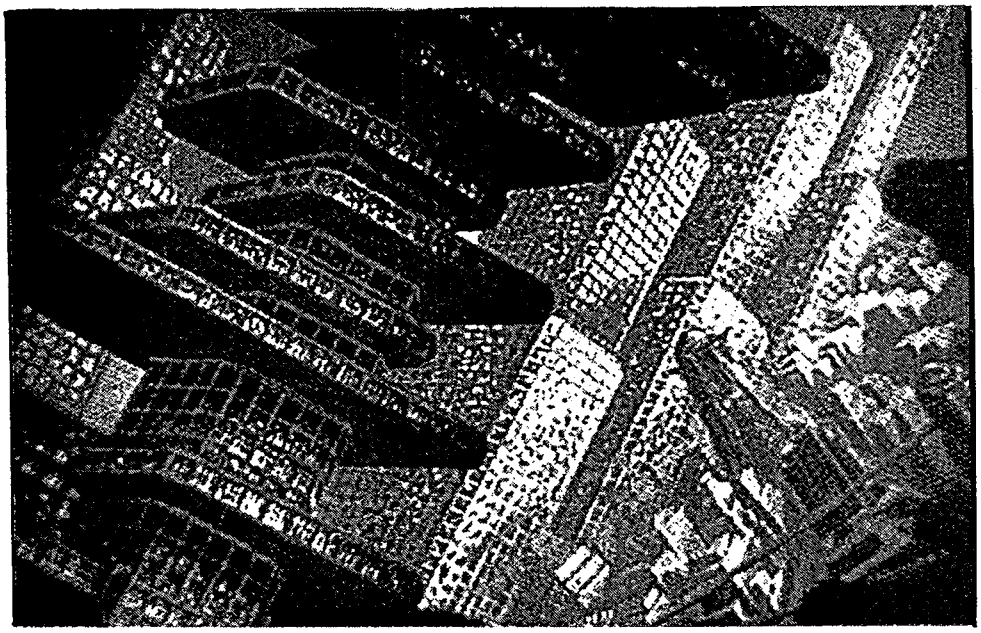


Figure 3.4 A complete Modern city vision. *Metropolis*, 1927.

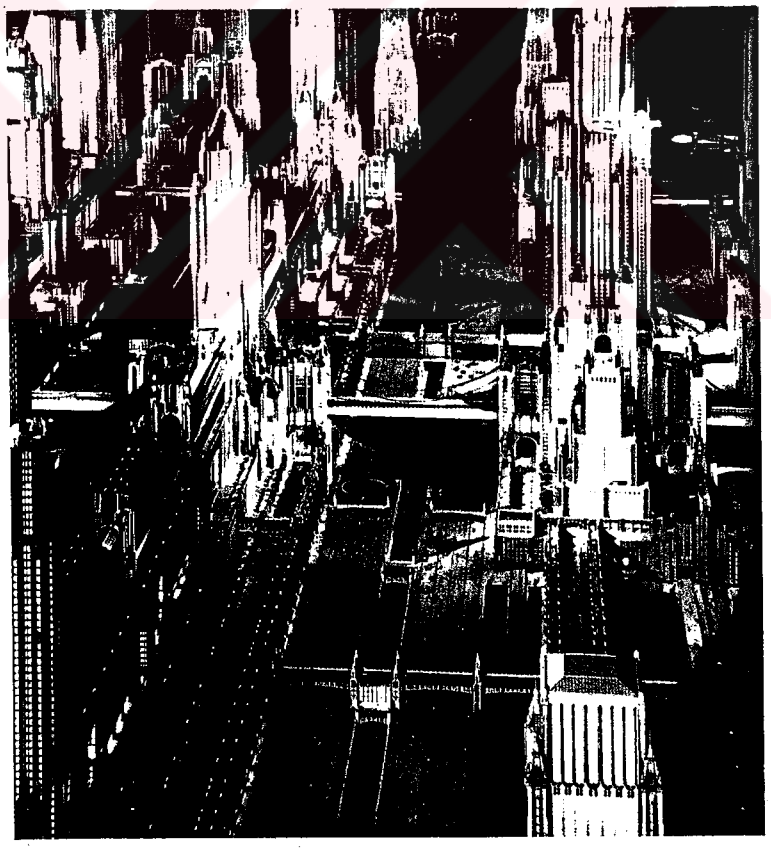


Figure 3.5 Futuristic urban images cropped up after *Metropolis*. *Just Imagine*, 1930.

Unfortunately, these designs were not used, perhaps because they were too abstract. Instead, director's brother Vincent Korda took the position. The end result was not as creative as had been expected, but still, the main space, sufficient-in-itself, with its curving balconies, pedestrian walkways, monorail, and glass elevator can be seen as a prototype for contemporary atriums.

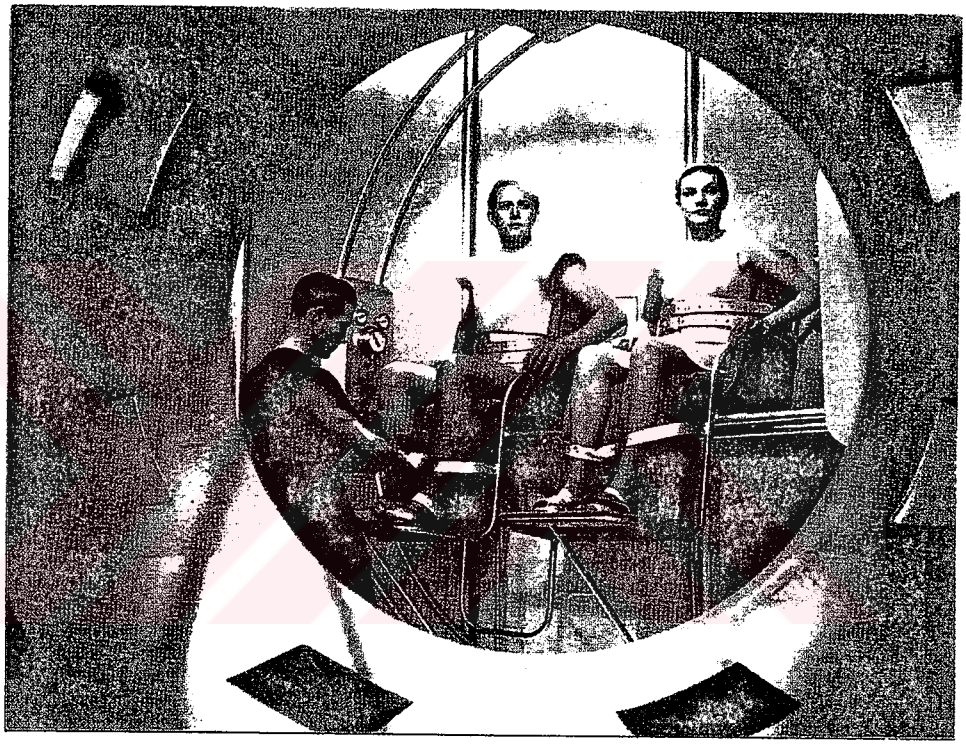


Figure 3.6 *Just Imagine*, 1930.

At the following period (approximately between 1950-1970), the SF genre focused on post-holocaust terror, alien invasion, and space travel themes. Spaceships became the main focus for the representation of our future home. Unimaginative and stereotyped representation of total submission to technology (the spaceship) is the single feature that one could detect in those pulp-movies.

Kubrik's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), became another turning point in the genre. Space, time and technology was handled in a radical, critical, political way. Pure, clean, and fully-automated space-technology had a leading role (Fig.3.7 and Fig.3.8). The *Star Wars* trilogy, which could not go beyond being space-operas for easy consumption, came next. Beginning of the eighties witnessed the arrival of critical SF films.

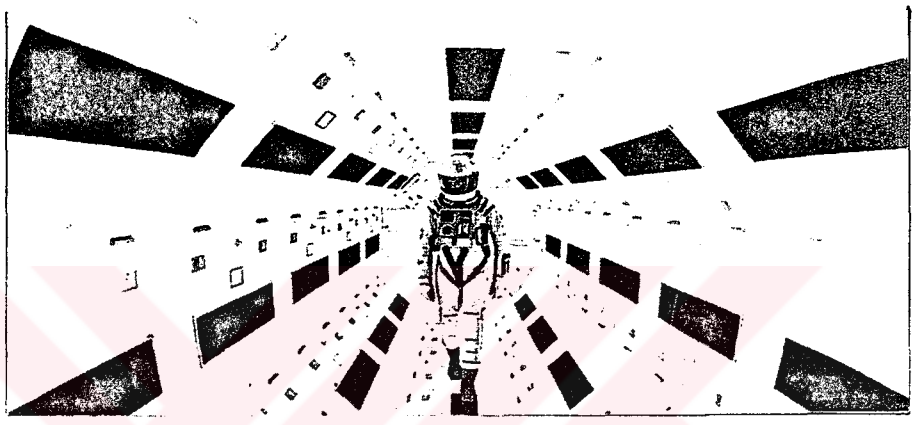


Figure 3.7 Pure, clean and fully-computerised spaceship finally rejects biological life. *2001.* 1968

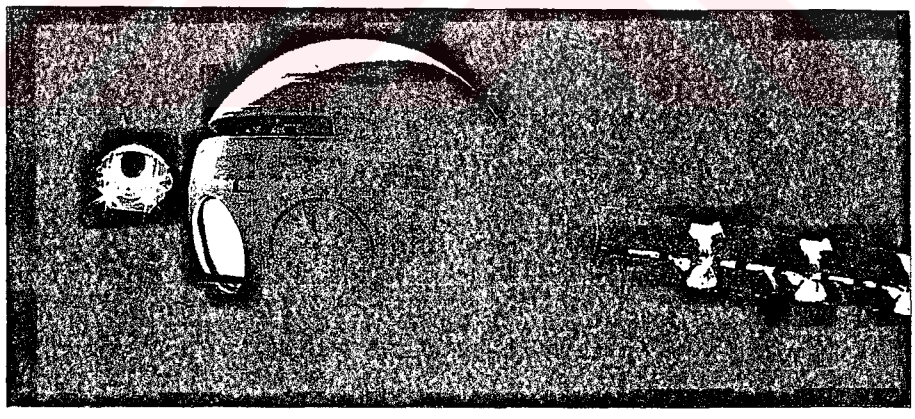


Figure 3.8 Spaceship: a reresentation of total submission to technology. *2001.* 1968

Scott's vision of a future metropolis in *Blade Runner* (1982) is rue to the archetypes of SF. A city is at once reality and symbol, both a way of life and a way of thinking.

It is a dream come true, or a nightmare, or both. Yet perhaps it has ever been so, for the attitude of mankind toward its cities has always been ambivalent.

The city is the essence of civilisation: of commerce, science and art, of the interchange of goods and ideas. Yet it is also a den of iniquity: Babylon, the great whore of the Bible is the most artificial of our creations, and therefore it is damned as the enemy of all that is natural, including the natural within ourselves. But man have always built, continue to build, and probably always will build these artificialities. In spite of all denunciations, then, the city must appeal to basic human needs —spiritual as well as material. For all its sins, the city offered freedom and a variety of experiences. Rural life in any culture must, of necessity, be only one kind of life —it can accommodate neither the population density nor time for specialized interests. Without the city, mankind would have missed out on slums, crime waves, epidemics, and air and water pollution —and also classical music, drama, literature, art and architecture, and much else of deeply human value (Pierce, 1987).

The pessimistic idea that the machines would not make a better world was definitely controversial in the modern design world. In *Metropolis*, technology intensified social segregation, reducing the workers to subordinate levels and elevating the wealthy to god-like supremacy. These two social groups were connected by lift. The subterranean industrial hell below, and the Garden of Eden above.

Le Corbusier once called houses "machines for living"; cities are even more so. They can also be seen as vast and complex living organisms. Pohl says (1984),"They breathe, they eat, they sweat, they excrete. Given a chance they grow and, if somehow they are prevented from doing any of these vital things, they are very likely to die." Mankind's long love-hate relationship with the city, with technological civilisation, revolves around whether they serve human needs, or humans merely serve their needs. The sheer scale of structures, the power of light, the energy of motion have always been essential to the wonders and anxieties of SF's cities. There is also a dark vision of suffering, dehumanization, and privation in the wonder cities of the future. Perhaps nowhere in SF's ambivalence toward the city is better expressed than in *Metropolis*. Georgi, Workman No. 11811, who as he toils at the Pater-noster machine, mutters a bitter mockery of the Lord's Prayer:

> Give us this day our daily bread....Grind machine, grind flour or our bread. The bread is baked from the flour of our own bones....And forgive us our trespasses....what trespasses, Pater-noster? The trespass of having a brain and a heart, that thou hast not, machine? (Harboy, Metropolis).

Yet we can also feel for Grot —loving defender of the machine— "the heart of the machine city of Metropolis," that the workers seek to destroy:

> The machine was a universe in itself. Above the deep mysteries of its delicate joints, like the sun's disc, like a halo of a divine being, stood the silver spinning wheel, the spokes of which appeared, in the whirl of revolution, as a single spinning disc...All the treasures of the world heaped up before him would not, for Grot, have outweighed this, his machine (Harboy, *Metropolis*).

How to resolve this contradiction? For Wells, in his persona as an utopian socialist at least, the answer was obvious: Simply impose a new and "rational" social order. In his film *Things to Come* (1936), Everytown 2036 is a SF dream: a spacious underground city, lit by artificial sunlight. Crowds of apparently happy people mill about an atrium of pure white concrete walls and balconies (Fig.3.9). Pedestrians

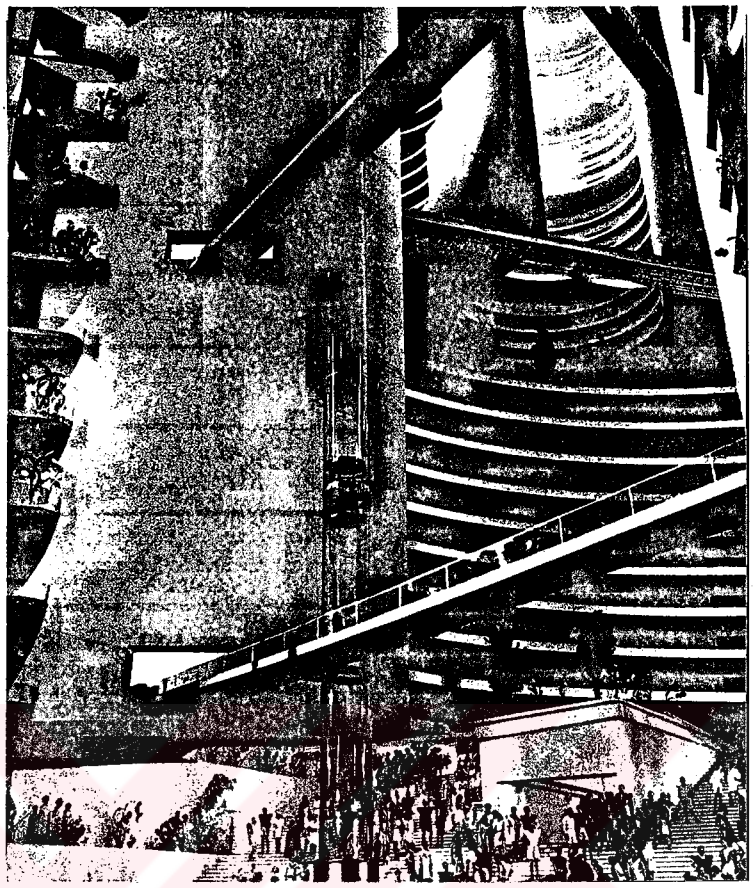


Figure 3.9 An influential future image. *Things to Come*, 1936.

can cross the atrium at various levels on walkways, and a glass elevator rises to the upper stories. Lest anyone doubt the impact of SF on the real world, Well's vision has become part of our own urban environment in the designs of hotels and shopping arcades (Pierce, 1987).

Excluding a few outstanding films such as *Metropolis* or *Things to Come*, we can argue that until 1970s, representation of urban and architectural visions in SF films had been immature and naive. That can be justified with the risky costliness of such film projects and the, then insufficient, technology. But the exhaustively repeated stereotypical visions can only be labelled as brainwash detergents. We

cannot place those pulp fiction SF television and cinema productions into the SF concept that is discussed above. It is not proper to declare that these mass-produced pulp movies have vanished with the 1970s, but we can say that there has occurred an advance both in quantity and quality of critical SF films.

3.2 REPRESENTATION OF URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS IN RECENT SCIENCE FICTION FILMS

In the spectrum of numerous recent SF films, three attitudes prevail in shaping of their worlds. The first attitude can be characterised with pessimistic images, produced by employing myths and dystopian mode. The second attitude utilise future images as metaphors, in order to portray the present, produced by a critical, cognitive approach. The third one aims to explore possible consequences of the latest developments in an extrapolative and critical manner. The architectural visions of these three different categories are evaluated by deciphering the world views they reside.

3.2.1 APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

As it was discussed in section 2.5, there has been a boom in apocalyptic future visions with the 1980s. Political, technological and sociological developments have caused a pessimistic atmosphere, where the rationale seemed inadequate to solve these perplexing problems. As an expected result, religions and myths once again

surfaced with reductive and simplistic ideas. Not as a pure form, but as a mixture of both rational-secular and mythical-religious elements (Fortunati, 1993). Catastrophism, apocalyptism and horror themes have become dominant in most of the SF films. Their impact is to strengthen the status quo, by comparing the present state, as bad as it might be, with the dangerous, threatening otherness of tomorrow by an anti-cognitive manner.

In reviewing the post-holocaust world representations, we can talk about two sub-categories. Whereas in the first category, ruined cities are still inhabited, in the second category, they are abandoned for nomadic or pre-modern environments which also lack natural resources and beauty. As an outstanding shared feature we can argue that in these worlds, current state of humanity is substituted with a chaotic milieu which is based on the survival of the fittest.

***Mad Max* trilogy is a remarkable example for this category. A world ruined by the nuclear holocaust frame the narrative of the serial. Max, the protagonist, combats in behalf of the miserable, against savage gangs fighting for the remaining technology and power in Australian deserts. Desert can be interpreted as a metaphoric representation of a world without order and technology.**

In the third film of the serial, *Beyond Thunderdome*, the plot revolves around two attempts to reconstruct the civilisation. Barter Town, which is a capital-based commerce town that runs with fuel obtained from pig excrement, is ruled by a female ruler who repeatedly reminds the laws and her ideal of reconstructing civilisation through the microphones. Another significant character of the Barter

Town is a genius dwarf who invents technology to run the city. There is a constant clash for power between these two characters. Max unintentionally spoils the balance between these two and gives way for the abuse of the technological wisdom by the ruler and then is punished for rebellion. A deadly punishment in the desert, leads the protagonist to come upon a group of children who were saved by a pilot during the nuclear-holocaust. Unlike the others, they have been dwelling in an oasis and have generated a kind of culture/religion depending on the traces of their saver. They also desire a civilisation, but quite different than the image of the Barter Town. With the help of Max, they save the genius dwarf and fly to the ruined city of Sydney, to start once again.

Barter Town, even though it's set in the future, is really medieval. So it's a very feudal place, a walled city ruled by physical power with law and order, but for the common good because it's certainly better than what was before. It represents the kind of world in which you have to make your own way. Barter Town is really our world today. A world which is vital, lively, funny, grim, totally relying on commerce and trade. There are bars and pigs and technology of a sort, and industrial complexes. Everything you see is built up of recycled materials of the pre-holocaust times.

The fortifications of the Barter Town is fastened for the ones who do not have anything to exchange. Thunderdome, where two go in and one get out, is placed in the centre of town to maintain the laws for the fittest. Monarchy is illustrated with the lofty residence of the female ruler who guards the city with optical lenses and

declares her orders by simple microphones. The lift once again appears as an apparatus that articulates social segregation and authority.

On the other hand the oasis of the children tribe, does not display any hint of hierarchy. They live collectively, connected with the Nature. That is why Max, at the beginning, tries to persuade them to cease their plan of seeking the dead civilisation. The film concludes with the first hints of fresh city life germinated as candle flames in the ruins of the skyscrapers. The apocalyptic vision is tied with a brand new regeneration achieved by the union of children (hope) and genius dwarf (technology).

Figure 3.10 Tech-noir in design, the narrative's time-travel plot is regressive and circular, signaling.the end of belief in the future. *The Terminator*, 1984.

The Terminator offers yet another apocalyptic vision, in which the city is represented as a ground for the battle between self-sufficient technology and

humankind (Fig.3.10). The nuclear holocaust originated by an intelligent defence network computer, has lead to a world where the machines decide what is best for the world: a world without human race. An agent was sent back to our day to prevent the Terminator to assassinate the mother of the future leader of the rebellion against the machines. *The Terminator* is studded with everyday detail, all organized by an idea of "tech-noir". Machines provide the texture and substance of this film: cars, hair-dryers, Sony walkmen, beepers, answering machines, automated factory equipment. The defence network computer of the future which has decided our fate in a microsecond has its humble origins here. When Sarah Conner finally reaches the LA Police Department emergency line, on a phone in the Tech Noir night-club, it is predictably to hear "All our lines are busy...please hold." The film seems to suggest that "if technology can go wrong or be abused, it will surely be" (Penley, 1990). *The Terminator* warns us about the signs of the apocalypse.

Just as has happened after *Blade Runner* many stereotypical films cropped up after *The Terminator.* They portray ruined cityscapes as a battleground for the war between human kind and machines/cyborgs. Old heavy-industry factory buildings and dumpsites fitted perfectly for these low cost film sets. This type of visions suggest a world of no-architecture or recycled architecture. Public service buildings and infrastructures function as home for the miserables. But it is hard to understand why people still prefer these hostile cities, which appear as terrible as hell, to the never-represented destroyed Nature.

3.2.2 METAPHORICAL VISIONS

It can be argued that ruined city is a basic essential for a postmodern city vision. Late capitalist economic system, which is endlessly referred to in the discussions of postmodernity, embraces a third-world within the first. The multi-national corporations, which seem voluntary to deliver state's contracts with the citizens, obviously do not promise a wealthy future for all. Cyberspace, as a tool for the economic system, is also apparent in some of those images. Yet, this category is intended to cover off-cybernetic cityscapes.

All the critics agree that the most successful and comprehensive representation of the postmodern city in SF films is *Blade Runner*'s, yet there are a few other relevant films as well. *Alien, Running Man, Total Recall* and *Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan* can be counted as outstanding examples for the category. The shared characteristic of these four films is that they all explore the relationship between high-tech corporate capitalism on one hand and styles of personal behaviour on the other. Interestingly enough, they express an agreement concerning the nature of the infrastructure's demands and influences on the individual, but *Star Trek 2* stands diametrically opposed in its evaluation of these demands and influences (Byers, 1990). These films suggest an inevitable conflict between human feelings and bonds on the one hand and duty to the socio-economic structure on the other. *Star Trek 2,* in contrast to the others, welcomes a future whose challenges are met by a reaffirmation of the traditional values. One cannot grasp any traces of technology criticism in *Star Trek* series.

In *Alien* the story develops in an off-world setting, where the crew of the spaceship *Nostromo* is totally submitted to technology to survive. Right at the first scenes of the film, we witness the crew sleeping in tomb/womb machines, totally submitted to the computer's caring hands (Fig.3.11). Unbeknownst of the disaster awaiting, they undertake a secret assignment to bring an invincible creature to Earth where it will be inspected for the profits of a multi-national, multi-world corporation. The service ducts and tunnels —the infrastructure— become the stage of a deadly chase.

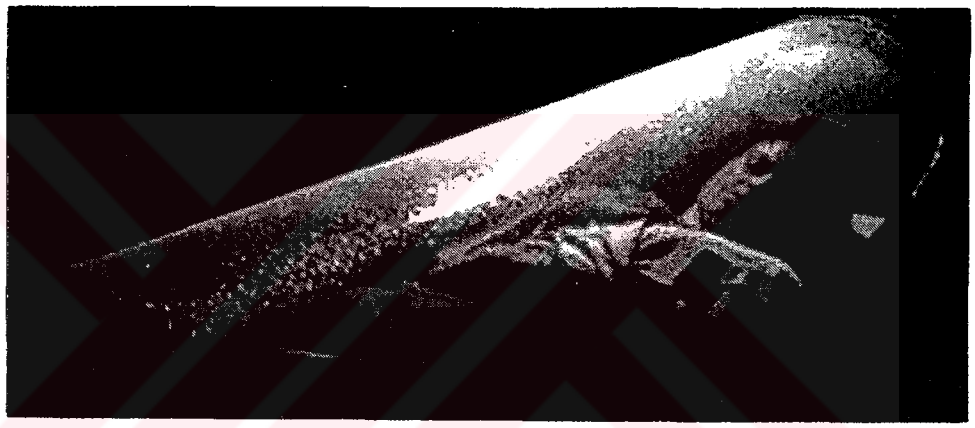


Figure 3.11 In the caring hands of technology. *Alien*, 1979.

Alien spins one of the most terrifying of SF's many ecological cautionary tales. For the corporation, all life is commodity, and the crew members are expendable. The creature (Fig.3.12) —which was designed by famous artist Giger— is, in fact, an embodiment of Nature as perceived by corporate capitalism, and by an evolutionary science whose emphasis on competition is a manifestation of capitalist ideology (Byers, 1990).

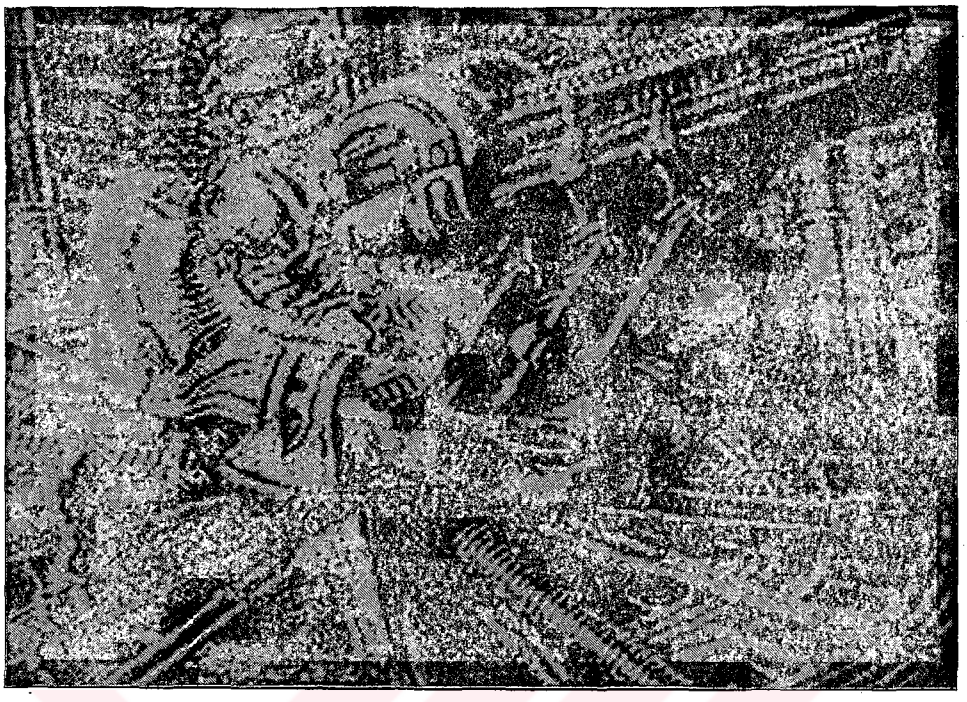


Figure 3.12 R.H. Giger's design of an alien environment: the embodiment of Nature. *Alien*, 1979.

The visual treatments of *Voyager* and *Nostromo* present a remarkable contrast, which shows that iconography is shaped with a direct interaction with the aimed political message. Clean and glossy spaces of the spaceship *Voyager* totally oppose to the *Nostromo*'s. *Voyager* leaves no doubt as to the "goodness" of a technology which can produce such a magnificent toy. The ship itself is "good" and beautiful. It promises positive adventure, an ecstatic release from the gravitational demands of Earth, and it can remove us from ourselves and the complexity of life on our planet, taking us to new Edens and regeneration (Sobchack, 1988). *Alien*, however, attaches a demonic side to the spaceship. It is a trap from which there is little hope of escape. *Nostromo* is visually cold and menacing, its surfaces hostile to human warmth. It functions mechanically and perfectly, ignorant of its creators and operators, almost as if it could choose to do otherwise but prefers to rid itself of its unsleek and emotionally tainted human occupants (Fig.3.13). It evokes associations

not of release, but of confinement. The womb-like and protective warmth of a positive visual treatment is nowhere apparent; rather, the ship is seen negatively, viewed with anti technological suspicion, the images of it suggesting a tomb-like iciness, a coffin-like confinement.

Figure 3.13 Nature vs. technology of multinational corporate structures. *Alien*, 1979.

After such off-world reflections of the current condition, we may proceed to the earthly postmodern city representations. Yet in different contexts, we observe identical arguments in these SF films. Cities turn into larger-scale spaceships which we are trapped in. The crowded, aggregate, and polyglot megalopolis is a sign of the success of neo-colonial and multinational "incorporation".

As another common feature, we meet resistance groups, living in poor-quality environments, and combating against the multinationals who abuse people with the technology. Infrastructures, like the subway or air-ventilation system in *Total Recall*, are over-exposed to articulate technology-dependency. *Total Recall* portrays a nightmare. The protagonist wakes to realise that in fact he is not who he thinks he is, right after memories of a virtual touristic trip to Mars as a secret agent is

loaded over an erased memory block in his brain. His ordinary job as a worker in the mine, his ordinary apartment with a large TV projecting multiple choice virtual panoramic views when turned off, his cheerful wife are all pieces of the plot he has been trapped in. The tragedy is that he will never be able to tell which life is the real, and which is the virtually loaded one.

An assorted but boring crowd fills the clean metro stations and public spaces where one does not have to go out to reach his/her destination. Everything works perfectly in the concrete and steel. The conditions of the Martians are even more depressive. All the terrible consequences of the late-capitalism is portrayed in that uninhabitable planet. The human habitat is totally isolated from the Nature. Privatisation public services supply the oxygen for the citizens, who mostly work for the mine that belongs to the same corporation. When the protagonist gets out of the Mars Hilton, faces the mutants living in inadequate conditions: another representation of a third world within the first. The sleazy downtown, which houses the rebels against the cruel corporation, is an indoor simulation of a customary 20th century American downtown. Rebellion against the corporation results in operating the reactor which generates oxygen flourishing an inhabitable Nature in Mars.

The *Running Man* employs another motif of the postmodern condition. Spectacular society is critically portrayed in the film. Entertainment and communication industry disinforms the society and keeps the problems well hidden. A cruel game that punishes the rebels is the favourite programme on TV. Familiar visions of an extravagantly decorated TV studio is filled with monitors which capture the

adventures of the competitors in a cruel man hunt through the decayed decor of the city. The Hollywood clichés once again operate at the final of the film.

These images, which usually employ a technological or societal novum, portray and discuss present anxieties in different contexts. As an outstanding exemplar of this category, *Blade Runner* is going to be comprehensively analysed in the following chapter.

3.2.3 PROSPECTIVE VISIONS

The term "cyberspace" itself is generally attributed to the original and most successful writer in the literary genre of cyberpunk, William Gibson. As Gibson cheerfully has admitted in an interview, the origin of cyberspace is contemporary video-arcade games and computer-graphics programs (Cited in McHale, 1992, and McCaffery, 1990). In his Sprawl trilogy, Gibson envisioned cyberspace as a global network of computer information and transactions, which could be accessed and inhabited virtually.

In his dystopian future, cyberspace is the realm in which all commerce is enacted, and where the all-powerful corporations dominate a computer generated landscape, modelled on real cities, whose urban squalor is left behind in the virtual realm. It also exerts a formidable psychological force on its users, the most extreme of whom crave the "bodiless exaltation" of virtuality, and escape from the contemptible prison of their own flesh ("The body was meat" —Gibson, 1986).

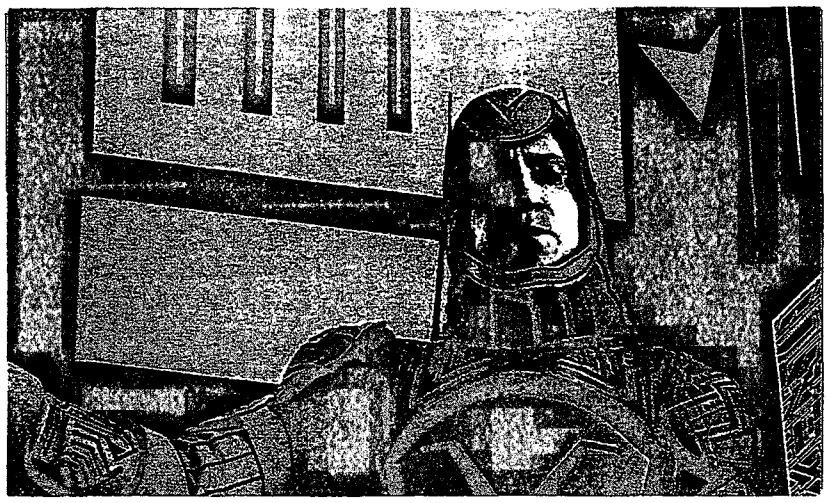


Figure 3.14 Embodiment of evil bureaucrat in computer's circuitry. *Tron*, 1982

Figure 3.15 Imaginary Stations: Flattened, electronically simulated space. *Tron*, 1982

With its dual connotations of control systems and spatial dynamics, cyberspace quickly assumed a powerful position in the social imagination of computerised potentialities, and deeply affected actual research programs being conducted into prospective virtual worlds.

The first attempt to enter cyberspace cinematically was Disney's *Tron* (1982), in which the protagonist passes into a computer generated world and fights against

evil software/avatars acting on behalf of a bureaucrat who has stolen the hero's programs (Fig.3.14). *Tron* takes place within the impossible geography of a mainframe computer's circuitry (Fig.3.15). A massive, animated world unfolds around him, replete with video gladiators pitted in combat, high speed chases on "light cycles" (Fig.3.16) and an assortment of hi-tech looking death machines, all creating a splendidly paranoid environment of enormous scale (Fig.3.17). This Techno-fascist world provides the context for Flynn's ultimate victory over the MCP, whereupon he is able to return to the outside world and ascend to the corporate presidency in place of the deposed Dillinger (Glass, 1984-85). The strong primary colours (fig.3.18 and Fig.3.19) and grids of electrical light through which the cyborg figures moved became a pervasive mode of representing computer generated graphics and space (Fig.3.20) (Baker, 1993). Whilst it represented a digital realm, *Tron*'s world is not virtual in that the user is actually dematerialised and reconstituted inside the program, without retaining any real presence outside it. Nevertheless the design is a replicant of the earthly geography in which world's natural laws, such as gravity, applies.

The first film to depict and popularise virtual reality, and the only one to achieve commercial success so far, was *The Lawnmower Man* (1992). Brett Leonard's film featured scenes of users entering virtual environments, and interacting with them using body suits. Ultimately, Jobe, the handy-man who achieves superhuman powers through a combination of drugs and virtual learning, does vacate his human body and enter the computer network as pure information. The sign of his

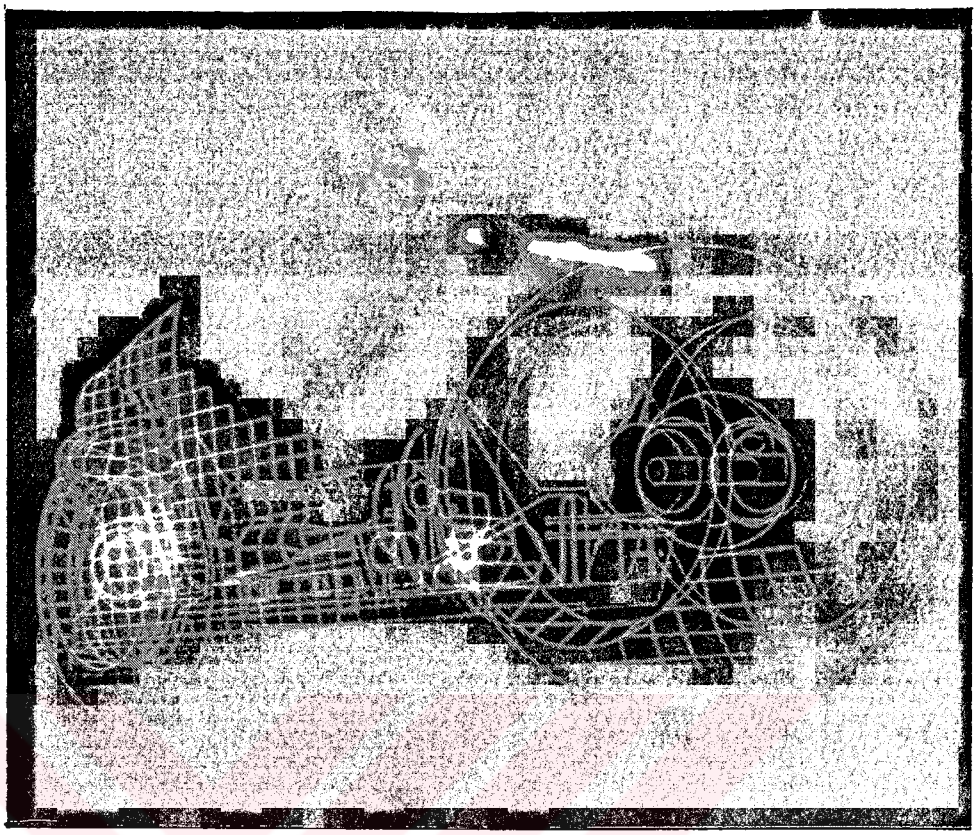


Figure 3.16 Earthly physical rules also apply in this earliest cyberspace film. *Tron*, 1982.

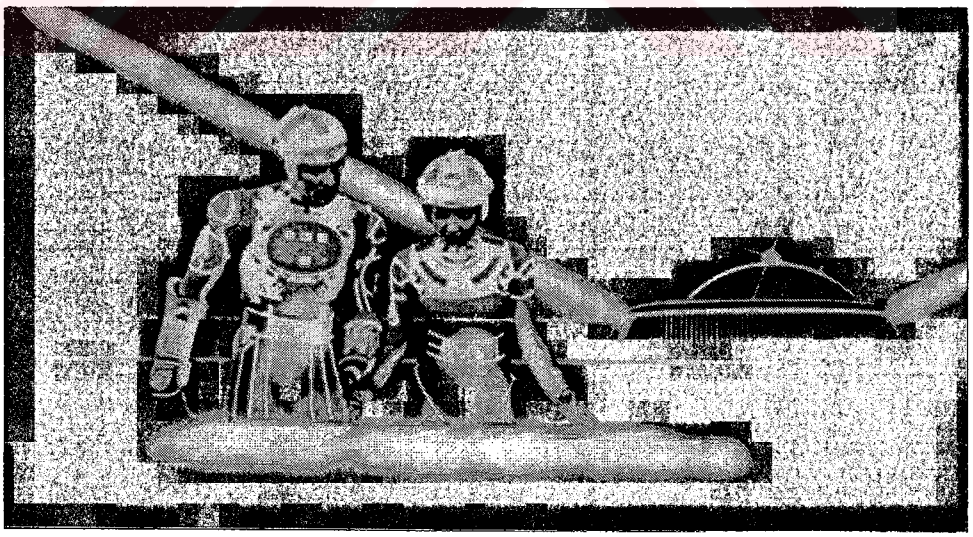


Figure 3.17 A paranoid environment of enormous scale. *Tron*, 1982.

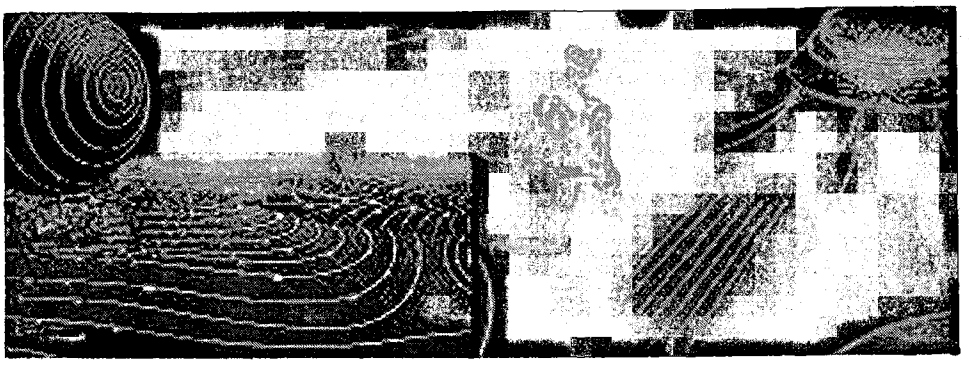


Figure 3.18 An electronic geography. *Tron*, 1982.

Figure 3.19 Interior space of the computer also includes cities of high-rise structures. *Tron*, 1982.

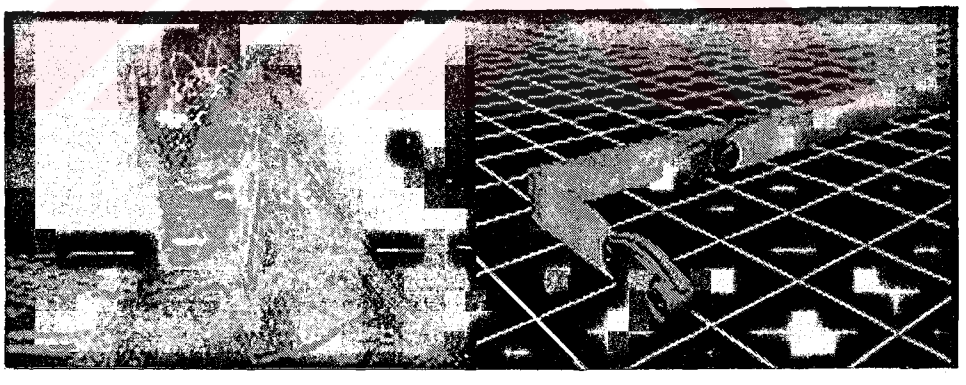


Figure 3.20 Strong primary colours and grids of electric light as a mode of computer generated space. *Tron*, 1982.

transformation is the sound of all the telephones in the world ringing simultaneously. The film's impact relied heavily on its association of technology, controlled and abused by military-governmental forces, with dehumanisation,

mental trauma and violence. But the creation of a virtual Frankenstein was totally reliant on the excessive use of mind altering drugs, and the resulting nightmarish vision is sensationalist and confused. It confines the spatial dynamics of cyberspace to the internal, psychological domain only, and does not attempt to represent the global flow of information capitalism, and virtual capital and commodities; the key components that made cyberpunk's future landscape so intrinsically of the present (Napleton, 1996).

***Johnny Mnemonic* (*JM*), which was based on a book of Gibson, is about an information courier, who carries valuable data in a brain implant, within a dystopian context. Johnny's personal quest is to free himself of his own data disease, and retrieve his humanity. Contrary to many of Hollywood's technophobic visions of social entropy and political conspiracy, the film does end with the liberation of information from corporate control. Johnny's dilemma and the conflict between the corporations and the LoTeks, all dramatise this relationship between the power structures of late, or post industrial, capitalism, and the decentralised, global communications network in the digital era. *JM* maps the technological commodification of late capitalism onto a dystopian, cybernetic future, and attempts to restore the human subject to a fantasised pre-cyborg condition (Fig.3.21). The film attempts to disavow the contemporary relevance of this near-future dystopia, and to assert a utopian belief in pre-technological human subjectivity, and in the possibility of escape from social and psychological repressions. (Napleton, 1996)**

Figure 3.21 The attempt to restore human subject to a fantasised pre-cyborg condition. *Johnny Mnemonic*, 1995.

Films such as *JM*, or *The Lawnmower Man*, have generally been criticised for either tedious scenes of keyboard and monitor interface, or dated and stereotypical images of virtual realities in their fantasy, or nightmare, fulfilments (Napleton, 1996). The dominant tone of these productions has historically been technophobic, associating computer driven technologies with totalitarian, dystopian and dehumanising tendencies, although this is not a phenomenon unique to the cinema, or to the digital age. Napleton (1996) states that Hollywood has a long history of reacting to technological changes, especially when they pose a direct threat, such as television, with an ambivalence, and occasional hostility, evident in its corporate

and cinematic strategies. Hollywood films deal with the substance and forms of virtual worlds explicitly in the cinema of cyberspace. They indicate points of cultural crises and displacement concerning our relationship with technology, and by extension the role of subjectivity in the economic and political framework of postmodern capitalism. Like all artistic and philosophical investigations into the spatial, metaphysical and socio-economic significance of virtual realities, these films ultimately deal with the reverse implications and effects of alternate computer mediated subjectivities on reality itself, and our experiences of it. Digital media have introduced a number of factors which are unique in relation to analogue representation, and, with their move away from the referent, and endlessly reinscribable and alterable discourses, lend themselves easily to postmodern cultural analysis (Napleton, 1996). But the degree to which computer mediated experience can be said to offer the potentiality for new types of human perception, experience and social repositioning remains a highly contested issue. For advocates of the former position, cyberspace offers the potential end of hierarchical and repressive symbolic frameworks of gender, race and class; their critics argue that the dominant matrixes of power relations are not eradicated, but reconstituted in the new dematerialised, virtual realm.

Since the world system of late capitalism is inconceivable without the computerised media technology which eclipses its former spaces and faxes an unheard of simultaneity across its branches, information technology will become virtually the representational solution as well as the representational problem of this world system's cognitive mapping. The film attempts to disavow the contemporary relevance of this near-future dystopia, and to assert a utopian belief in pre-

technological human subjectivity, and in the possibility of escape from social and psychological repressions (Jameson, 1995). Jameson's notion of a geopolitical unconscious is defined as the collective experience in which our ever present awareness of the totality of the social system is faced with the impossibility of trying to imagine or represent that totality. It cannot be accidental that many of the films featuring virtual technologies and cyberspace conform to the conspiracy formula which Jameson (1995) sees as an imperfect, but powerful allegorical means of envisioning the "potentially infinite network" of global power relations, and offering "plausible explanations for its invisibility". Information, and the technological itself, only become significant and magical when they are narrativised as allegorical representations of "the whole unimaginable decentered global network itself" (Mulvey, 1996).

Using Lacan's concept of the Real, (Zizek, 1989) residing in the ideological dream which is our true consciousness, and unable to be represented or translated into reality, some postmodern critics have identified cyberspace as the dream of late capitalist ideology.

The role of cinematic expression, and of all cultural production in society, becomes more powerful if ideas and representations are not conceptualised as simply reflecting economic determinants and political hegemony. If ideological fantasy can structure social totality, as Zizek (1989) argues, then what becomes important is not the degree to which the cinema of cyberspace represents "reality", but the degree to which it stages that ideological fantasy, from which reality, and subjectivity, are structured. Zizek uses Lacan's concept of ideology; "a totality set

on effacing the traces of its own impossibility", which generates socially constituted fantasies, through which human subjectivity is governed.

Following Zizek's argument, David Brande (1996) argues that Gibson's vision of cyberspace stages the ideological dream of postmodern capitalism, in subsuming all symbolic exchange into monetary form, and providing the spatial solution to the crises of over accumulation. Cyberspace is the last, post-national frontier, and offers the means to symbolically reterritorialise the deterritorialised flows of capital expansion. In answer to the global and regional limitations of post-fordist, flexible production, Gibson's cyberspace offers a "vision of limitless virtual space for market expansion", a "matrix which stages the revolutionary force of the global market, its capacity for the production of space" (Brande, 1996).

A common feature of cinematic (and literary) visions of the near-future has been the rise of city states in place of nations, in which Western and Eastern-Asian ethnic, cultural and economic elements have become inextricably mixed. In *JM*, the "Free City of Newark", Beijing and Tokyo illustrate the power of urban centres, but the Internet itself is the truly global marketplace. Starting from Robert Longo's brief that the cities of the future will exist primarily in cyberspace, the virtual landscapes of Beijing and Newark were constructed and texture mapped to combine a technological precision and sheen, with an urban roughness and structural proliferation. (Napleton, 1996)

In *JM*, the corporations are opposed by the LoTeks, who stand outside and oppose the technological hegemony of information and consumerism; "a resistance

movement risen from the streets: hackers, data-pirates, guerrilla-fighters in the info-wars" (cited in *JM*). In a world in which citizens define themselves through consumerism and commodities, the LoTeks refuse to consume; they eke out their existence in the cracks of society, "in the old city cores, like rats in the walls of the world", and make their world from the refuse and junk that litter the burnt out urban areas, which have been left to decay. Their headquarters, Heaven, is a bridge welded together from rusted metal, wood, chains and freight containers. These artefacts represent the "old futures", (William Gibson cited in Manohla Dargis, 1995) whose redundant technology clutters the present and become, for Gibson, nostalgic remnants of future visions past. In a society where information is power and commodity, they are disenfranchised from the institutional modes of production and distribution.

The cyberspace of *JM* is a matrix of urban architecture, through which the traffic of data incessantly pulses, and occasionally explodes, as balls of light rush to their destination (Fig.3.22). In the predominantly blue-tinged cyber-city of corporate structures, company logos bedeck the heterogeneous mix of rectangular, pyramidal and asymmetrical shapes. Gibson states that "*JM* is about the politics of information" (Cited in Barlow and Salza, 1996).

The hotel-like hotels and bank-like banks of cyberspace become almost nostalgic remnants, whose disembodied existence in the virtual, but dominant realm of capital and commodity circulation, drains their indexical antecedents of value and

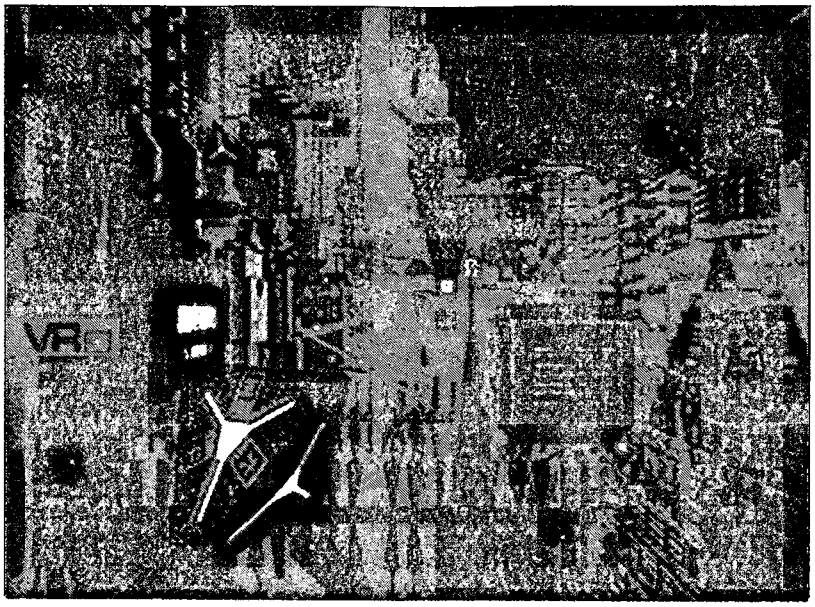


Figure 3.22 A matrix of urban architecture through which traffic of data rushes to its destination. *Johnny Mnemonic*, 1995.

meaning; in short, of reality (Napleton, 1996). Cyberspace is not envisaged as a symbolic means of facilitating and enacting commercial transactions, but the dominant site of economic activity.

Anna K, the founder of Pharmacom, has been imprinted onto its "neural net installation" before death, and exists only as pure data, the "ghost in the machine". The film's most literal symptomatic shift involves the epidemic disease of NAS, which has no known cause or cure, but is wiping out the world's population. "The world causes it, information overload, all the electronics around you poisoning the airwaves, technological civilisation, but we still have all this because we can't live without it"(cited in *JM*). NAS is the gruesome punishment for a population which, in order to work and survive, must impel itself towards machine status, and away from humanity.

In virtual space, the distance between two points can be traversed visually through every perspectival node on the graph of their spatial difference, the camera itself a construct of the scene's shifting co-ordinates (Napleton, 1996). Virtual reality exteriorises and emulates the neural feedback loop between our minds and the external environment with its hardware/software interface, whilst actually removing the user from interaction with the non-virtual world, and tricking the mind into accepting the virtual as real. Napleton argues that the cinema cannot convey the interactivity and open-ended, multiplicity of virtual reality, and is forced to render its fluid spatial and temporal rhythms within the fixed, linear patterns of mainstream filmic codes.

The dream of escaping from technology in *JM* is based on the utopian fantasy of an organic, individual consciousness that precedes the problematic identities that are defined in relation to technology, society, labour, and the human, or cyborg, body. The same political utopianism also underlies the contrary desire to transcend and escape repressive psychological and alienating social forces, of physicality, gender, race and class, through virtual realities and disembodiment. The virtual world is perceived as limitless in its spatial and conceptual possibilities. Both utopian and dystopian visions of digital potentialities share an underlying technological determinism, which fetishises the technological, and removes human agency.

Hollywood projects its institutional and aesthetic anxieties about the impact of digital technologies onto the cinema of cyberspace, and produces films which do not successfully conform to the mainstream filmic codes of spectacle and spectator

positioning. This failure is based on the cinematic apparatus confronting the representational impossibility of virtual realities.

Urban space becomes a metaphor for the electronic spaces of data circulation. As Vivian Sobchack (1988) notes: "The multinationals seem to determine our lives from some sort of unearthly "other" or "outer" space". William Gibson, the father of cyberpunk, during his observations in Tokyo, Las Vegas and Times Square came up with the idea that cyberspace only represents an extension of the urban sector located at the intersection of postmodernism and SF. The city is both micro-cosm and macro-cosm even when it turns upon itself, as it often does, it both celebrates and denies its own interiority. The shopping mall is emblematic of this spatiality: it possesses a monadic self sufficiency in which the outside world is denied, but this is coupled with a recapitulation of forms that strongly connote exteriority—"streets" are lined with carefully planted and nurtured trees; a central "food court" mimics the plazas of a more traditional urban space. The city has changed: this new realm is a city of simulations, television city, the city as theme park. The new urban space is directionless—coordinates are literally valueless when all directions lead to more of the same (Bukatman, 1993).

The cyberpunks are perhaps the first SF generation to grow up not only within the literary tradition of science-fictional world. For them, the techniques of classical "hard" SF —extrapolation, technological literacy— are not just literary tools but an aid to daily life (Bukatman, 1993).

Cyberpunk stories propose a relationship between the pleasure of debris and the disappearance of the body. This is a topography familiar to us from innumerable 1980s tech-noir films like *Total Recall*, *Blade Runner* or *The Terminator*, in which destitute urban landscapes littered with abandoned factories, barbed wire fences, and burnt out buildings provide the background against which the story takes place (Sponsler, 1993). Ruined cities become a metaphor for the disintegration of the body as well as a way of valuing cyberspace, which is after all, an escape from the constraints, poverty and danger of the physical world. The decayed urban zone provides cyberpunk with a playground where outlaws and outsiders can seize the main chance, adapting and surviving in a ruined cityscape, ultimately discovering an escape to the most important zone of possibility —the new frontier of cyberspace. The ruined city is the appropriate place to leave the body behind; operating as a kind of cemetery space, the urban ruins of cyberpunk signify a transfer of interest from physical exterior to electronic interior (Fig.3.23) (Sponsler, 1993).

The planes of cyberspace enable the activity of social penetration and thus produce the subject's mastery of a global data system. Oddly, writings about cyberpunk often define it as dystopian, marked by *noir*-ish excesses in extended inner cities. There are dystopian elements to be found, not least in cyberpunk's satirical approach to contemporary urbanism, but to reduce the genre to one rhetorical mode seems misguiding (Bukatman, 1993).

Figure 3.23 A transfer of interest from physical exterior to electronic interior. The body needs technological extensions for this aim. *Johnny Mnemonic*, 1995.

The cyberspace is a space that one is physically absent from, in that the space no longer permits any authentic bodily function or experience. Much of the terminal experience is not extrapolation at all —the virtual reality video arcades, Internet space, IRC programmes, where you can chat with complete strangers using nicknames and fantastic virtual identities, have all been a part of terminal experience for at least a decade now.

Granted that the near-future cyberpunk postulates has come about through technological developments, the physical settings of most cyberpunk stories nonetheless look strikingly like the setting of any post-holocaust story: blighted, rubble-strewn, broken-down cityscapes; vast terrains of decay, bleakness, and the detritus of civilisation; and the nearly complete absence of a benign or beautiful

nature. Cyberpunk usually operates with the assumption that some kind of catastrophe has occurred just like the earlier stories. Nevertheless, the decayed yet vitalized cityscape of cyberpunk differs from the physical worlds of post-holocaust SF. Cyberspace can be viewed as a fantasy realm of rebellious escape that derives its glamour from its contrast with the decayed physical world around it. The cybernetic countercultures of the nineties are already being formed around the "folklore of technology"—mythical feats of survivalism and resistance in a data-rich world of virtual environments and posthuman bodies (Sponsler, 1993).

Although cyberpunk's complacency about eco-disaster is troubling, the continued appeal of cyberpunk's geopolitics is its attempt to use the physical world as a way of ushering in emerging technologies and exploring new, non-corporeal modes of being (Sponsler, 1993).

CHAPTER 4

A CASE STUDY:

ANALYSIS OF THE FILM *BLADE RUNNER* by RIDLEY SCOTT

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE SAVED MY LIFE. MAYBE IN THOSE LAST MOMENTS HE LOVED LIFE MORE THAN HE EVER HAD BEFORE —NOT JUST HIS LIFE— ANYBODY'S LIFE —MY LIFE. ALL HE WANTED WERE THE SAME ANSWERS THE REST OF US WANT. "WHERE DO WE COME FROM?", "WHERE AM I GOING?", "HOW LONG HAVE I GOT?" ALL I COULD DO IS SIT THERE AND WATCH HIM DIE.

DECKARD, FROM THE SCRIPT OF *BR*.

4.1 ABOUT THE DIRECTOR: AN EXCEPTIONAL ONE

SOMETIMES THE DESIGN IS THE STATEMENT.

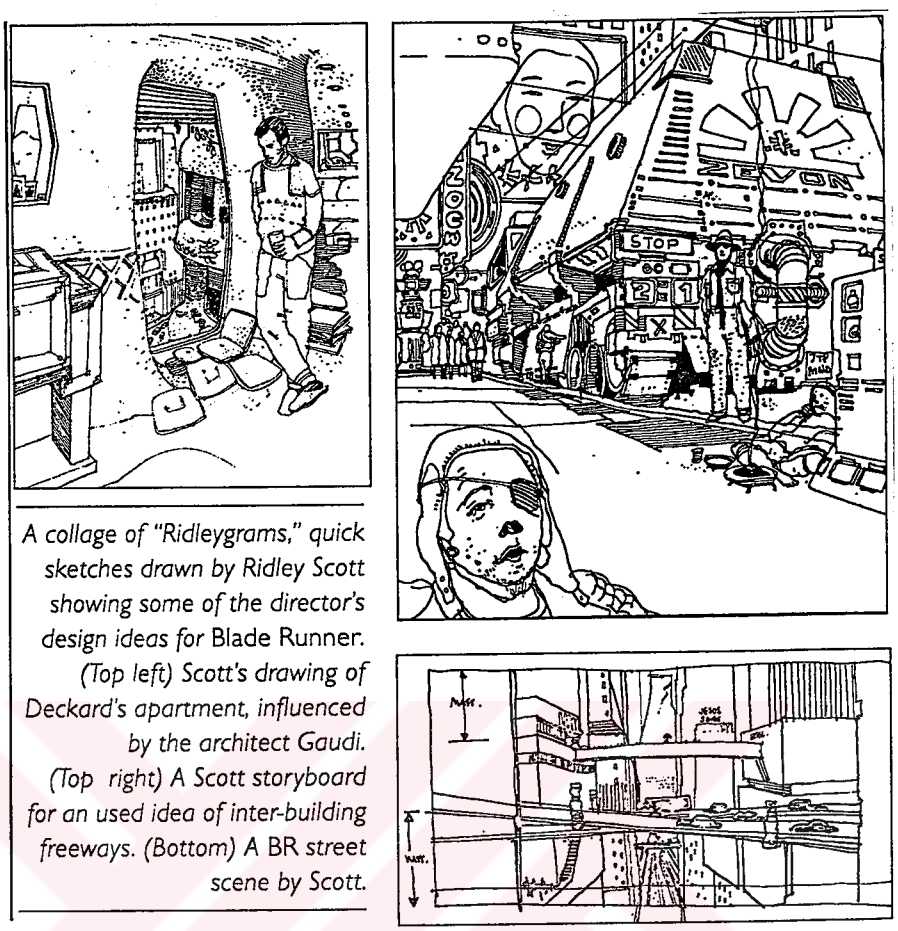
RIDLEY SCOTT, DIRECTOR OF *BR*

According to the *Ridley Scott Biography* released with the original *Blade Runner Press Kit*, Scott as a child, "showed little scholastic aptitude for any subject but art, so his parents encouraged him to study at West Hartpool College of Art. He excelled at painting and went on to the prestigious Royal College of Art in London, with the idea of becoming a set designer. After graduation, he went on to become a set designer, and then a director for BBC TV programmes. In 1967, Scott crossed

over into advertising and directed over 2000 commercials, many of which have been award winners.

Alien, which has become an influential SF film, was his second feature film. It was a SF/horror/suspense thriller detailing a bizarre extra terrestrial's murderous pursuit of unlucky astronauts through the dark corridors of a huge spaceship. R. H. Giger and Ron Cobb had contributed to an environment which had been carefully designed and very carefully thought out. To a large extent, that environment was a statement, and a great piece of artwork. *Alien*'s "environment" was the popular film going public's first exposure to "layering," Scott's self-described technique of building up a dense, kaleidoscopic accretion of detail in each frame and set of a film. "To me," Scott said in an interview with Sammon in 1980 (1996), "a film is like a seven-hundred-layer cake." This process of layering was to continue unabated in *Blade Runner (BR)*; indeed in certain shots, freed from the claustrophobic interiors in which most of *Alien* took place, *BR*'s layering was to reach an overwhelming visual intricacy unseen in any prior SF film.

Scott tells that he is a hard-core SF comic periodicals fan, and admits that hallucinatory landscapes of the popular graphic arts magazine *Heavy Metal* had been a strong inspiration for the image of *BR*. Deeley, the producer of *BR*, calls him one of the best art directors ever: "He draws well, has an incredible flair for details, and a brilliant eye." Much of that "eye" evolved during Scott's early professional training. "I was a designer, trained as a painter, then an art director, and then from art direction drifted into graphic design," Scott tells Lightman and Patterson (1982).



A collage of "Ridleygrams," quick sketches drawn by Ridley Scott showing some of the director's design ideas for Blade Runner. *(Top left) Scott's drawing of Deckard's apartment, influenced by the architect Gaudi. (Top right) A Scott storyboard for an used idea of inter-building freeways. (Bottom) A* BR *street scene by Scott.*

Figure 4.1 Ridley Scott's sketches of the design ideas of *BR* (Please note the parallelism of the bottom drawing with the image of *Metropolis*). *BR*, 1982.

With his intensive visual background it's not surprising that Scott believed that a film's design can be just as important —and in some cases, perhaps more so— than the actual narrative. Therefore he has always tended to control as many of the visual elements of his films as possible (Fig.4.1). He says (Cited in Lightman and Patterson, 1982):

> **There should be a total integration on a film, a complete synthesis running through the hands of a director who is involved in everything. That includes all the design elements. Certainly, there are moments in movies when the background of a shot can be as important as the foregrounded actor, whether that background be a figure or a landscape...Believe me, designing *Blade Runner* was more of a challenge than *Alien*, simply because it's much easier to create the environment for a space film rather than a project detailing life on Earth. In any event, I insisted that *Blade Runner*'s final look be authentic, not just speculative.**

Syd Mead, the "visual futurist" of *BR* who had previously worked on the visualisation process of *Tron* (Fig.4.2) and *Star Trek* (Voyager design), became an influential person to realize what Scott had in mind. Scott, in collaboration with his "visual futurist" Syd Mead, production designer Lawrence Paul, and art director David Synder, really offers us an incoherent pastiche of imaginary landscapes.

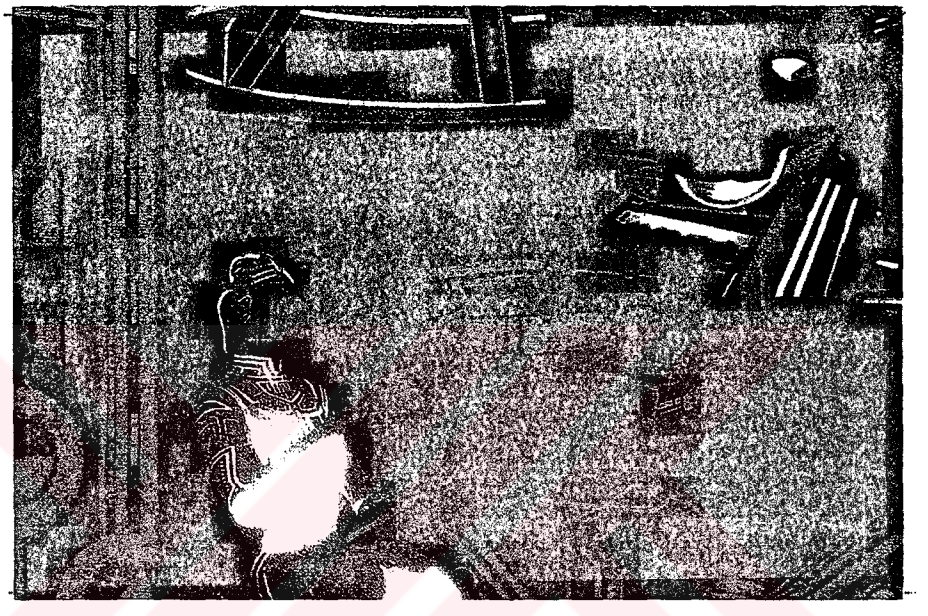


Figure 4.2 Syd Mead had previously worked on the design of *Tron*. *Tron*, 1982.

4.2 INTO THE WORLD OF BLADE RUNNER

> THE CITY EXISTS AS A SERIES OF DOUBLES; IT HAS OFFICIAL AND HIDDEN CULTURES, IT IS A REAL PLACE AND A SITE OF THE IMAGINATION. ITS ELABORATE NETWORK OF STREETS, HOUSING, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, TRANSPORT SYSTEMS, PARKS AND SHOPS IS PARALLELED BY A COMPLEX OF ATTITUDES, HABITS, CUSTOMS, EXPECTANCIES, AND HOPES THAT RECEDE IN US AS URBAN SUBJECTS. WE DISCOVER THAT URBAN "REALITY" IS NOT SINGLE BUT MULTIPLE, THAT INSIDE THE CITY THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER CITY.
>
> CHAMBERS (CITED IN MC CAFFERY, 1991)

BR **has become one of the cult films of postmodern times. The film tells the story of a bounty-hunter, who is assigned to "retire" 5 perfect genetic engineering products (replicants) who revolted against their creators to change their horrible destiny. The film does not take place in a spaceship or space station, but in a city, in the year 2019, a step away from the development of contemporary society. An industrial landscape, lit in part by smog, moonless and starless (Fig.4.3). In the far distance rises a structure (Fig.4.4)—an immense urban arcology that hinders anything of today's Los Angeles.**

Figure 4.3 An industrial polluted landscape. *BR*, 1982.

BR **is viewed as a metaphor (an architectural one) for the postmodern condition. Its future does not realize an idealized, aseptic technological order, but is seen simply as the development of the present state of the city and of the social order of the late capitalism (Bruno, 1990). Total surrender to technology represented in Scott's former film *Alien*, is carried to the worldly context. This horrifying and oppressive atmosphere is linked to the total dominance of late capitalism.**

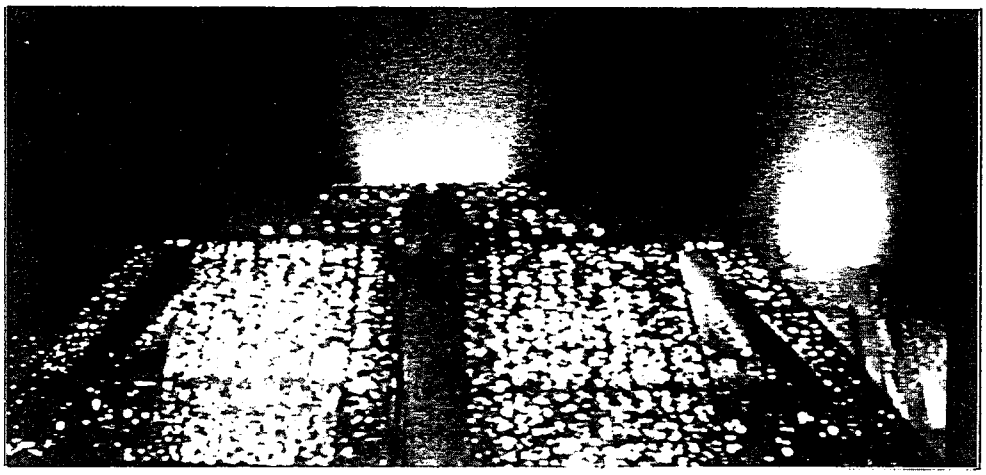


Figure 4.4 Giant pyramidal structures behind the industrial landscape. *BR*, 1982.

Bruno (1990) declares that, the discussion of *BR* will involve a consideration of questions of identity and history, of the role of simulacra and simulation, and of the relationship between postmodernism, architecture and post industrialism.

Those who are responsible for the design plan, Scott (the director), Paull (production designer) and Mead (industrial designer/visual futurist) repeat in the interviews that the future of *BR* is recognisably a continuation of the familiar past. They say that accomplishing this goal meant adhering to a strictly applied, coherent design program which would seem to have evolved through a logical process of accretion from what its appearance is today. Specifically, they agreed to shape the city's future appearance by the assumption that economic development over the intervening years would have been directed toward more lucrative extraterrestrial exploration, leaving those who remained in the increasingly polluted city to make do as best they might by constantly upgrading old technology and pre-existing buildings, rather than replacing them outright (Fig.4.5) (Deutelbaum, 1990).

Figure 4.5 Pre-existing buildings and the new ones coexist in a decayed environment. *BR*, 1982.

Mead gives hints about the design concepts of *BR* in Shay's article (1982):

> "The old city structures would still be there, but the buildings might now be hollowed out and used as service access or plenum chambers for the really big megastructures above them. Or maybe the building would be left where it was, but with a whole column built inside; so you'd have a normal five-story building, and then out of the top of it would be a big pylon that would go up a hundred stories to the underside of another building."

As a result of the design plan's guiding logic, both the city and the objects which fill it so densely finally take on the appearance of what Mead terms "accumulated progress" the layering of detail upon detail which visually attests —like so many layers of geological stratification visible at once— to the cumulative changes these elements have endured over a long period of time (Shay, 1982). At street level, the viewer is overwhelmed with a barrage of visual information, the strange and unfamiliar being cunningly mingled with familiar images from our time, such as the Coca-Cola or Atari logos all of which create a future city of convincing reality that no other SF film has yet managed to repeat (Fig.4.6) (Brosnan, 1991). This "retro-fit" approach to design, or principle of "layering" as Mead also terms the process for its resulting appearance, was applied uniformly throughout the film (Deutelbaum, 1990).

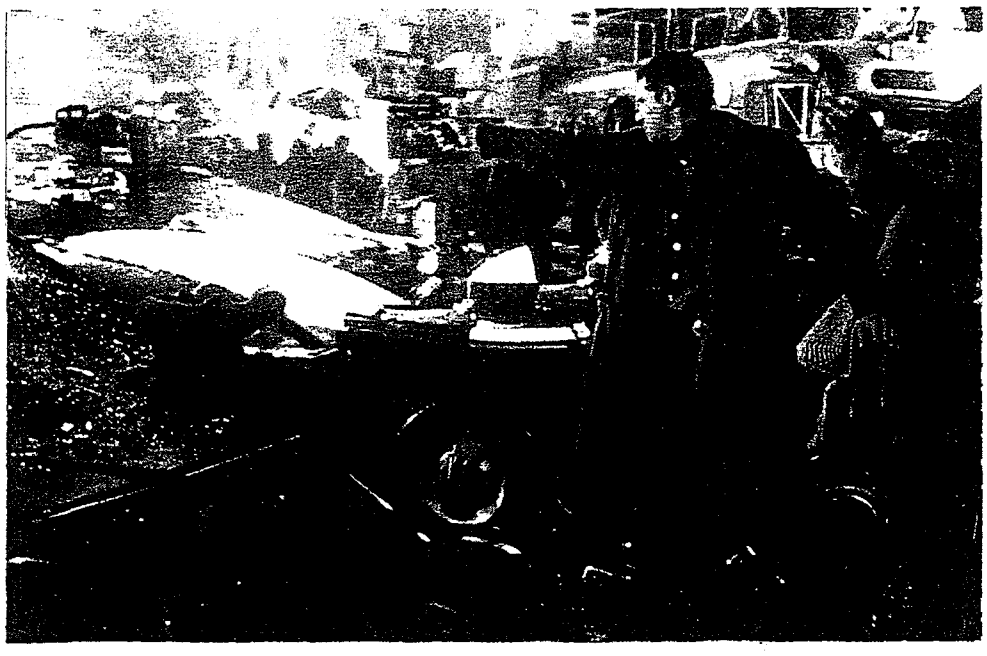


Figure 4.6 Space as text rather than context. Excessive scenography and decentered mise-en-scéne become more figure than ground. *BR*, 1982.

More than simply a device, to ensure the plausible appearance of the city's buildings, the process of "layering" or "accumulated progress" also serves to develop a metaphoric argument based upon sight which answers the question raised by the film about what makes one human (Deutelbaum, 1990).

The bond between postmodernism and late capitalism is highlighted in the film's representation of post industrial decay. The city of *BR* is not the ultramodern, but the postmodern city. It is not an orderly layout of skyscrapers and ultracomfortable, hypermechanized interiors. Rather it creates an aesthetics of decay, exposing the dark side of technology, the process of disintegration (Fig.4.7). Next to the high tech is its waste. Post industrialism recycles; therefore it needs its waste (Laporte, 1978). Nothing in the film escapes this logic. The buildings themselves have developed according to a process of continual accretion whereby the additional parts themselves become the functioning organs of their otherwise

wasted anatomies. Harvey (1989) calls that "the logic of architectural prosthesis", arguing that the destiny of modern architecture, which according to Mies van der Rohe was to "translate the will of an epoch into space" has been abandoned. We find architectural idealism replaced by material pragmatism.

Figure 4.7 The aesthetics of decay, exposing the dark side of technology. *BR*, 1982.

The metropolis itself is both post industrial and post-modern. Everything in the city space speaks of a recycling process that denies linguistic, architectural or

geographical specificities. Its architects, like its inhabitants, are style cannibals seeking assertion, totemism and segregation via the medium of the "neo" (Harvey, 1989). Perhaps inspired in part by Lang's celebrated vision in *Metropolis* (Fig.4.8), made in 1926, the city operates on many levels (Fig.4.9 and Fig.4.10); the upper echelons of society and transportation systems, as in the Lang's film, are at least sixty stories above the street level (Fig.4.11) and only the little people circulate amongst the omnipresent detritus down below (Harvey, 1989).

Figure 4.8 Police Station Building approached from above by flying cars. *BR*, 1982.

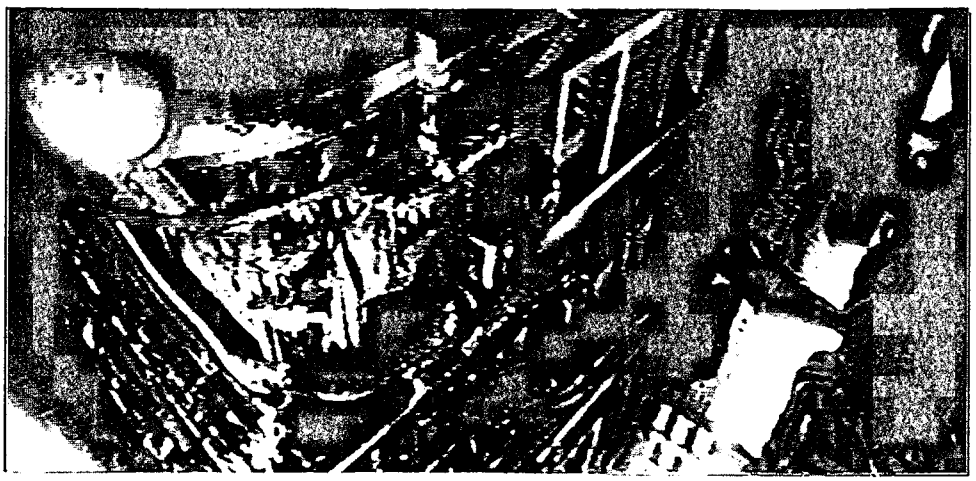


Figure 4.9 Again multi-layered city; but this time it is applied on the existing-city. *BR*, 1982.

Figure 4.10 Stories are added over the pre-existing buildings. *BR*, 1982.

Figure 4.11 Verticality creates a sense of claustrophobia on people on the street level. *BR*, 1982.

The film-noir rain and lights complete the ambience. It is a corrosive rain that veils and wears things away. The psychopathology of Sebastian, the replicants, and the city is the psychopathology of the everyday post industrial condition. The post industrial city is in ruins.

Pastiche is intended as an aesthetic of quotations pushed to the limit; it is an incorporation of forms, an imitation of dead styles deprived of any satirical impulse. The city is called Los Angeles, but it is a hybrid architectural design that

looks very much like Tokyo, NY, or Hong Kong (Fig.4.12). We are not presented with a real geography, but an imaginary one: a synthesis of mental architectures, of *topoi.* Quoting from different real cities, postcards, advertising, films the text makes a point about the city of post industrialism. Bruno (1990) states that, *BR*'s space of narration bears, superimposed, different and previous orders of time and space. It incorporates them, exhibiting their transformations and deterioration. It is a place of vast immigration, from countries of overpopulation and poverty (Fig.4.13). While third world immigrants crowd the city, the petit bourgeoisie moves to the off-world suburbs. Even the language (city speech) is pastiche, a collage of various languages. The aesthetic of Blade Runner, says Bruno (1990), is the result of recycling, fusion of levels, discontinuous signifiers, explosion of boundaries and erosion.

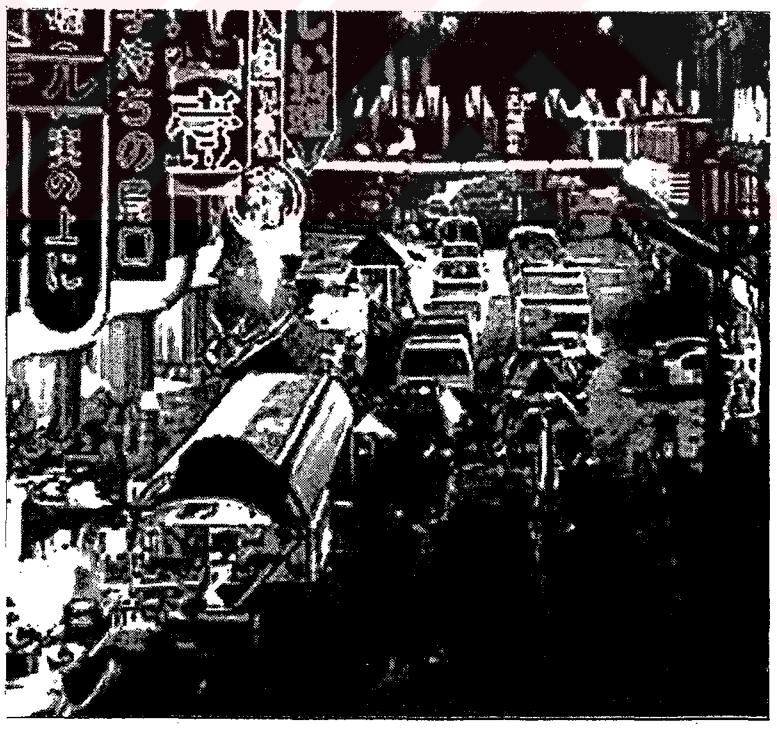


Figure 4.12 NY, Tokyo or Hong Kong: a hybrid architectural and urban design. *BR*, 1982.

Figure 4.13 An over-populated, aggregate and visually exhaustive city. *BR*, 1982.

In the post industrial city the explosion of urbanization, melting the futuristic high-tech look into an intercultural scenario, recreates the third world inside the first. In *BR*, recollections and quotations from the past are subcodes of a new synthesis. Roman and Greek columns, mythological Chinese dragons, Egyptian decorations, Tyrell Corporation's pyramid building, elevators made of stone, Mayan decoration of Deckard's apartment are all aesthetic quotations (Fig.4.14 and Fig.4.15). Pastiche incorporates dead styles; it attempts a recollection of the past, of memory and of history. Bruno (1990) says that the result of pastiche is an excess of scenography.

This excessive scenography effectively depicts a degraded social sphere and evokes a number of contemporary anxieties about the city: our general fear of the city as a chaotic and congested prison from which no escape seems possible; the fear of a

situation in which Nature is so mediated by technology and spectacle that we are no longer able to distinguish the real from artificial. These images of massive depersonalisation, homogenisation, and fragmentation also leave us with an overwhelming sense of loss: a loss of Nature and natural life forms; the loss of identity and continuity with the past and desire for a future; the loss of the sense of the city as a locus for community and more genuine collective activity. In bringing these fears and anxieties to the surface, the film leaves no doubt about their source in corporate capitalism and its ideology of a free market and a free enterprise (Ruppert, 1989).

Figure 4.14 Columns are borrowed from Eastern history. *BR*, 1982.

Pastiche and the exhibitionism of the visual, celebrate the dominance of representation and the effacement of the referent in the era of post industrialism. The post industrial society is the "society of the spectacle", living in the "ecstasy of communication". Addressing this aspect of postmodernism, Jean Baudrillard (1994) speaks of a twist in the relationship between the real and its reproduction. The process of reproducibility is pushed to the limit. As a result, "the real is not

what can be reproduced, but that is always already reproduced...the hyperreal...which is entirely in simulation". The narrative space of *BR* participates in this logic: "All of Los Angeles...is of the order of hyperreal and simulation". There, the machinery of imitations, reproductions, and seriality, in other words, "replicants", affirms the fiction of the real —almost a literalization of Baudrillard's (1994) theory of postmodernism as the age of simulacra and simulation.

Figure 4.15 Eclectic giant columns in a film-noir atmosphere. *BR*, 1982.

Nothing in the previous films prepares us for the ruined frontier of *BR*'s Los Angeles of 2019 —perhaps the most dazzling cinematic vision yet of the results of exploiting the environment for technological progress. This is a film that seems to have been shot inside a dumpster. The city decays with the waste products of its over-technologised, over-commercialised culture. The only thing that is recycled is waste, which forms the raw materials for architecture, fashion and even transportation. The set designs and mise-en-scene in *BR* reveal the future as a

recycled collage of the present (Sobchack, 1988). The people in *BR* seem constructed, sewn together from used parts so that the finished product is not a whole, but a dissonant aberration —not quite like the romantic "global village" ideal of McLuhan. Although LA. projects a feeling of overpopulation, no one seems to live near anyone else (Fig.4.16) (Sebastian's baroque apartment building or Deckard's bleak flat). The city projects no sense of community.

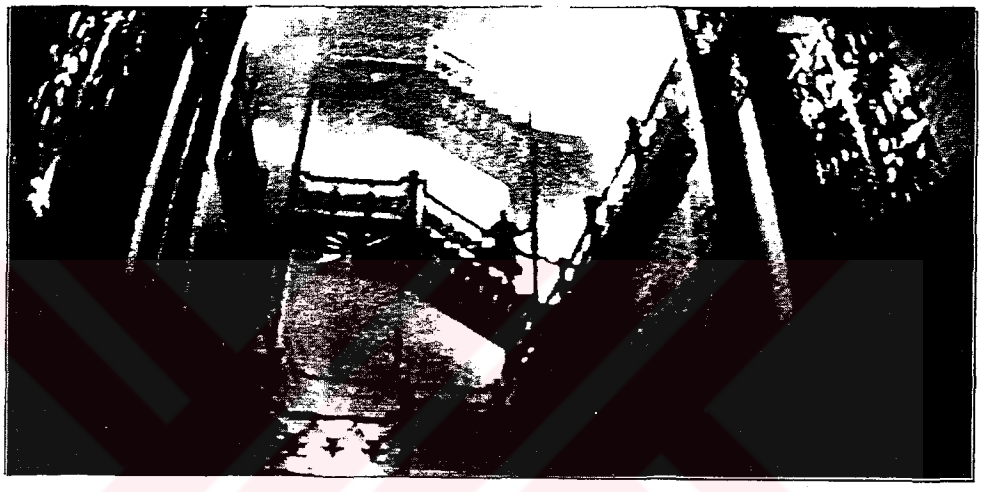


Figure 4.16 The famous Bradburry Building as Sebastian's isolated apartment block. *BR*, 1982.

Figure 4.17 The gigantic billboard. *BR*, 1982.

The city skies are polluted, not only with acid rain, but with obscene blimps whose neon graphics and noisy commercials lure those with enough money to exotic off-world promised lands. At a later-omitted sequence, the Japanese girl on the commercial (Fig.4.17)—most probably selling birth-control pills— watches the fight between a replicant and the detective, simultaneously reacting to it. That would make up a paranoid nightmare (Fig.4.18).

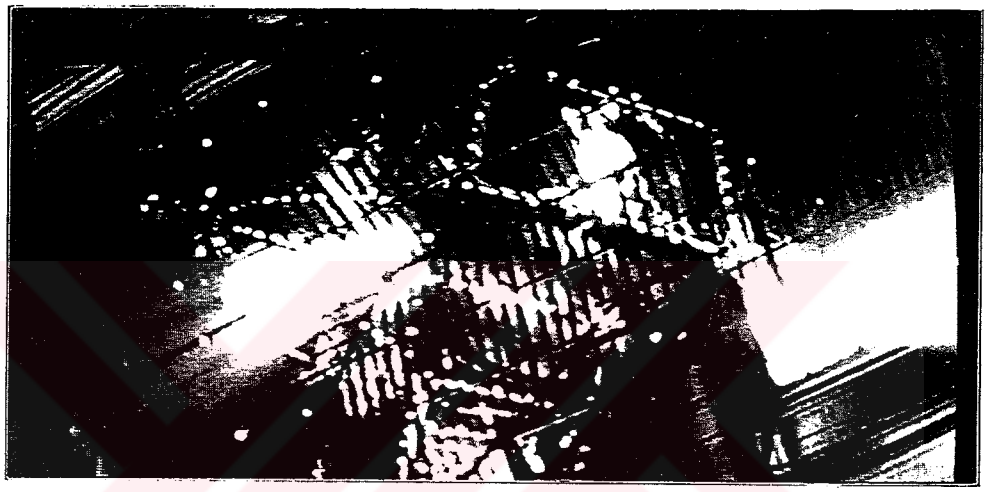


Figure 4.18 The billboard appears again through the glass roof of Sebastian's building. *BR*, 1982.

Tyrell, a genetic genius, heads one of those multi-national (multi-world, in this case) corporations that abstract the concentration of power in the postmodern age; that is, as Sobchack (1988) points out, they have centralised control over the world(s) as marketplace, but from a centre that appears decentered, determining our lives "from some sort of ethereal "other" or "outer" space. This space is most explicitly figured, she writes, in the "impossible towering beauty of *BR*'s Tyrell Corporation Building —an awesome structure whose intricate facade also resembles a microchip (Fig.4.19 and Fig.4.20). The use of the colour makes an impact as well. The building shines with thousands of golden lights coming from

the inside (Fig.4.21). The audience interprets those lights as rooms of the building. This gives the building the appearance of being large in size. The golden colour is translated by the imagination as an object of power.

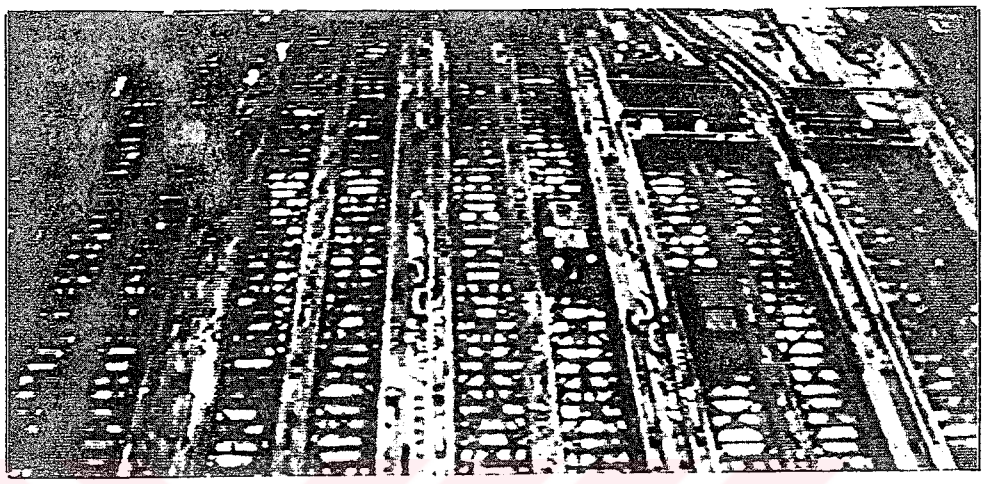


Figure 4.19 Intricate façade of pyramidal Tyrell Corporation Building. *BR*, 1982.

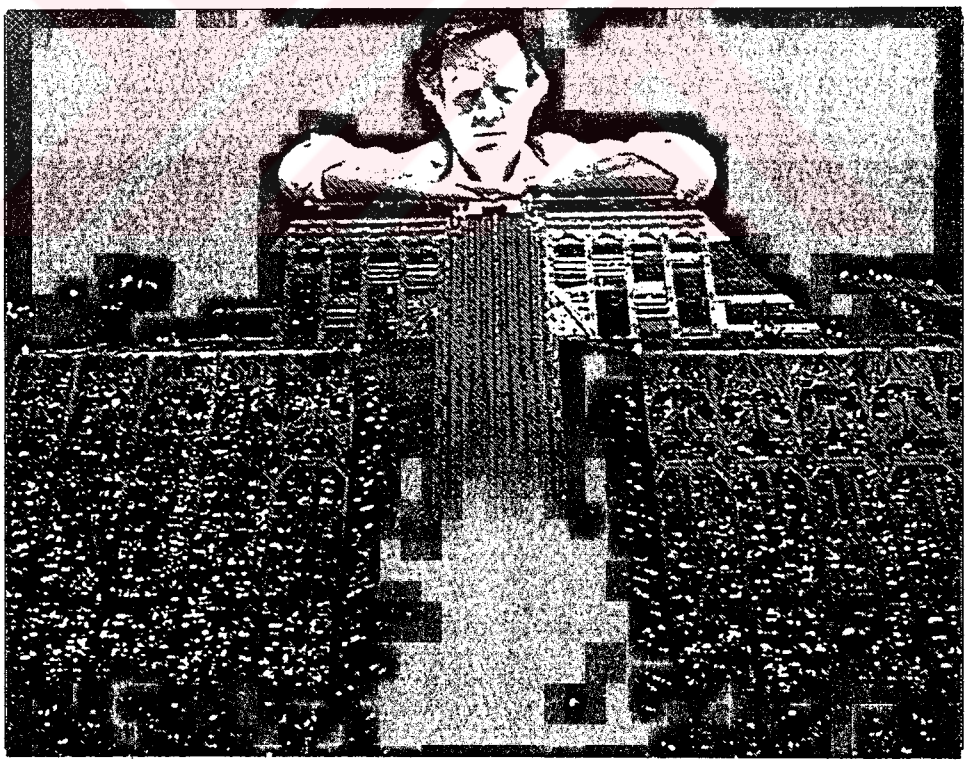


Figure 4.20 Mead with the model of the Megastructure. *BR*, 1982.

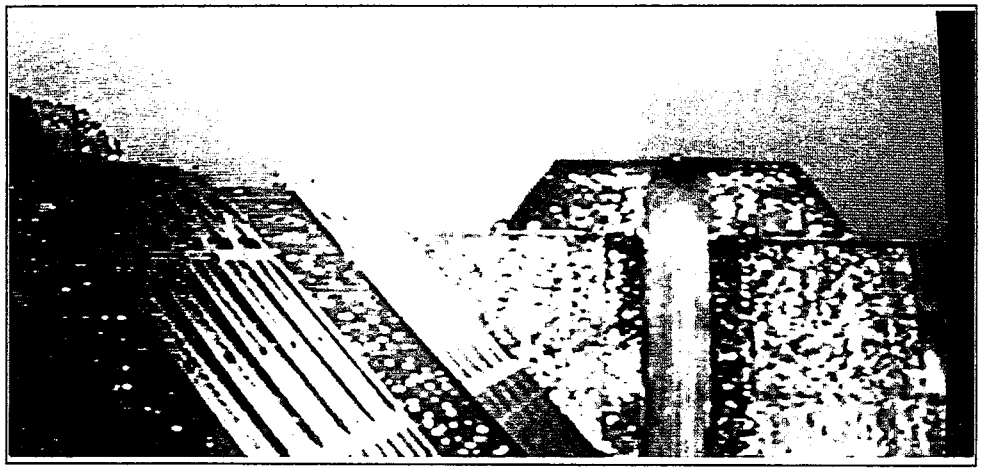


Figure 4.21 The object of power: the structure resembles a micro-chip. *BR*, 1982.

The techno-commercial exploitation of the cityscape does not seems to be reacted over by the inhabitants; they are either resigned to its ruin or plotting to escape. One of the main characters, Sebastian, appears as a victim who is infected by the technological decay of his surroundings: his illness—accelerated decrepitude—is definitely a metaphor. Just like the city itself, its inhabitants face an accelerated decay.

The eye motif definitely has an important role in *BR*. As well as the sound of the word that recalls a fundamental philosophical question, the eye has an important function to provoke thoughts about our visual-based culture and personal reflections on our surroundings. As "the window of the soul," the eye is the point where the exterior reflects inward for understanding of the world and ourselves (Morrison, 1990). But as Morrison denotes, in *BR*, veils, mirrors, rain, smog, smoke, and neon lights define a mise-en-scene that clouds human vision and distorts sight. Particularly whole of the Zhora's death chase is designed to articulate this idea.

In the opening scene, images of replicant's eye are superimposed on shots of the polluted city (Fig.4.22), factory waste fires illuminate the iris, linking the postmodern industrial scene to its most important product (Rushing and Frents, 1995). The search for Tyrell leads replicants Roy and Leon to Chew, the eye maker. "If only you could see what I've seen with your eyes" Roy says to his eye maker, perfectly articulating the transference of identities that has taken place. Even Roy's climactic meeting with Tyrell —the culmination of his hunt for more life by searching for his creator— centres around vision. Bottle base thick glasses of Tyrell manifests his short-sightedness, that would be the cause of his death by his prodigal son. Roy's killing of Tyrell —by crushing the skull and pushing eyes back into his head— is motivated out of revenge for his creator's myopia, in payment for Tyrell's refusal to see what he had made.

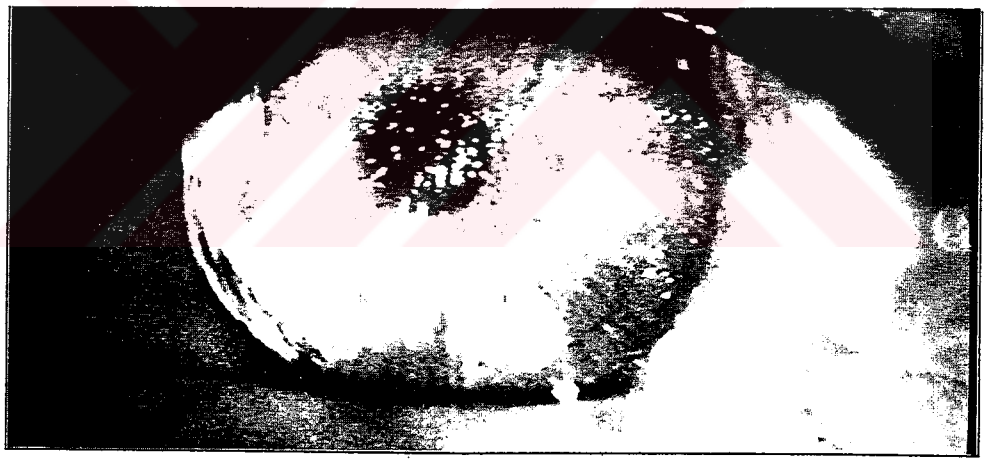


Figure 4.22 Cityscape reflects in the eye of a replicant. *BR*, 1982.

Morrison (1990) comprehensively analyses Zhora's chase scene. Led by the clue of an artificial snake scale, through the labyrinth of Chinatown, Deckard ends up with a dead human double whose murder by his hands moves him to compassion.

The window motif is first presented when Deckard asks the snake maker for the name and address of the snake scale's owner. Then again it is repeated in Zhora's dressing room. Hairdryer is a large plastic bowl through which we occasionally view Deckard by reflection. Zhora actually wears a window in the form of a clear plastic raincoat as she runs from Deckard through the crowded streets. Deckard appears through window reflections, as does Zhora. Camera frames a woman on a bus long enough to look for cues to connect her to the story, but there are none, further promoting a theme of perceptual fragmentation. When Zhora is shot by Deckard, she breaks through a series of store windows (Fig.4.23). This action of breaking through anticipates the scenes when Deckard pulls the veil off Pris and Roy crashes his head through a bathroom wall to Deckard's astonishment. In all these three instances, first an obstruction to vision is removed, then a replicant dies, and finally Deckard experiences human empathy. Once the visual obstructions delienating separateness are removed or permeated, he sees the replicants as himself.

Figure 4.23 Zhora dies breaking the store windows. *BR*, 1982.

The interior design within *BR* is straightforward. The police station to which Deckard is taken, has an entrance reminiscent of large rail stations, while within the office filing cabinets are wooden. The desk is conventional. The presence of fans indicates the absence or failure of air conditioning. Here technology is only partly at work. The office indicates a continuity with a certain image of the present. On the other hand, the cars used by the police do not maintain the same level of continuity. They are technology at a very sophisticated level. The co-existence of various levels of technology, languages, styles strikingly completes the image of the film.

Figure 4.24 Interior of Deckard's apartment. *BR*, 1982.

Deckard's apartment is located on the 97th floor of a deserted building and looks quite standard. As a work of architecture, his apartment's only concession to the future is the voice activated systems and the magnitude of its panorama. For the decor of Deckard's one-bedroom apartment, a 1920s Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis-Brown House, up in the Los Feliz hills of Los Angeles, was used. Two matte shots were painted to make it look like a 20-50 story condominium complex. This

apartment was the first major interior done for the film. The ceilings were very low--only 6'8"--and it felt very claustrophobic inside (Fig.4.24). The walls were all textured concrete block (Fig.4.25). The living room was designed with a couple of sets of glass windows; one set leads to the outside balcony.

Figure 4.25 Interior of Deckard's apartment. *BR*, 1982.

Immigrant communities, corporate headquarters, elements of government and those who work within them seem to be all that has remained. Tyrell Headquarters is housed in something that looks like a replica of an Egyptian pyramid, Greek and Roman columns mix in the streets with references to Mayan, Chinese, Oriental, Victorian and contemporary shopping mall architecture (Harvey, 1989). Internally, its architecture and design is also eclectic. A visionary future is held at bay by size. As with the elevation of Deckard's apartment, here the interior conveys an enormity.

The room where Tyrell first receives Deckard looks more like a glossy, high-tech mix of ancient palace than a business office (Fig.4.26), and his bedroom, recalling another religious era, "a Gothic setting lit with wax candles to suggest a magician's place" (Slade, 1990). He appears as a worldly god, who plays with the secrets of life.

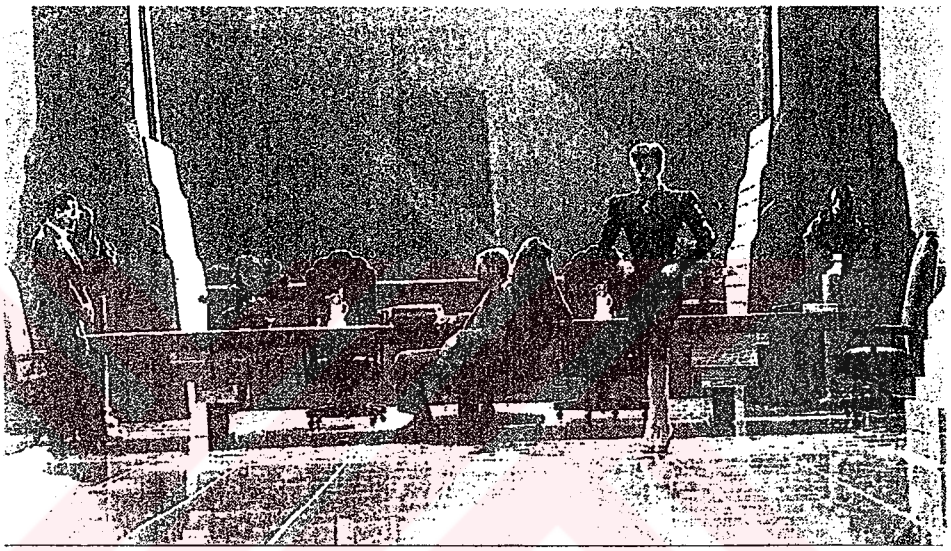


Figure 4.26 Interior of Tyrell's office: high-tech version of ancient palace *BR*, 1982.

One of the most interesting visual concepts within the film lays in a snapshot from Leon's apartment, which Deckard investigates in Esper machine. Off balance and poorly lit, with its living subject obscured at one side, the photo seems at first glance merely to exemplify the aesthetics of typical amateur snapshot in which sentiment overwhelms compositional standards (Fig.4.27). Yet, Deutelbaum (1990) demonstrates that, despite its apparently casual composition and realistic subject matter, it is an image carefully constructed to suggest the well-known traits of Dutch painting. In a witty play of perspective, van Eyck places the viewer within

the depicted room, with the apparent source of the mirrored reflection behind the viewer, in *The Arnolfini Marriage* (1434) (Fig.4.28). The perspective recession of de Witte's *Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals* (1660) toys with the viewer's perception in a different way by so insistently drawing attention through the doorway to the background that one does not immediately notice the man in the bed at the left foreground for whom the woman is playing. In combining the two canvases, the snapshot connects both plays of perspective: the figure in the bed from de Witte's painting is placed in the next room, making her visible only by way of indirect reflection in the convex mirror borrowed from van Eyck. This striking configuration of the two painting's details enables *BR* to surpass either's play of perspective when Deckard employs the Esper machine to search the photo's details.

Figure 4.27 The analysis of the snapshot supports the design strategies of the film. *BR*, 1982.

Inserting Leon's snapshot into the Esper, Deckard calls out verbal coordinates which direct the machine to search and enhance specific details displayed on its video screen's grid. After examining Batty and other elements in the photo's

foreground, Deckard notices a glint in the convex mirror and directs the machine to reposition itself within the depicted space to shoe the glint's source. Moving through what we would think is the image's illusory space to show what cannot be seen directly by the unaided eye, Esper reveals not a witness as in Eyck's portrait, but Zhora asleep in the next room in a bed similar to the one in de Witte's painting.

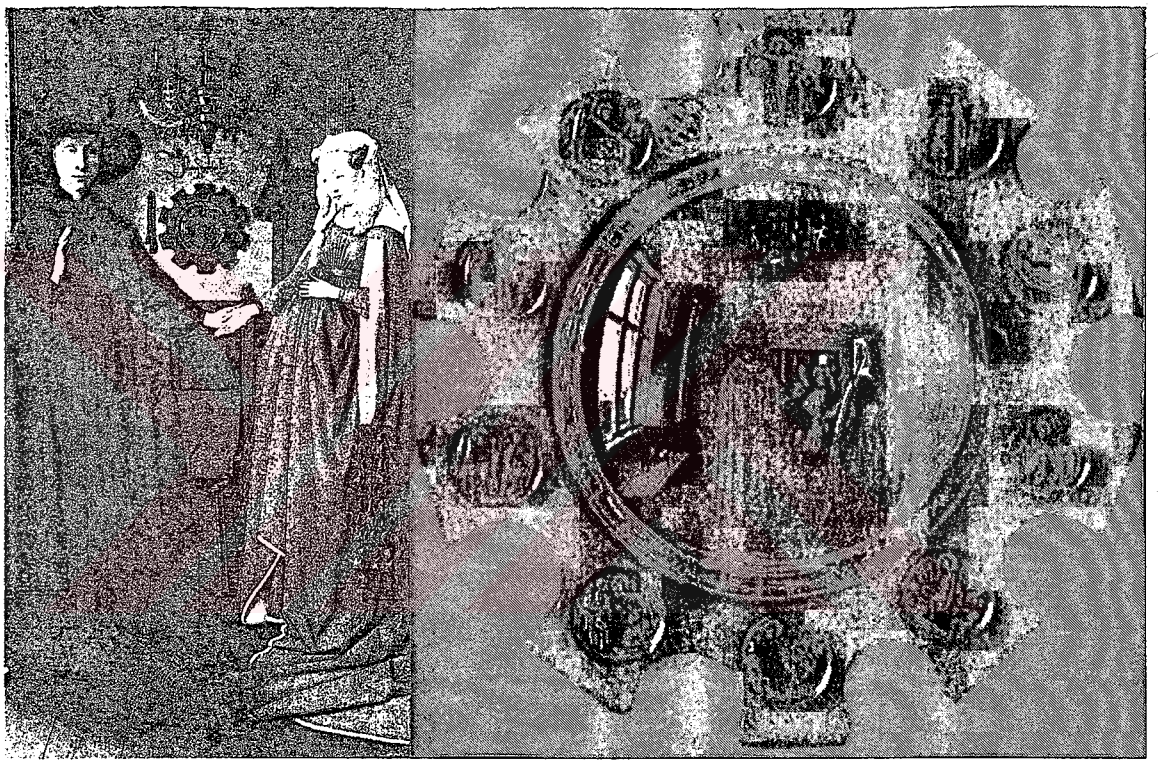


Figure 4.28 Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Marriage*,1434.

This combination, as Deutelbaum (1990) states, of Fifteenth and Seventeenth Century paintings alluded to in a Twentieth Century improvement (the instant snapshot) of a Nineteenth Century invention (the photograph) searched by a Twenty-first Century optical device (the Esper) aptly illustrates the principles of "layering" which guides the film's visual design programme. Here lies another

point: the acknowledgement of the progressive development of perspective which long ago established Dutch painting as the model of realistic illusion in the history of representational painting. Broadly stated, the Esper search demonstrates that by 2019 technology will have collapsed what we assume to be permanent aesthetic distinctions between a depiction of reality and reality itself. Because the Esper can treat the snapshot's depicted space as if it were real, what we regard today as the irreducible difference between imitation and reality will have largely disappeared, just like the disappearance of human/replicant dichotomy (Deutelbaum, 1990). In much the same way the Esper search transforms the representational illusion created by perspective in past art into virtually realistic space, the Tyrell Corporation's advanced technology eliminates a comparable distinction between imitation and reality in its transformation as a stage of another kind of representational illusion, artificially created androids, into virtual human beings.

Scott admits that film-noir style definitely has an essential influence on the atmosphere of *BR*. In film-noir, the world-weary detective journeys inward toward the heart of darkness of the urban landscape, and the hero discovers in the city something other than what he was hired to investigate (Rushing and Frents, 1995). As Slade puts it (1990): "Usually [he discovers] that the trail of corruption leads deep into society itself, and the critique of society that Deckard's quest implies is part of that tradition. Film-noir is a distinctly urban genre, representing a moral response to the abuses of power in civilisation."

Doll and Faller (1990) point that the set of conventions that defines film noir as a genre are based initially on visual style. Place and Peterson (1974) suggest five

characteristics which identify film noir: low-key lighting, claustrophobic framing, shadows and/or reflections, unbalanced compositions, and great depth of field. To these Doll and Faller (1990) add three more: urban landscapes; costuming, particularly trench coats, garments with padded shoulders, and spiked heels; and most often rain-soaked environments. These eight characteristics can be regarded as the iconography of the genre. It is surprising to observe all these characteristics in the visual surface of *BR*. We see that style may express theme as well as narrative.

***BR* posits questions of identity, identification, and history in postmodernism. The text's insistence on photography, on the eye, is suggestive to the problematics of the "I" over time. Photography is the suppressed trace of history, the lost dream of continuity. Photography is memory. The past has become a collection of photographic, filmic, or televisual images. We, like the replicants, are put in the position of reclaiming a history by means of its reproduction. Photography is thus assigned the grand task of reasserting the referent, of re appropriating the Real and historical continuity (Bruno, 1990).The postmodern person —to capture a personal identity, history and narrative— is likely to feel nostalgia for time and memory, and to attempt to reproduce such continuity —restoration of historicity— by collecting material artefacts from the past —photos, memorabilia, junk, the waste products of a consumer culture (Rushing and Frents, 1995). We no longer live in an age of production, but of reproduction.**

Deckard collects photographic portraits clearly from an earlier century. The subjects of these portraits and their relation to Deckard remain ambiguous;

perhaps he is attempting to reconstruct a past, a past where members of society relied more on each other (hence a true community) than on technology. The parallel between Deckard and the replicants —who are assembling a past which replaces a lifetime of memories by collecting photos— is underlined here because both are creating an artificial history.

BR posits the view that unity exists in a chaotic world, but is infinitely expunged by fragmentation. Benjamin (1994) argues that the architectural aesthetic within *BR* that posits an otherness that is only explicable in terms of decay and size has done no more than heighten possible already present in contemporary urban life. That is obviously true. So we can argue that futuristic vision of *BR* is a dense metaphor of our present time. "The finale of the film is a scene of sheer escapism (tolerated, it should be noted, by the authorities) that leaves unchanged the plight of replicants as well as the dismal conditions of the seething mass of humanity that inhabits the derelict streets of a decrepit, deindustrialised, and decaying postmodern world" (Harvey, 1989). In recent films of this genre, the vision of heroic idealism gives way to one better described as savage imperialism. *BR* shares this characteristic to the extent that its dystopian view is the result of unleashed capitalism. Morrison (1990) concludes her article with a remarkable interpretation:

> In Blade Runner, the flame reflected in the human eye in the opening sequence is both the fire of destruction and the flame of life; it suggests the striving for unity in chaos, the struggling against death in a world in which death is inevitable, and both the need for artificial systems of belief and the awareness of our unreliable perceptions, an awareness which eclipses both systems.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

SF world building process has close affinities with architectural design. Whereas architectural and urban designs have to satisfy the functions stated in the programme and the scenario of the designer, SF worlds have to satisfy the requirements of the plot and the requirements of film production. SF artist is certainly more fortunate in experimentation, if compared with practising architects. But the conditions balance when the experimental architecture is concerned. In our age when scientific thinking and technology have become so dominant in making decisions, it is possible to import SF world building methods into architecture. At such a period of accelerated technological progress, an architect has to consider latest and probable technological developments and their impact on society, in order to catch up with the requirements of the age. Thinking on such scenarios will inescapably resemble SF world creating process. Therefore this study discusses both the methods of creating SF worlds and the analysis of these worlds.

Malmgren's diagram (1991), which is offered as a model for the analysis of SF worlds in the second chapter, suggests four interlocking and inter-animating sets of systems: actants, social order, topography and natural laws. He argues that SF is

characterized by the introduction of a novum into at least one of these four systems, originating a factor of estrangement which transforms the basic narrative world into a SF world. The architectural point of view implies focusing on the topological transformations in the analyses. However, it is impossible to analyse the future visions disregarding the context in which actantial and societal transformations determine the form.

The future visions in Hollywood cinema are discussed within three categories. The analysis of the first category discloses that, mythical approach, as was in employing the myth of Apocalypse, still plays an important role in shaping of the future visions, despite the cognitive approach of the genre. Ancient and eschatological concepts cohabit in the contemporary consciousness with notions of scientific progress. Hollywood's "love affair" with Apocalypse and Armageddon (American SF genre's continuing affinity for the dystopian rather than the utopian, with fantasies of cyclical regression or totalitarian empires of the future), according to Jameson (1982) "results from the atrophy of utopian imagination, in other words, our cultural incapacity to imagine the future". Or it may be simply explained with that, our rationale is too confused with the complexity of the reality we face.

According to Jameson (1991), the two major themes that inform and dominate postmodern representation are an "inverted millennarism" and an "aesthetic populism". The former is consistently figured in, among other things, the visual "trashing" and yet operative functioning of what used to be shiny "futurist" technology (Sobchack, 1988). The latter appears as embracing and incorporating

the degraded landscape of "schlock" and kitsch that represents contemporary American popular culture.

Humanity has always witnessed reappearance of myths at times when rationale fronted perplexing problems. Comfort of the authentic may seem to offer solutions; and that relieves tired minds. People like to recognise and to classify. The familiar is comfortable, the new has potential to shock. Therefore fashionable catastrophism, the mass-marketed apocalyptism, the horror/fear/danger supermarket of the mass culture (Sci-fi myths and iconography and earthly disasters) which are run by a vulgar pseudo-utopia, are just part of the repertory of themes and motifs that occur incessantly in popular fiction, film, and television programs. Their impact is to strengthen the status quo; these popular themes compare the present state of affairs, as bad as it might be, with the dangerous, threatening otherness of tomorrow. From the purifying function of the apocalyptic vision, we pass to the terrifying hopelessness and nihilism of a total end, or of the apocalyptic cycle that negate the possibility of motion in space or time.

Within this nihilist societal representation, architecture turns into no-architecture or recycled architecture. These films represent abandoned ruined cities, mostly offering technological trash and infrastructures as a new home for the survived. Ruined cityscapes are portrayed as battleground for the war between human kind and machines.

In the second category, which also covers the case study film *BR*, future visions appear as metaphors of our present condition. These films carry the discussions of

late-capitalism, postmodernism and post industrialism into totally new contexts, in which the presumable outcomes of these arguments are hypothetically sketched out. In these films we observe the mediation of ideologies, which is set as a cultural instrumentality of the SF genre in the second chapter (Kuhn, 1990). These visions are the society's representations of itself in or for itself. A city is at once reality and symbol, both a way of life and a way of thinking.

Once again we come across decayed cities in representations of postmodern society. But this time it is not an entire collapse. Within the polluted, oppressive and horrifying cityscape of the postmodern future raises the slick-tech buildings of the late-capitalist elite. The late capitalist system recreates the third world within the first. Old technology and pre-existing buildings are upgraded, rather than being replaced outright. These films present an aesthetic of decay, exposing the dark side of technology, the process of disintegration. Next to the high tech is its waste. Post industrialism recycles; therefore needs its waste. The buildings themselves have developed according to a process of continual accretion whereby the additional parts themselves become the functioning organs of their otherwise wasted anatomies. Harvey (1989) argues that the destiny of Modern architecture, which according to Mies van der Rohe was to "translate the will of an epoch into space" has been abandoned. We find architectural idealism replaced by material pragmatism.

These films represent infrastructure's demands and influences on the individual. Spaceships symbolises the trap of technology which the society has surrendered to. The cold and menacing spaces with surfaces hostile to the human warmth evokes

associations not of release, but a coffin like confinement. Cities can as well be viewed as larger-scale spaceships in these films. The human habitat is totally isolated from the Nature. The narrative always develops in crowded, aggregate, and polyglot cities.

Pastiche is intended as an aesthetic of quotations pushed to the limit in *BR*. The city is called Los Angeles, but it is a hybrid architectural design that looks very much like Tokyo, NY or Hong Kong. We are not presented with a real geography, but an imaginary one: a synthesis of mental architectures. The feeling of placelessness and of being everywhere coexist. The borders between the model and replicant is ambiguous in architecture too. Architecture is fiction; a recollection of past styles and images, gathered in an eclectic manner.

The last category analyses the representation of cyber space as a promising future. Our experience of spatial contiguity has been radically altered by digital representation in last few decades. The manmade cybernetic universe offers a new home for the future. Whereas many people think that this new environment will alter whole human perception and capability, turning them into godlike creatures, others argue that such a case would be a total submission to technology and late-capitalist ideals. For advocates of the former position, cyberspace offers the potential end of hierarchical and repressive symbolic frameworks of gender, race and class; their criticisers argue that the dominant matrixes of power relations are not eradicated, but reconstituted in the new dematerialised, virtual realm.

This new medium, indeed, is the heaven of the late-capitalist corporate structures. Decentralisation is perfectly being carried to reality at last. Cyberspace is the last, post-national frontier, and offers the means to symbolically reterritorialise the deterritorialised flows of capital expansion.

For that dream universe, the ruined city is the appropriate place to leave the body behind; operating as a kind of cemetery space, the urban ruins of cyberpunk signify a transfer of interest from physical exterior to electronic interior (Sponsler, 1993). Cyberspace can be viewed as a fantasy realm of rebellious escape that derives its glamour from its contrast with the decayed physical world around it. The cybernetic countercultures of the nineties are already being formed around the "folklore of technology"—mythical feats of survivalism and resistance in a data-rich world of virtual environments and posthuman bodies (Sponsler, 1993).

Whereas McLuhan (1965) tends toward a kind of celebratory optimism (at last, the extensions of humanity are uniting us again) most postmodernists are less sanguine. Relying on Jameson's discussion of postmodernism, Sobchack (1988) notes that we now have a new world geography that politically and economically defies traditional notions of spatial location. Electronic technology disperses capital while uniting and expanding its power to an "everywhere" that seems like "nowhere". Where are the multinational corporations that have such power over our lives? SF films visualise this paradoxical paranoia, often projecting it onto some evil "other". As Bukatman says (1971): "We are constantly bombarded by images which decay at an accelerated pace, and this creates a profound sense of impermanence."

The post industrial capitalist culture, which has surrendered to technology, is confused about the question, "what or who does technology serve for?" For a majority, technology does no more promise a future of plenty and liberty; but oppositely, it threatens future of the mankind, by becoming a tool of capitalist power. In *Strange Weather*, Andrew Ross (1991) invites the cultural critics to defeat technophobia, and contribute to the discussions on the future. The lack of public discussions on the technological future deepens our estrangement towards science and technology.

The difficulty of designing future worlds does not lie in a lack of imagination or capacity for futural projection, it is rather that the future and therefore its being thought will always need to be undertaken in relation to present and furthermore, to be seen as a condition of the present. Benjamin (1994) argues that, the possibility of a pure utopia, a place outside all relation, is an impossibility.

The hope that we can find solutions is tempered always by the fear, largely unexpressed, that we may ourselves be part of the problem. We sense that we are facing not one, but two futures: the future of our public allegiances, and that darker future of moral decay, terrorism and nuclear holocaust which occasionally decorates our private nightmares. Unfortunately, both are based on the same evidence. Whether we like it or not, the choice between them is always an act of faith -- which may be why the use of the future as a metaphor for the misgivings of the present has become such a commonplace. It serves the same function in our time as Hell did in Dante's: it provides us with the excuse -- and occasionally the

means -- to confront what we have all too carefully hidden from ourselves (Timberman, 1995).

Where the rationale is incapable of generating alternative secular type of visions, religion and other myth empowering mechanisms would instantly intervene. SF as a genre of experimentation and cognition, has the power to withstand myths which confine humanity's quest towards improving himself/herself. SF is characterised by the introduction of a novum into, at least, one of the four systems listed in Malmgren's diagram (1991). The decision on which system to transform is set by its relevance on the aim of the experimentation. For example, SF presents the reader with a societal novum when it locates its story within an estranged or alternative order. Then, the story paradigm here typically entails the excursion to a utopic or dystopic elsewhere; and the reader or viewer is invited and encouraged to make comparisons between the fictional society and the originary one and to establish normative frameworks. Alternate world fiction addresses questions dealing with the relation of humanity to its physical environment, such as how the environment shapes and conditions all forms of life, how humanity adapt itself in order to accommodate new environments, or how humanist might remake or modify alien environments in order to make them amenable to human existence (Malmgren, 1991).

BR confronts us with complex questions on identity, history, existence, power, reproduction, and technology-human relation. The representation of architecture and city in the film embody statements on these subjects. The context appears as

important as the foreground actor and the story. The director says that sometimes design is the statement.

The design strategy of *BR* is unique and complex. Scott says in an interview that for him "a film is like a seven-hundred-layer cake. (Cited in Sammon, 1996)" In *BR* the process of layering results an overwhelming visual intricacy unseen in any prior SF film. Scott said in an interview that designing *BR* had been more of a challenge than his former SF film Alien, simply because it was much easier to create the environment for a space film rather than a project detailing life on earth (Lightman and Patterson, 1982).

BR's city can simply be seen as the development of the present state of the city and of the social order of late capitalism; it is recognisably a continuation of the familiar past. To accomplish this goal, designers adhered to a strictly applied, coherent design program. As a result of the design plan's guiding logic, both the city and the objects which fill it so densely finally take on the appearance of what Mead terms "accumulated progress", the layering of detail upon detail which visually attests to the cumulative changes these elements have endured over a long period of time (Shay, 1982). The strange and unfamiliar was mingled with familiar images from our time. This "retro-fit" approach to design and principle of layering was applied uniformly throughout the film (Deutelbaum, 1990). According to Sobchack (1988), the set designs and mise-en-scene in *BR* reveal the future as a recycled collage of the present. More than simply a device, to ensure the plausible appearance of the city's buildings, the process of "layering" or "accumulated progress" also serves to develop a metaphoric argument based upon sight which

answers the question raised by the film about what makes one human (Deutelbaum, 1990).

SF's strategies, may well be inserted into architectural experimentation. Such designs may function in attempts to bridge likely gaps between latest technological developments or societal transformations, and human habitat; in attempts to handle any ideology critically; or in attempts to extrapolate the potential of brand new ideas. SF, as a mode of thinking and design method is already present in current condition; but we are not aware of it. When Rogers, one of the most influential architects of our age, was asked the question of the connection between SF and his architecture, his reply was, "...there is indeed a strong link between such futuristic projections as cinema and Dan Dare, but in my case it's never been a conscious link (cited in Palmisano, 1991)."

It is a fact that SF imagery effects the world-views of people, and especially children (Zıllıoğlu, 1984). These future images even do effect their future expectations and decisions subconsciously. Then, it appears as a vital urgency to produce alternative images to break the Hollywood's hegemony in this field. Growth in alternate visions will surely empower us to be more critical, sensitive and active about our present and our mutual future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CREDITS FOR THE FILMS

CREDITS FOR *ALIEN* (1979, 20th Century Fox, 116 min.)

Director: Ridley Scott

Producers: Gordon Carroll, David Giler, Walter Hill, Ronald Shusset

Cinematographer: Derek Vanlint

Writers: Walter Hill, Thilo Timothy Newman, Dan O'Bannon, Ronald Shusett

Production Designers: H.R. Giger, Roger Christian, Leslie Dilley, Anton Furst, Michael Seymour

Costume Designer: John Mollo

Editors: Terry Rawlings, Peter Weatherley

Music by: Jerry Goldsmith

CREDITS FOR *BEYOND THUNDERDOME: MAD MAX III* (1985, American International Pictures, 106min.)

Directors: George Miller and George Ogilvie

Producer: Kennedy Miller Productions

Writers: Terry Hayes and George Miller

Producers: Terry Hayes (co-producer), George Miller (executive), Kennedy Miller (executive) and Doug Mitchell (co-producer)

Director of Cinematography: Dean Semler

Music by: Maurice Jarre

Costume Designer: Norma Moriceau

Editor: Richard Francis-Bruce

Production Designer: Graham 'Grace' Walker

CREDITS FOR *BLADE RUNNER* (1982, The Ladd Co., 116 min)

Director: Ridley Scott

Producer: Michael Deeley

Associate Producer: Ivor Powell

Screenplay: Hampton Fancher and David Peoples. Based on the novel "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" by Philip K. Dick

Director of Photography: Jordan Cronenweth

Production Designer: Lawrence G. Paull

Special Photographic Effects Supervisors: Douglas Trumbull, Richard Yuricich, David Dryer

Visual Futurist: Syd Mead

Art Director: David Snyder

Supervising Editor: Terry Rawlings

Music by: Vangelis

CREDITS FOR *JOHNNY MNEMONIC* (1995, 96 min.)

Director: Robert Longo

Screenplay: William Gibson (Based on his short story)

Production Company: Limited Partnership An Alliance Communications Production

Executive Producers: Steffan Ahrenburg, B.J. Rack, Victoria Hamburg and Robert Lantos

Producer: Don Carmody

Editor: Ronald Sanders

Production Designer: Nilo Rodis Jamero

Visual Consultant: Syd Mead

Art Director: Dennis Davenport

Special Effects Supervisor: Rory Cutler

Costume Designer: Olga Dimitrov

Music by: Brad Fiedel

Special Visual Effects: Fantasy II Film Effects

Cyberspace Sequence: Sony Pictures Imageworks

CREDITS FOR *LAWNMOVERMAN* (1992, Lane Pringle Production)

Director: Brett Leonard

Producer: Ginsel Everett

Story by: Stephen King

Art Director: Chris Farmer

Creative Designer: Albert Co

VR simulation: Angel Studios and XAOS. INC.

Music by: Dan Wyman

Costume Designer: Mary Jane Fort

CREDITS FOR *METROPOLIS* (1927, UFA, 183 min.)

Director: Fritz Lang

Producer: Erich Pommer

Writers: Fritz Lang and Thea Von Harbou

Cinematographers: Karl Freund and Guenther Rittau

Music by: Gottfried Huppertz

Production Designers: Otto Hunte, Erich Kettelhut and Karl Vollbrecht

Costume Designer: Aenne Willkomm

Model and Sculpture designer: Walter Schultze-Mittendorf

CREDITS FOR *TRON* (1982, Walt Disney Productions)

Director: Steven Lisberger

Producer: Donald Kushner

Production Designer: Dean Edward Mitzner

Story by: Steven Lisberger and Bonnie MacBird

Music by: Wendy Carlos

Conceptual Artists (Electronic World): Syd Mead, Jean 'Moebius' Giraud, Peter Lloyd

Costume Designers: Elois Jenssen, Rosanna Norton

Art Directors: John Mansbridge, Al Raelofs

OTHER FILMS

***RUNNING MAN* (1987, Director: Michael Geaser)**

***STAR TREK: WRATH OF KHAN* (1982, Director: Nicholas Meyer)**

***THE TERMINATOR* (1984, Director: James Cameron)**

***TOTAL RECALL* (1990, Director: Paul Verhoeven)**

APPENDIX B: LIST OF READINGS

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