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The Tannhäuser Gate.

Architecture in science fiction films of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century as a component of utopian and dystopian projections of the future

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The frame from the film *Metropolis*, dir. F. Lang; Universum Film AG (UFA), Neubabelsberg 1927

I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die[1].

Films in many ways represent views on social life in the more or less distant future. Pluralism of messages contained in them extends from the vision of the so-called bright future to manifesting beliefs about the fall or even the annihilation of the Earth civilisation. Also in the case when creators of a given piece created their image of existence in epochs that were just to come in isolation from objective justifications and unleashed their fantasies their works belonged to the stock of predictions rooted in specific historical conditions. The fantastic vision therefore had limits set by current ideological and political situations. "Even our wildest imaginings are all collage of experience, constructs made up of bits and pieces of the here and now", as Fredric Jameson wrote[2]. If we limit our research on projections of the future only to the time after the end of World War II, it can be noticed that the optimism, still prevailing in the 1950s and 1960s both in the communist East and the capitalist West, gradually changed into pessimism and lack of perspectives. Whereas when we look at films from the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries we can register a lack of direction of predictions corresponding to the helplessness of liberal democracies towards negative phenomena of the present and the increasing visible lack of ideas for the modernisation of political systems.

Among the various genres of cinema, the images of the future were most often presented in films conventionally defined as science fiction. Starting from *Metropolis* (a 1927 film by Fritz Lang), images of the consequences of the characteristic phenomena of the present, among which the most frequently mentioned were the overgrowth of technical values over natural ones, were all too often combined with the presentation of works of architecture[3]. At the same time, the film performances of the buildings did not only play the role of backstage scenes, but often correctly communicated the important ideological contents of individual works of cinematography. However, even the most bold images of architecture used in the film had their real patterns, as it was for example in the case of the monumental residence of industrial magnate Joh Fredersen shown in *Metropolis* inspired by the impressive water tower built in 1911 by Hans Poelzig in Poznan[4]. Reflecting on the sources of film architecture and the processing of real objects allows to bring out additional messages of specific works, and it should be noted that the reinforcements of expressive values of the originals by set designers sometimes made of the buildings actors expressing proclamations beyond the possibilities of natural language.

[1] Monologue of a replicant Roy Batty from the film Blade Runner.

[2] **F. Jameson**, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, London – New York 2005, p. XIII.

[3] **P. Aleksandrowicz**, *"Metropolis" Fritza Langa jako pierwowzór i inspiracja współczesnych filmowych dystopii, [in:] Narracje fantastyczne*, ed. **K. Olkusz**, **K. M. Maj**, Kraków 2017, https://factaficta.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/narracje-fantastyczne-red-ksenia-olkusz-krzysztof-m-maj.pdf (access date: 25 IX 2018).

[4] The set designer of the film was E. Kettelhut; see **W. Pehnt**, *Expressionist Architecture in Drawings*, New York 1985, pp. 81, 82; *"Metropolis". Ein filmisches Laboratorium der modernen Architektur*, Hrsg. **W. Jacobsen**, **W. Sudendorf**, Stuttgart 2000, p. 15, fig. 9, p. 106, fig. 26; **A. Kaes**, *"Metropolis" (1927). City, Cinema, Modernity, [in:] An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era Weimar Cinema*, ed. **N. Isenberg**, New York 2008, p. 175; **C. D. Guschelbauer**, *Formensprachen der Filmarchitektur im Weimarer Kino*, Master's thesis under. Univ.-Prof. Dr. B. Marschall, Universität Wien 2010, http://othes.univie.ac.at/9274/1/2010-04-13_0216452.pdf (access date: 25 IX 2018), pp. 82, 86–87.

Cinematographic works are rarely carriers of serious content, as such a focus would run counter to their spectacular character and entertainment objectives. As Werner Herzog said: "Film is not the art of scholars, but of illiterates"[5]. Even among cinematographic pieces with philosophical themes, socially or politically engaged, what dominates are forms that provide the viewer with pleasure (or perhaps contrariwise – arousing fear), but – maybe apart from documentary films – that are not research oriented or do not bring valuable cognition. The attribution of cognitive deficiencies to films touches only one side of their character. The autonomy of art in the face of moral or epistemic problems, strongly outlined in Immanuel Kant's aesthetics, aroused doubts already at the time when it was first formulated. Works of art cannot be detached from the practice of individual or social life, and even musical works became components of reflections on the destiny of human or the desired social system. Also in the case of films, as if deliberately devoid of intellectual threads, it can be seen that they reflect criticism of certain tendencies in collective life and transfer current deficiencies in an exaggerated way to the concepts of future times.

Predicting certain social phenomena or changes in the basic behaviours of individuals based on the recognition of annoying manifestations in their current existence is so uncertain that it rarely leads to accurate scientific forecasts. Such situation even encourages to make less logically organized predictions the intuitive character of which however is not an obstacle to obtaining accurate results. Cinematographic works are probably the best area in which the future was projected with great freedom, while at the same time diagnoses of the present and fears of what might happen were depicted.

The reflections on the coming times contained in films can be grouped into utopian and dystopian images. The variety of definitions of the mentioned types of forecasting leads us to assume that in the analyses below the first term will include predictions permeated by **optimistic belief in positive values** that the future will bring, and the second – by **pessimistic visions**. The intensification of the manifestation of the former ends at the beginning of the 1970s and the document of this change is the report *The Limits to Growth* published by the so-called Roman Club. The second type of prognosis is many times broader and is associated with multiple fears.

Utopian images – optimistic visions: the architecture of glowing future

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of economic and industrial development in the history of European countries (both socialist and capitalist), as well as the United States, Japan and the USSR. Strong competition between the political East and West partially weakened after the Berlin crisis in 1961 and the Cuban crisis in 1962 and

[5] **L. Kent**, *Werner Herzog: "Film Is Not the Art of Scholars, But of Illiterates", "The New York Times" 1977*, no. of 11 IX, p. 83; online: https://www.nytimes.com/1977/09/11/archives/werner-herzog-film-is-not-the-art-of-scholars-but-of-illiterates.html (access date: 25 IX 2018).

turned into a policy of "relaxation" ("*détente*"). This situation was the background for the vision of the development of the world, which, after the expected next global conflict, will move towards never-ending progress and prosperity. In both political blocs a science fiction prose was developed that showed a united humanity conquering the space and entering into relationships with inhabitants of extraterrestrial civilizations. The most popular motif of the novels of this genre became a journey by a spacecraft into distant galaxies and solving problems resulting from the encounter of various cultures. In the field of film art, this type of content was evident in ***Star Trek***, the first series of which was broadcast in the years 1966–1969[6]. The multi-ethnic crew, consisting of, among others, an American, a Russian, a Scottish, a dark-skinned African, a Japanese, but also commander Spock from the Wolkan planet, crossed distant spaces in the spacecraft USS Enterprise (NCC-701) the originator of which was mainly Matt Jefferies, a former American bomber pilot during World War II and then a film designer. The ship's crew was a model of the future civilization, extending to the whole space, aimed at rational overcoming of all difficulties. The utopian habitat created by the set designers was saturated with the atmosphere of disputes as if from UN Security Council meetings and concealed the fact that in principle it was a combination of a bomb plane and a warship – a cruiser or an aircraft carrier. Its airplane-navy architecture in interiors included frugal equipment resembling a control room of an automated factory or a power plant. Subsequent versions of the series *Star Trek* from the 1980s (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*), 1990s (*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*) and the next ones until the beginning of the 21st century turned the steadfast optimism of the original series into a climate of struggling with the dark evil manifesting itself constantly in countless of its varieties.

An encounter with metaphysical evil capable of manifesting itself in an unexpected form (e.g. in the soul of a computer) was shown, among others, by Stanley Kubrick's film ***2001: Space Odyssey*** (1968), which tells the story of a flight of cosmonauts on board a spacecraft Discovery One. During the space travel, the main computer HAL 9000 tries, partly effectively, to murder the ship's crew by demonstrating technology as not so much a positive tool in the existence of humankind, but rather a potential cause of its extermination[7]. The spacecraft in its external form was the result of ideas coming from a large group of originators, as well interior design with the use of projects by well-known artists, such as Arne Jacobsen, Olivier Mourgue or Eero Saarinen. The ingenuity of many solutions applied in the film was mutually connected with the development of technology at that time, which allows us to point out that the modularity of the construction of the ship Discovery One was not only technologically motivated, but also had an aesthetic value, which was taken up, for example, in the Nakagin Capsule Tower built in Tokyo in 1972

[6] See **K. S. Decker, J. T. Eberl**, , *"Star Trek" and Philosophy. The Wrath of Kant*, New York 2008.

[7] See **B. Schauer**, *Escape Velocity: American Science Fiction Film, 1950–1982*, Middletown [Connecticut] 2017, p. 108.

by Kisho Kurokawa. Although Moshe Safdie had used the modular principle in his residential complex in Montreal before, already in 1967, it can be said that the aesthetics of the film also influenced the design of industrial products and architecture.

The horror of the spacecraft, once surrounded with optimism, was introduced by the colossal vehicle of Lord Vader's – Devastator, shown in the 4th episode of *Star Wars*. The star destroyer, which came from the shipyard on the planet Kuat, was 1600 metres long and 450 metres high. It is necessary to recognise its architectural value, as it was the home of 35 thousand crew and 10 thousand soldiers ("storm-troopers"), but at the same time it could also dazzle any lovers of highly lethal weapons with its beauty. The space vehicle that appears on the first stages of the 1977 film saga was actually created by a company founded by George Lucas to create special effects for the cinema, led by John Dykstra. The Devastator in its architectural and visual layer inherits many of the warships: old aircraft carriers (such as Saratoga), battleships (such as Yamato), cruisers (such as the Soviet Groznyj), or destroyers (such as Prichett from the World War II). In post-war architecture, similar aesthetic features were found in brutalist works, which often used ship-like solutions. We can see a work exhibiting stratification modelled on that of ocean-going ships at the La Verpillière High School, built in 1976 by Georges Adilon.

The dying out of positive utopias as early as in the late 1960s can be seen in the vision of the space station presented by Kubrick in his aforementioned ***2001: Space Odyssey***. On the one hand, space stations orbiting the planets and equipped with docking ports for spacecraft seem less destructive than products of military technology, but US and Soviet space programmes have always contained hidden military components, despite the agreements of 1963 and 1967 limiting the deployment of weapons in space[8]. The vision of the orbital station used by Kubrick was based on the concept of the co-creator of V-2 ballistic missiles Wernher von Braun, an SS Major accused of ordering the murder of prisoners working in the Mittelbau-Dora camp, and after World War II the creator of the American space program. Von Braun developed Hermann Oberth' ideas and in 1952 presented in the "Colliers Weekly" magazine his own idea of a circular station, which by rotating around its axis would produce a substitute for gravity[9]. The real stations never reached the level of advancement of von Braun's ideas and in the Salut version only the last two (Salut 6 from 1977 and Salut 7 from 1982) had ports to dock supply missiles. However, in developed forms, they appeared in works of cinematography.

In 1979, the 11th part of the series of films about James Bond appeared, entitled ***Moonraker***, whose negative hero is Hugo Drax, an American billionaire and owner of a space-shuttle construction company. The lunatic visionary has secretly built a station in space where he intends to multiply members of a new perfect human race

[8] See *Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and use of Outer Space*, http://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/186/37/IMG/NR018637.pdf?OpenElement (access date: 6 X 2018); *Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water*, https://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002801313d9 (access date: 25 IX 2018); *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies*, http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html (access date: 25 IX 2018).

[9] From March 1952 to April 1954, "Collier's" magazine published a series of articles by eminent space exploration experts describing the potential of space exploration and the devices that can be used for this purpose. The discussions, beside von Braun, were attended by Harvard astronomer F. L. Whipple, physicist J. Kaplan and space medicine specialist, physicist, and Disney's film consultant H. Haber. The article by von Braun presenting an orbital space station was published as early as March 1952 (**W. von Braun**, *Crossing the Last Frontier*, "Collier's" 1952, no. of 22 III). The text was illustrated by the famous image of the base by Ch. Bonestell (ibidem, p. 25). Comp. also: **N. McAleer**, *Space Stations of the Mind: The First Space Station. Was a Big Hollow "Moon" Made Entirely of Brick*, "Boy's Life" 1989, no. 9, p. 20.

and, at the same time, send capsules from it to the Earth, which will spray a toxin causing infertility in people. In Ian Fleming's novel, which was the starting point for the script, Drax is in fact Hugo von Drache, a former Nazi who tricked himself into the UK and there, with the help of the Soviet intelligence service, was constructing a rocket with a nuclear warhead capable of destroying London. The film ignored the original plot of the novel and focused on the vision of a powerful space station capable of accommodating the crews of several space ferries.

The idea of von Braun was also the basis for a droid control station, which was destroyed by the young Anakin Skywalker in the ***The Phantom Menace*** (a part of the ***Star Wars*** from 1999) and – to a lesser extent – the Death Star – the combat station from the aforementioned 4th episode of the Lucas's saga. Despite military character of this station and inability to compare it with any other architectural work, the Death Star was home for over a million people, including a quarter of a million crew, 160 thousand pilots and hundreds of thousands of soldiers of various formations. To a large extent, the originator of a new species of weapons of the size of a planet was Colin Cantwell, a maker of models for the film, who was also the designer of the Millennium Falcon – the pirate ship of Han Solo and other space ships in the Lucas's saga. The conversion of extraterrestrial laboratories, which the space stations primarily were to be, into weapons capable of destroying entire planets can be seen as undermining of the faith in peaceful development, not only in the sphere of interplanetary policy but also the inter-state one. Similarly, other optimistic visions of the1960s evolved.

According to futurologists, overpopulation of the Earth was not only supposed to force the colonization of space, but also to lead to populating areas which were previously difficult to access, including seas and oceans. Cities elevated high above the surface of the earth, located on floating islands or submerged under the surface of seas and oceans, definitely exceeded the financial and technological capabilities of the 1950s and 1960s, and what prompted to consider their construction was the optimism of that period. When, for example, embryonic underwater habitats were built, they were objects intended only for oceanographic research, or bases for exercises of military naval vessels. Subsequent implementations, in turn, were aimed at commercial purposes, such as hotels and oceanaria. In cinematography they manifested themselves in the 9th part of James Bond's adventures entitled *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and as an underwater city which was the seat of Gungan on the planet Naboo, and which could be seen in 1999 in the aforementioned *Phantom Menace*.

In this film with Bond, Karl Stromberg, a madman billionaire typical of the series, plans to exterminate humanity and settle the chosen survivors in an underwater habitat called Atlantis. The orig-

inator of the sub-oceanic base was Ken Adam, a designer of many bold solutions in the 007 agent films, a Berliner born into a Jewish family, who as a teenager was forced to emigrate from Germany together with his family in 1934[10]. In London, Adam studied architecture, during the World War II he was a RAF pilot, and after the war he became a film set designer and staged 7 films about the adventures of a British agent, from *Dr. No* (1962) to *Moonraker* (1979)[11].

The breadth and architectural rank of Adam's ideas can be fully compared to the works of the members of the Archigram group, who, like Adam, did not become famous due to the implementation of their projects. The projects of Peter Cook, David Greene or other members of the group did not seem to be intended for implementation and they seemed to ignore the practical aspect, but, like the films discussed above, they brought out and highlighted certain social trends and did so in a spirit of infinite optimism. They foresaw the massification of societies, nomadism, the popularisation of tastes, the rise of the importance of technology and its wider than ever entry into the world of aesthetic values. The disturbingly high importance of technology may have been a problem for philosophers and was expressed in the late writings of Martin Heidegger, but it was much more fascinating and eventually reflected in the actual works of the builders, such as the architecture of Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers, or Terry Farrell. The futuristic visions of Adam and the Archigram group coincided in the construction of the MI6 (actually the Secret Intelligence Service) seat, built by Farrel in 1994.

The highest form of optimism of the 1960s and 1970s was the belief that spacecraft travel would lead to colonization and population of other planets and systems distant from our central star. In the second half of the 1970s, such faith in the realm of real space activities was only a relic, but it was revived in the film bringing some diversity to the imagination of foreign beings and their ways of habitation. Post-modernist fantastic cinema, such as the Steven Spielberg's one, had however something more regressive than progressive in itself, and only carries into the space images drawn from the entirely earthly reality. The desert planet Tatooine, about which we could learn in several parts of the *Star Wars* (in the *New Hope* of 1977, the *Return of the Jedi* of 1983, but especially in the *Phantom Menace* of 1999), took not only its landscapes but also its name from the geographical area and the city of Tataouine in Tunisia, and the seemingly unusual houses where the story of the young Anakin Skywalker took place, were the so-called ksars, typical of the area's clay and stone settlements, of which the Berber town of Matmata with its Sidi Driss formation (now used as a hotel) was already the basis for Herodotus's description of rock dwellings. Therefore, it is not a cosmic peculiarity, but rather a common tourist attraction, and certainly a ksar cannot be seen as an unprecedented extraterrestrial habitat. The marshy planet Dagobah, where the young Luke Skywalker

[10] See **Ch. Frayling**, *Ken Adam and the Art of Production Design*, London – New York 2005.

[11] See **L. N. Ede**, *British Film Design in the 1970s, [in:] British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure*, ed. **S. Harper**, **J. Smith**, Edinburgh 2012, p. 55.

[12] Leia was a daughter of Padmé Amidala and Anakin Skywalker, adopted by the rulers of Alderaan planet.

was taught by the master Yoda resembles simply tropical jungles. The snowy planet Hot is in fact the town of Finse in Norway, located at an altitude of 1222 metres above sea level, where Roald Amundsen was preparing to conquer the North Pole in 1910. It is not accessible by car, but it is accessed by rail and by tourists. We learn little about the Alderaan, princess Leia's family planet[12], and its architecture because the planet has been annihilated by the Death Star in the 4th part of the saga. Nevertheless, we know that it fulfilled the dream of many architects of the so-called sustainable development, it was urbanized, but with respect for the beauty of the landscape. The mountainous planet, inhabited by convinced pacifists, demilitarized and with an excellent university, may have exceeded the previous visions of the "garden city" according to the concept of Ebenezer Howard, but in its idea one can find threads from dozens of attempts to carry out such plan, among others in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, and perhaps also in Garden City on Long Island, with quite a nearby Manhattan visible on the horizon of this town. A planet colonized by humans is Naboo, the native planet of Padme Amidala, where, in addition to colonizers, the Gungans live in the underwater towns. The central city of the Earthlings is Theed with its royal palace extended by successive rulers, combining the features of Roman, Byzantine and Baroque buildings. In this environment, Padme and Anakin secretly marry each other and there, after their death, Leia and Luke's mother is buried.

The most architecturally elaborate habitat shown in the *Star Wars* is Coruscant, a planet that is entirely a giant city. The screenwriters singled out its capital Galactic City where they located many buildings important for the course of the plot, including the Galaxy Senate and the Jedi Temple. As we get to know the planet-city more closely, it becomes only a summary of the problems afflicting large metropolises, including the disappearance of industry, the manifestation of social stratification, the rise in crime and the constant threat of terrorist attacks. The landscape of the city does not differ from that of Singapore, Hong Kong or New York, and also in this case the visions of the scenographers did not go far beyond the actual images of heavily urbanized areas.

Dystopian images – pessimistic visions

The first fear illustrated in the group of dystopian films concerns the uncontrolled growth of cities, the disappearance of economic bases in their functioning and, as a consequence, the growth of negative phenomena, and above all, the increase in crime. The future presented in these works is not far away, and the recurring motif is the separated parts of the cities subordinated exclusively to the power of bandits. An American example of such a work is the film ***Escape from New York*** (1981) by John Carpenter, which shows the

New York Manhattan in 1997 as an area isolated from the rest of the city and settled by criminals send there. An almost identical situation in European conditions was presented in the film ***District 13*** (2004). Directed by Pierre Morel and based on a 2004 screenplay by Luc Besson, the story made the main protagonist the Paris district in 2013. The real background to these visions was the functioning of street gangs in large North American cities and street riots in the migrant districts of Paris.

Carpenter's film was rooted in the director's indignation at the role played by President Richard Nixon in the Watergate affair, and drew the conclusion that the corruption at the top of power could have consequences in the social sphere. Predicted in the scenario the increase in crime in New York by several hundred percent logically had to lead to a loss of police control over certain areas of the city, to criminals dominating them and, as a result, to the fall of criminal-controlled districts into ruin. The devastated Manhattan was "played" in the film by East Saint Louis, Illinois, which almost collapsed as a result of economic problems and was destroyed during a massive fire in 1976[13]. The burnt-out quarters of the city expressed disgust and disdain for political power evading moral norms, observance of the law and democratic rules more strongly than the plot itself.

The film by Morel and Besson, which presented a gang-held district separated by a powerful wall too, also show a similar distance from the ruling politicians as described above[14]. Most of the scenes were shot in deteriorated parts of Épinay-sur-Seine near Paris, but for the ruined buildings shown in *Banlieue 13* and its sequel *Banlieue 13: Ultimatum*, fragments of estates in Romanian Piteşti and Serbian Belgrade were also used. One may wonder, therefore, whether the choice of objects made for the needs of the film did not equate the canvas of the film referring to the degeneration of state officials with the consequences of socialism and the cruel war[15].

The second of the distinctive types of social unrest frequently depicted in the films refers to the growth of corporations uncontrolled by the authorities of cities and states, and their taking control over politics, and especially over the influence of the development of weapons and social control devices. Characteristic of such productions was Paul Verhoeven's 1987 film ***Robocop***, showing Detroit under control of criminals, which is to be replaced by the new, excellent Delta City built by Omni Consumer Product (OCP) corporation. The same group includes Paul Anderson's *Resident Evil* (2002), a film about a fictitious Umbrella Corporation that, in addition to its commonly useful production, also conducts secret research into a dangerous virus.

Verhoeven's film is hard to consider as a story about a possible future, because the story told in it, worthy of comic books, had a strong basis in reality. Before Detroit declared bankruptcy in 2013

[13] See **M. Beeler**, *Escape from N.Y.: Filming the Original*, "Cinefantastique" 1996, no. 2, p. 24. Numerous press articles on the film are summarised on the following website: http://www.theefnylapage.com/pressarticles.htm (access date: 25 IX 2018).

[14] See **N. Archer**, *Paris je t'aime (plus). Europhobia as Europeannes in Luc Besson and Pierre Morel's Dystopia Trilogy, [in:] The Europeanness of European Cinema: Identity, Meaning, Globalization*, ed. **M. Harrod**, **M. Liz**, **A. Timoshkina**, London 2015, pp. 188–190.

[15] See **D. Pettersen**, *American Genre Film in the French Banlieue: Luc Besson and Parkour*, "Cinema Journal" 2014, no. 3, p. 47.

and the famous car factories were finally closed down, the city's decay had been uninterrupted since the racial unrest in 1967. The city gradually lost not only wealthy inhabitants, but also decreased its population by over 60%. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s it reached the highest poverty and unemployment rate in the United States and was described as the American capital of arson and murder, and through the image of abandoned factories, warehouses and tens of thousands of residential homes it achieved the status of the most ruined city in the whole country.

At the time of the film's making, one could still have been under an illusion as to the future fate of Detroit, and the errors in its management were sometimes more inherent in the Afro-racist policy of the city council than they were solely the fault of one corporation, but in reality the effect achieved was beyond the scope of the fantasy of the film. Currently, there would be no need to use the Pittsburgh plant in the suburbs of Monessen in Pennsylvania to shoot the scenes in a closed steel plant, as Detroit itself would provide a better setting. It can also be noted that the 170-metre Reunion Tower (1978) in Dallas and the neighbouring Hyatt Regency buildings were chosen as the headquarters of a corrupt industrial corporation for convincing reasons[16]. The tower unambiguously suggests business control over the city, while the hotel's cover with reflective glass symbolizes isolation and secrecy in terms of decisions taken by the management of the OCP. A brutalist concrete town hall building in Dallas (by Ieoh Ming Pei in 1978) was chosen as the police headquarters and elevated by film methods to become a fortress surrounded by gangs and internally entangled in dealings between the public authorities and a degenerated corporation.

The first part of ***Resident Evil*** with Milla Jovovich takes place in a laboratory hidden under the city of Raccoon or rather in an extensively large research centre, where the virus that zombies its staff has spread. The film's character inherits much from the claustrophobic climate of a computer game, but it also uses the glass and laboratory character of its interiors to create the fear of uncontrolled scientific research carried out in secret by private companies. Berlin underground stations were chosen for the scenes taking place in the underground train, especially the unusually high, ultramodern U-Bahnhof Bundestag designed by Axel Schultes, whose exterior design was also used by the scenographers of *Æon Flux* and *Equilibrium*. The impersonality of technologically improved architectural modernism has often been associated with the de-humanisation of science and technology and has served to reflect on the possible consequences of such tendencies.

The third kind of fear on screen concerns precisely the possibility of slipping out of supervision of research on biological weapons, viruses and consequences of other scientific experiments (also in the field of technical sciences). Works with such content include ***12 Mon-***

[16] The architect of both buildings was Welton Becket; see **G. H. Douglas**, *Skyscrapers. A Social History of the Very Tall Building in America*, Jefferson [North Carolina] 1996, p. 244.

keys directed by Terry Gilliam in 1995 or the aforementioned ***Æon Flux*** – a piece by Karyn Kusama from 2005.

Gilliam's film was, unusually for science fiction, located mainly in a psychiatric hospital and set in a model Eastern State Penitentiary prison in Philadelphia, built in 1929 by John Haviland, closed in 1971 and now intended to be visited for the sake of the cell in which Al Capone served his sentence. The juxtaposition of hospital and prison is not surprising in the context of Michel Foucault's philosophy, which drew attention to their similarity in terms of control over the body and mind that forms the foundation of modern societies. The film's protagonist's search in the past for a place of hatching of the virus created in Dr. Leland Goines's laboratory, which led to the extermination of humanity in 2035, thanks to the scenography used, extends the tracing of the roots of the extermination to science understood by Foucault as a part of power. Expanding the role of scientific knowledge and education, or the pride that society has taken in building excellent prisons and developing medicine, therefore makes it possible to anticipate not only social progress, but also extreme oppression and destruction[17].

Karyn Kusama's film, even though it was made by the daughter of two psychiatrists, did not further develop the role of control over the minds as a derivative of science constantly depraving itself; nevertheless, similarly to Gilliam's film, it exploited the issue of threats posed by scientific research. Again, a seemingly unobvious juxtaposition of modernity, science and extermination was made, but this time with the extraordinary use of works of modernist architecture[18]. The scenery of events told in the film were several dozen outstanding works of Berlin architecture, mainly from the period after the end of the II World War. Watching the work in question, it can initially be assumed that its story of the survivors of the Holocaust, who settled in the isolated city of Bregna and live there in excellent conditions, managed by a group of scientists, is yet another criticism of the oppressive society, and the modernistic architecture is aimed at strengthening the fear of the potential consequences of the excess of rationalism. However, the content of the film does not follow the principle of a simple plot, as in the case of post-comic films such as *Batman* or *Spiderman*. Although the story is based on an animated film series by Peter Chung, it introduces unusual ambivalences, such as the fact that with the course of the film it turns out that not only the resistance movement against the oppressive power has been manipulated, but also the members of the ruling group of scientists. The ambiguities contained in the film go beyond the plot and concern the architecture used there. Every deeper go beyond the basic content of this production, especially towards a closer understanding of the architecture presented in it and its political context, leads to a story different from the one directly contained in the adaptation.

[17] The modernity of which the final station is the concentration camp was also the content of **Z. Bauman's** reflection in his book *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989).

[18] See **D. Rybicky**, *"And Maybe There Is a Way to Give Hollywood the Kick in the Ass That It Leeds". An Interview with Filmmaker Karyn Kusama*, [in:] *Filming Difference. Actors, Directors, Producers and Writers on Gender, Race and Sexuality in Film*, ed. **D. Bernardi**, Austin 2009, pp. 263–264.

The members of the Bregna government meet in a room which, in a non-film setting, is the column room of the Berlin crematorium in the Treptow district. This fact alone should lead to an interpretation that the use of such a place was intended to arouse terror with the soullessness of hyper-rational power. Perhaps not everyone can be easily frightened at the moment, however. The exalted elegance of the internal hall of the sanctuary of the funeral ceremony was not born exclusively of the spirit of pure reason, but inherited much from the peristyles of Egyptian temples and ancient houses, and furthermore was accompanied by symbolic elements from the resources of reflection on death and eternity. It is worth putting forward a thesis that it is in the nature of this room that the solution to the problem of a radically different story about a perfect country and society is found. The story, which was not at all intended by the screenwriters, but concerning – which was particularly surprising – a utopia that was largely realized. In order to develop this story, one should refer to one Berlin interior, different from that shown in the film, but equally sterile in its ideas, i.e. the Room of Silence created in the northern annex of the Brandenburg Gate.

While thousands of people cross the Gate every day, this small room, although open to the general public, is of little interest to tourists. Its idea was born among the elites of East Berlin in the 1980s, but only came to fruition a few years after the reunification of Germany. An almost empty room – as if the spiritual heart of the new republic – is dedicated to tolerance, to halting xenophobia, to harmonious coexistence between people of different origins, but also, albeit discreetly, to weakening the role of religious ideologies. The simplicity of form, characteristic of the works of modernist architecture, should therefore be associated not only with the cult of reason, but also with the religion of freedom from the intrusive and sometimes murderous ideas of God, the nation or the state. The neat architecture of the Anatomical Theatre hall designed by Carl Gotthard Langhans or the buildings of the Bauhaus Archive, as well as other architectural works "performing" in this film, can therefore be read as illustrations of the history of efforts to promote a more open society than many of the previous ones. They would recreate a tale that was largely different from the one rooted in the script and which would be also worthy of being persistently transferred into the real world.

The fourth of the film's fears is connected with the development of robotics and genetic engineering, especially with the alarming appearance of androids – humanoid robots and the far-reaching effects of research on artificial intelligence. The concept of a terrifying creature created by human in their own image is rooted in the *Bible*, the *Talmud* (the *Sanhedrin treatise*) and *Sefer Yetzirah*. At the beginning of the 19th century, the idea of Golem was reflected in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* novel and James Whale's 1931 film. In late 20th-century films, cyborgs connecting electronic elements with organic ones

or already wholly imitating human organisms appeared in Ridley Scott's 1982 ***Blade Runner*** (1982) and James Cameron's ***Terminator*** **(**1984), although it should not be forgotten, that the combination of the remains of a semi-dead man with complex electronic parts was also presented by the above mentioned *Robocop*, and moreover by Darth Vader in *Star Wars*, and an individual with electronics was also the detective Del Spooner fighting with clusters of robots in Alex Proyas's film *I, Robot* (2004).

After several decades since its premiere, Scott's film has been recognized as the most expressive work of its genre. It, like *Æon Flux*, contains two stories: one directly told by the plot and the other expressed by the set design. In the case of *Blade Runner*, a different approach was followed than in *Æon Flux* and the two stories, although not fully identical, correspond to each other. The first one, motivated by the psyche of the author of the novel that formed the basis of the script, was a contemplation on the decisive elements of the individual's identity. The film's reflections suggest that they are not too deep and that they can be reduced to the functioning of memory, unreasonable phantasies, dreams and the ability to empathize. If we assume that these components are evidence of an individual's humanity, then a different problem arises: is an android to whom the above functions have been coded a person? Why is a replicate not subject to the same life protection as a natural human being? Especially in a situation when it surpasses the original with the richness of experiences and human depth. This exactly is attested to by the final scene in which the replicant Roy Batty ends his life with a monologue reminiscing with delight "C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate" seen in the space, a formation of asteroids invented for the purpose of the film. "All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain", he adds with a phrase worthy of a good poet just before his death.

The scenery used in the film presents a vision of a world that has actually come to an end and is dying together with those who have contributed to it. The death of the brilliant inventor of the replicants from the hands of his creations is suggested by the slow destruction of the environment in which people and doubles have to exist. The city shown in the film is Los Angeles in 2019 with a population of 90 million, mostly Asian emigrants wearing strange, oriental costumes. The domination of Asians was emphasized by powerful advertisements showing a Japanese woman dressed in a kimono. There is constant darkness and acid rain as a result of nuclear bombs, which have spread huge amounts of dust into the atmosphere. This vision is surprisingly likely in the light of the knowledge of volcanic eruptions, which, like the eruption of Gunung Tambora in 1815 on the island of Sumbawa in Indonesia, are capable of throwing billions of tonnes of ash into the atmosphere, changing the climate on Earth and causing the effect of the lack of access to sunlight throughout the planet.

Most of the scenes of urban life were shot in a film studio in Burbank, where models of old houses were built using methods similar to those used in Lang's *Metropolis*, which in the new weather conditions were encircled with pipes supplying fresh air. Earlier than in Scott's film, that is in 1978, Cook presented a vision of the Trickling Tower, in which the older building was wrapped in newer, more modern elements. In turn, in real architecture pipes running along walls of the building were used in Rogers and Piano's design of Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1977[19]. Perhaps it should be assumed, therefore, that the futuristic vision of Syd Mead, the main screenwriter of *Blade Runner*, at least in these elements did not go too far into the future[20]. Besides Mead admitted that in shaping the models of the buildings he used the models of New York buildings, which he only magnified on a grand scale.

Also the buildings of the studio in Burbank "took part" in the film, previously used for gangster and detective noir style films, assimilated to American productions by masters of German Expressionism – Fritz Lang and Otto Preminger. The use of objects from old films was part of the director's more general idea of composing a work from references to well-known cultural products or civilisations. The quotations used did not always have a logical justification, but this was the reason why they accurately reflected the director's consciousness and future predicted by him. This current and potential state of mind can be described as intensified pluralism, in which temporarily important elements of culture last only in a degraded state and do not constitute determinants of the world of individual or collective values. Each of the characters in the film is affected by the weakness of their moral and cognitive systems, which is emphasized by an architectural background saturated with elements of a declining civilization.

The film begins with a view of Los Angeles from a distance and from above. The city presents itself through the crown of factory chimneys, from which the flames of burning industrial gases explode from time to time. As Jonathan Glancey noted, this vision corresponded strongly to the industrialized landscapes of the Tyneside and Teesside conurbations, known to the director from his childhood in England[21]. Like many other contemporary critics of civilization, Scott has adopted the belief that all the ills of living in extremely urbanized environments are rooted in the uncontrolled and rapid development of technology and industry. The city is dominated, as in Lang's *Metropolis*, by a gigantic building of Eldon Tyrell's corporation, which produces humanoids to replace people in all professions. Douglas Trumbull, the originator of the idea of placing the headquarters of the corporation in a pyramid with Aztec motifs, probably had similar reasons for the shape of the building as Antonio Sant'Elia in the skyscraper projects of 2014. In both cases, the adopted shape of the building enabled better illumination of the rooms,

[19] It's hard to say whether Scott's 2015 thesis that Mead's set design was copied by famous architects is true; see **S. Graham**, *Vertical noir: Histories of the future in urban science fiction*, "City" 2016, no. 3, p. 396.

[20] See **S. Mead**, **C. Hodgetts**, *The Movie Art of Syd Mead: Visual Futurist*, London 2017.

[21] **J. Glancey**, *From "Metropolis" to "Blade Runner": architecture that stole the show*, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/nov/05/architecture-film-riba (access date: 23 IX 2018).

while its divisions allowed to distinguish different functions of the building.

The android creator presented in the film, a brilliant J. F. Sebastian lives in an abandoned place "played" by the Bradbury Building of Los Angeles that has been already used several times in other films. There can be some doubts about the logic of this location, when a major associate of Tyrell Corporation lives in a collapsing tenement house, and an impoverished android hunter in the vast Ennis House of Frank Lloyd Wright's project. The explanation for this choice lies in the extraordinary visuality of the Bradbury Building and the possibilities it offered the filmmakers to shoot chase scenes essential to the film of that kind. Harrison Ford (playing the protagonist Rick Deckard) sneaking up the stairs of an unusual skylit atrium and fighting the final battle with Rutger Hauer as Roy Batty, could have been well filmed when their combat scenery was an object of astonishing character from the beginning of its existence. Having a rather ordinary appearance on its external side, it concealed a large width of a staircase with an internal pane and completely covered with a large glass roof. Cast iron balustrades of stairs with filigree decorations and also cages of internal elevators made of forged iron are illuminated with the upper light creating the impression of being in the cathedral of modernity from 120 years ago. This effect was certainly intended by the architect of the building, Georg Wyman, who had been encouraged to build it by his 6 years earlier deceased brother during the spiritualistic procedures. In addition, he relied on the influential book by Edward Bellamy *Looking Backward* from 1888. Bellamy's work, presenting a socialist utopia, contained an image of a public building from 2000, which was flooded inside with light from a dome placed on top of it. Such an effect would have been easy to achieve with later technical possibilities, but at the end of the 19th century it stood out as an example of visionary courage and that is why it gained influence on the designer susceptible to unusual suggestions. For film enthusiasts, the character of the scenes in the building was complemented by the fact that the name Bradbury can be associated with Ray Bradbury, the author of the dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Such a looping of associations can be considered typical of the postmodernism of the 1980s and it was also reflected in the knotting of various historical periods and the weakening of the division of time into the past, present and future, which is characteristic of Scott's film.

The consequences of robotics and the production of artificially intelligent humanoids are also explored in Proyas's above-mentioned film ***I, Robot***. The director tried to solve the problem of threat from androids by assuming that the basis for designing their consciousness should be encoding in it, as a decisive condition, the prohibition of harming people. He also assumed that their creator should be a person who meets the highest moral requirements, and that the

corporation producing robots should operate in an open and transparent manner. The U.S. Robotics corporation building, presented as a large glass laboratory with an atrial space penetrating the entire interior of the facility, strengthened the impression of applying all the rational and technical protections against improper functioning of the thinking automats. Instead of the darkness that saturated Scott's film, Proyas's film was set in interiors carefully illuminated by natural and artificial light. Although the skyscraper of the USR dominates the landscape of Chicago from 2039, its large hall is widely accessible and the open internal space allowes to look at most of its storeys. The transparency of the building was to prove the purity of the company's intentions.

At the same time, the work of Proyas showed insoluble contradictions in terms of protection against machine rebellion. It led to the conclusion that it was impossible to obtain a safe product equipped with an artificial mind. Human creations can only be endowed with an intelligence that imitates their creators, so they inherit from them the tendencies for evil, the paranoia and the lust for unlimited power that they claim to exercise in the name and for the sake of the "sovereign". But who becomes a sovereign in the film, however, is not the creator but the central V.I.K.I. (Virtual Interactive Kinesthetic Interface) computer, the sister model of the HAL 9000 computer, who took control over Kubrick's *Discovery One*. The thinking V.I.K.I., like any other autocrat, finds a fully rational way to ignore the principle of not hurting people and surrounds them with a care system in which security is more important than freedom. Unlike in political reality, the film's protagonists manage to save the traditional scope of freedom, for which it is beginning to lack demand in the 21st century world.

The conditions that can be placed on a human who is the result of genetic engineering ultimately make him or her a little different from the android, which was the subject of reflection in Andrew Niccol's film ***Gattaca*** (1997). Humanity must be redefined if it is determined solely by specific consciousness and body relics placed in an electronic casing. Equally problematic is the distinctiveness of technological creations in which, apart from intelligence, feelings are aroused. Another problem may be caused by an individual without purely mechanical support, but with a biological improvement. For it raises the question whether the perfect genetically individual is not a denial of humanity, to which a certain defect belongs in the deepest sense, described, for example, in the myth of original sin.

In *Gattaca*, its architecture in a puzzling way polemicizes with the message of the film. The main idea is not ignored, but its significance has been downgraded. The piece illustrates the individual's fate in a society where genetic discrimination is not allowed, however, when recruited for work in corporations, it is decisive to belong to a group of people with artificially modified genes. But the protago-

nist, who does not have the right genome, aspires to become a cosmonaut at Gattaca Aerospace Corporation. He deceives the recruitment system in a complex way and at the same time shows not only the ingenuity of a fraudster, but also the strength of character, which is often lacking for genetically superior individuals. As one can conclude, eugenics loses morally once again in its history because the improvement of genetic material does not concern a human spirituality or ability to adapt. However, the triumph of the individual over the selection system is incidental, which is confirmed by the architecture shown as the background of the events.

The company's headquarters were located in a complex of administrative buildings of the county of Marin in San Rafael, California, a late work of Wright (1960). This extravagant complex houses various offices, as well as a district library and a local court building. Its main part is accompanied by three smaller ones, in which a post office, an auditorium and a theatre are located. This work, which has many features typical of this architect's design courage and was created in an atmosphere of violent objections, was perfectly suited for the headquarters of a powerful corporation that could ignore legal regulations and create new moral principles. The main character of the film breaks the company's security systems, yet it is a partial and accidental victory and does not diminish the fact that the company imposes new standards on the whole society. Nevertheless, the space company represents not only a business impudence and an abuse of traditional rules, but itself is also subordinated to the logic of scientific development which has dominated the behaviour of people and societies. Other architectural objects used as a background for the protagonists' actions confirm the conviction that individuals no longer play a decisive role in the formulation of value systems. The romantic scene of a walk between two people confessing their feelings to each other was depicted against the backdrop of the massive walls of the Sepulveda Dam in Los Angeles, which showed in what proportions human values are currently in the face of the power of modern technology.

The dangers of combining outstanding human talents, such as the gift of clairvoyance (in the non-film reality – only an alleged one), with the most advanced technique were presented in Steven Spielberg's ***Minority Report*** from 2002. Illustrated there the issue of control over crime reveals at the same time the hypocrisy of the ruling class (for which the background are luxurious, historicising interiors), as well as the excessively procedurally focused elite of technocrats and policemen (shown in combination with modern architecture and advanced technology) and impoverished masses (located in a city degraded and yet saturated with control instruments). The intellectual problem of the film is the search in modern technology for tools to solve problems of providing society with better formulas of organization, in which architecture traditionally wanted to have

its share. However, whenever perfection appears on the horizon of dreams, the final solutions turn out to be murderous fiction, which does not exclude widespread enthusiasm for its implementation. It is difficult to ignore the fact that even extremely cruel dictatorships have always had greater public support than democratically elected governments.

Minority Report combined features of utopia and dystopia. On the one hand, it represented optimism characteristic of most of Spielberg's films, reinforced with a happy ending, and on the other hand it was affected by the atmosphere of paranoia typical of Philip K. Dick's work. Dick's story, on which the script was based, dates back to 1956, so when it was adapted in the 1990s and set in 2054, it was necessary to modernise or even create professional visions of the world of the future. To this end, a dozen or so specialists were invited to a hotel in Santa Monica, whose task was to imagine the ingredients of everyday life distant by half a century. 16 years after the film's premiere, it should be said that their predictions have been largely accurate. Cars that function without the involvement of their passengers, retinal scanners, computer touchscreens, voice triggered devices and a large number of other ideas have either been implemented or are being attempted. Also the main thread of the film, i.e. prediction and prevention of crimes before their occurrence, has become an active component of the present. Countless surveillance cameras, located in the streets, subways, and shops, combined with a face recognition system and database of criminals and terrorists, enable the continuous tracking of thousands of people around the world. Data on the location of mobile phone calls, together with an analysis of the content of e-mails and a survey of activities on social networking sites, are already becoming the basis for preventive actions taken by special services all over the world. Against the background of these unrestrained intrusions into the sphere of privacy, St. Augustine's question about the extent of free will of humans remains. Even without accepting the concept of predestination (or its modification in later philosophical systems, including Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's thought), it can be assumed that at present the determination of human will by external factors is considered more probable than faith in human ability to manage one's own destiny. Spielberg, however, resolves this problem in the spirit of family cinema (especially of fantasy such as the series of films *Back to the Future*) and expresses the message that a person who knows his or her future may change the negative features of destiny. Although this seems to be a logical error, it also points to a weakness of logic itself.

The works of architecture presented in Spielberg's film showed social divisions typical of modern societies. The director uses a set of stereotypes in this respect. Poor people are biomass, which is linked to poor and neglected urban architecture. The houses of middle-income citizens do not differ from the average buildings of the

[43] **M. Weber**, *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, t. 1–2, Tübingen 1904–1905.

20th century. The main threads of the film were reinforced by computer-created images of autonomous routes of cars moving on the basis of a magnetic levitation system. Alex McDowell, the main designer of the virtual scenery of the film, based his ideas both on concepts of the group of experts, as well as on models suggested by the architect Greg Lynn and oscillating between the so-called folding and blob architecture. In a similar way, he also attempted to present the interior of the police department that dealt with crime forecasting. The office was organized by a spiral glass ramp, around which there were rooms of the prevention system equipped with spacious screens operated by gestures. The vision of the glass rooms was complemented by the grey and light blue colours dominating in the film, which gave the places of action an atmosphere of the interior of the television picture. As the façade of the police office, the heavy classicist Ronald Reagan Building in Washington was used. It can be said that the set of associations suggested to the viewer did not contain any unexpected elements.

The critical scenes of the film, which reveal that the reason for building a system for eliminating crimes before they were perpetrated was the murder committed by the founder of the company managing the system, are being held at the Willard InterContinental hotel in Washington, which since its construction in 1901 has been considered one of the most prestigious in the United States. The building was built by Henry Janeway Hardenbergh in the so-called Beaux Arts Style combining French neoclassicism with neo-Renaissance elements. One hundred years after its construction, its interiors represent a luxury of a rather museum-like character. Hotel organizations are now restrained making quality assessments of the hotel where many American presidents used to spend the night. The theatrical charm of the rooms was, however, appropriate in a situation where a cliché of comfort and pomp was needed. A benefactor and, at the same time, a criminal of the higher strata, guided by good intentions and as if only for important reasons exceeding the basic moral norms, was easily compared with the aesthetics of exuberance and appearances. In such a combination, ethical values have revealed their belonging to a world in which they are merely played out, but not real.

The fifth of the films of "horrors of destiny" considers the reasons why societies are moving towards centralization of power, examines the causes for technocratic instincts and the sources of universal surveillance and existence in a state of constant danger. A separate but related problem is the helplessness of societies in the face of these situations and even their falling into a state of collective happiness. In the works of this genre of films, circumstances are considered when changes in production systems (and especially further development of machine production) lead to degradation of middle and lower layers and their frustrations may be dangerous for liberal

[43] **M. Weber**, *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, t. 1–2, Tübingen 1904–1905.

forms of social order. A consequence of the decline of the position of large social groups may be an escape from freedom and democracy and a shift towards authoritarian or totalitarian systems, which are now also implemented with the use of technological tools. However, it is impossible to say whether the move away from freedom results from a situation where the majority of individuals have no economic basis for caring for their independence and become part of an undifferentiated mass demanding only the satisfaction of basic needs, and therefore voluntarily renounce freedom in favour of averaged and universally distributed prosperity, or, on the other hand, it can be assumed that the tendency to abandon the ideals of self-determination is only artificially fuelled by the political class and results from deliberate neglect in social education.

Regardless of what are the sources of authoritarianism or totalitarianism, in the films instrument of falling into the oppressive and repressive system is explained in an exaggeratedly simplified way and most often it turns out to be voluntary acceptance of the drug that releases from the emotional life. Such a version of keeping people in bliss is presented in Lucas's film *THX 1138* (1971) and Kurt Wimmer's piece *Equilibrium* (2005). A much more likely way to achieve far-reaching social control is to operate a collective memory of past times. This policy measure did not need to be invented, as the political power reached for it from very distant epochs and the operation later referred to as "*damnatio memoriae*" was already used in ancient Egypt. In George Orwell's novel such a procedure is called evaporation, but its literary depiction does not completely contradict the real situations, when the power of dictatorial inclinations willingly treats the heroes of the fight for freedom from the earlier period as traitors of the nation in the present times. Such moves require to get rid of old books, a motif that was used in François Truffaut's film ***Fahrenheit 451*** (1966), based on aforementioned Bradbury's novel.

THX 1138 was Lucas's film debut based on his student etude *Electronic Labyrinth: 1138 4EB*[22]. The original, lasting several minutes, leads to the conclusion that none of the director's later films, including *Star Wars*, has retained an explosive dose of artistic anger, comparable perhaps only with the manifesto of Theodore Kaczynski, a technopath "Unabomber" – *Industrial Society and its Future* (1995). The feature-length film is a dystopia, but a more detailed analysis shows that it is first of all a disguised story about the characteristics of Western culture at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. The film shows a city of the future set deep in the underground, whose inhabitants, dressed in white and with shaved heads, are focused on doing their job and, in order to maintain social cohesion, take drugs that inhibit emotional needs and strengthen commitment to their professions. The author does not explain anywhere in the film, why the civilisation needed to locate itself under the surface of the earth, nor what causes that people voluntarily accept medicines that reduces them to

[22] See **C. W. Anderson**, Science Fiction Films of the Seventies, Jefferson [North Carolina] 1985, pp. 25–28.

the role of living robots. The solution to this problem lies precisely in the lack of indication of a single cause and the multi-stage mode of falling into the state of inertia. If we look more severely at our own everyday life, we might think that Lucas's film shows the present rather than the future.

Shaved heads of underground inhabitants, whiteness of rooms, being under constant control or cult of work are only metaphorised features of an industrial-technical civilisation. More than once already attention has been paid to the position of hygiene and medicine, or the high moral evaluation of immersing oneself in the duties imposed by culture, as the distinguishing features of modernity. It is now commonly believed that they are natural, although they date back only to the end of the 18th century. Despite their apparent eternity, the most important norms of behaviour of individuals have become established only at the beginning of the 20th century, although through the 19th century they had time to erase the impression of their unnaturalness or even inhumanity. With the widespread use of psychoactive stimulants such as caffeine (contained in coffee or energy drinks), it has become equally unnoticeable to be constantly under the influence of drugs.

Lucas's film strongly suggests also replacing traditional sexual relationships with auto-erotic practices, towards which the tendency must be determined in proportion to the current availability of pornography. Social control mechanisms are not based solely on surveillance through a dense network of monitoring cameras or on the imposition of views by nationalised media, but also on the action of education systems, insistent advertising and the need, brought to the level of a serious illness, to purchase the goods promoted. The state of stupor and inertia, once caused by religion or national ideologies, is now achieved by the widespread availability of entertainment provided not only through television channels, but also, and above all, by smartphones.

In Lucas's film, people who went beyond the new order were isolated, but the presentation of this reduced sample of the whole society shows that the ability to rebel, resist, or self-organize disappeared with the loss of the ability to think critically or think in general. The diagnosis contained in Lucas's youth work was not further developed because no major social group could base its collective existence on it. Although the film *THX 1138* ends in a successful escape of a single person to the surface of the earth, it is impossible to imagine that his further fate could be marked by something other than an imminent death. The director himself withdrew from such a consequence and returned to the area of the before-contested lifestyle, creating entertainment films for an immature audience.

The whole film unfolded in an underground city, to which the scenery was provided both by film decorations (for scenes in white rooms) and by the fast underground railway system in San Fran-

cisco (BART) being built at the time. The final scene of the chase took place in the Caldecott Tunnel between the cities of Oakland and Orinda and the Posey Tube connecting the cities of Oakland and Alameda in California. Living in the undergrounds and dependence on machines appeared already in Herbert Georg Wells's novel *Time Machine* (1895), and again in a novel by Edward Morgan Forster entitled *The Machine Stops* (1909). In cinematography, the underground city for the first time was shown by Lang in *Metropolis* as a place of work for the masses of workers, beginning a long tradition of showing civilizations submerged in the earth. Bringing cities underground as a way of protecting them from a chemical weapon attack has also become the theme of the film *Things to Come* (1936), directed by William Cameron Menzies and based on Wells's novel *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). In the formally ascetic Lucas's film, the undergrounds were not presented in a very attractive way, but at the time of the film's making they ceased to serve only underground communication and started to connect with commercial and entertainment spaces. Compulsive purchases of goods and dependence on entertainment have become a decisive factor in the actual development of underground cities. Since 1971, when the film was introduced to the screens, the number of underground rooms and communication routes has increased very significantly. Currently, the standard for every major urban building is to design several underground storeys. Without catastrophic reasons, a large group of cities around the world have expanded their underground spaces, where communication tunnels have been surrounded, as in Montreal, Toronto or Ottawa, by shopping malls, offices and restaurants. There are also sports stadiums (such as the hockey arena in Gjøvik, Norway), churches (such as Temppeliaukion kirkko in Helsinki) and research laboratories (such as the 2.5 km deep Jinping laboratory in Liangshan, Sichuan) located beneath the earth's surface.

Some clarification should be added regarding the unification into white of the colour of most of the interiors where the film was set. Currently, large public indoor spaces are not often painted in white, but the hospital or laboratory character can be attributed to the vast majority of modern interiors, both private and public. In order to achieve such aesthetics, modernist architecture also uses large glazing or chrome-plated steel details. The distinction between the film metaphor and the current reality is not strong in this case either.

Wimmer's ***Equilibrium*** was the sum of fears contained in the dystopias of Aldous Huxley (*A Brave New World* [1932]), Orwell (*1984* [1949]), and Bradbury (*Fahrenheit 451* [1953])[23]. The sad feature of this work is the aestheticization of the problems that were seriously placed in the works of the director's predecessors. Therefore, the therapeutic effect of the film is overshadowed by its attachment to the phenomena it should oppose. In order to protect themselves

[23] See **A. Ch. O. Hall**, *Tech-Noir and the Critical Dystopia in the 21st Century: Wimmer's "Equilibrium"*, [in:] *Marxism and the Movies. Critical Essays on Class Struggle in the Cinema*, ed. **M. K. Leigh**, **K. K. Durand**, Jefferson [North Carolina] 2013; **L. Opreanu**, *Remembrance versus Reinvention: Memory as Tool of Survival and Act of Defiance In Dystopian Narratives*, "University of Bucharest Review" 2013, no. 2, s. 23; **M. Rawska**, *Miasta-światy. Analiza przestrzeni miejskiej w "Equilibrium" Kurta Wimmera i "Incepcji" Christophera Nolana*, [in:] *Narracje fantastyczne*.

against further social disasters, the population is taking Prozium medicine, which suppresses emotions. At the same time, the use of old cultural works, especially books, is prohibited. These two threads are rooted in the prose of Huxley and Bradbury. Research into the role of psychoactive agents was part of Huxley's personal experience in the early 1950s, and he assessed them positively, although earlier in his book he treated the widespread use of Soma, a fictitious hallucinogen, as the culmination of social evil. The divergence in the writer's views is also reflected in the state systems prohibiting or permitting the extra-medical use of drugs. However, the influence on collective and individual memory by destroying and banning books, as Bradbury described it, only exaggerated in the novel of this author the phenomena taking place in modern societies in a spontaneous manner and activated by lowering the rank of literature and replacing it with television[24]. In his film, however, Wimmer does not make Bradbury's diagnoses clearer and does not supplement them with the knowledge that has accumulated over the last half century, but rather creates another entertaining work that makes the viewers less sensitive to phenomena that may arouse fear. The aesthetic aura of the film has much of the character of a computer game and is supported by images of works of architecture.

Since Wimmer replaced the insightful recognition of contemporary pathologies with a purely theatrical image of a totalitarian society devoid of allusions to the real world, the set design of the film was based on references to the fascist architecture of Italy and Germany. In particular, the Palazzo dei Congressi was used for this purpose, the construction of which began in 1938, according to Adalberto Libera's designs, with the intention of erecting one of the objects to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fascists' march to Rome in 1922 and to take over power by them. Another building of Roman architecture used in the film was the Museo della Civiltà Romana, which Pietro Aschieri, Cesare Pascoletti, Gino Peressutti and Domenico Bernardini designed in the late 1930s also to glorify Italian fascism. The bell tower of the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, which was built by Werner March between 1934 and 1936, was also monumentalized for the film. Contrary to the idea of Olympic sport, the grandstand under the tower was also the mausoleum of the Battle of Langemarck, mythologised during the fascist period. The reasons why these buildings are still being admired and renovated can provoke serious thought. It seems, however, that in the seemingly condemnation of the right-wing version of totalitarianism, the exposure of these achievements, including Wimmer's film, contains an element of a disgraceful fascination with systems that once gained massive public support and do not belong exclusively to the past.

The lack of memory and reference points in the past was achieved in the second half of the 20th century and later with much simpler means than just taking drugs that blunt emotions, which

[24] **R. A. Reid**, *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*, Westport [Connecticut] 2000, p. 59.

were consumerism, hedonism, paying tribute to simple entertainment (such as the development of and wide access to the products of film art), obsessions with improving the body, or the so-called sexual revolution. The great hypermarket, connected with cinemas, beauty salons, restaurants and cafés, has become the ideal of life and architecture, which is already fulfilled in the present day. The commercial *hortus conclusus* is supported by an internal system of guards and equipped with internal greenery, and thanks to the beauty of the products presented in the shop windows it also provides contact with higher values, perhaps even sacral ones, since the term "commercial temples" adhered to the department stores as early as in the 19th century. In order to enjoy such benefits it is necessary to be young and not to exceed 30 years of age, therefore in Michael Anderson's film ***Logan's Run*** from 1976, a society living as if inside a commercial centre, under a dome resembling the Warsaw hypermarket Zlote Tarasy [Golden Terraces], regularly gets rid of older individuals. "The future has already begun", says the slogan often used in science fiction films.

Imagined in Anderson's film, the world of the year 2274 shows a society protected by a geodetic dome and composed exclusively of beautiful individuals[25]. The theme of staying in constant good shape, as part of the obsession with youth, health and beautiful appearance, has become a distinctive component of rationalised, modernist societies, reflected in the names of early-modern trends in art, such as "*Jugendstil*", "*art nouveau*" or "Young Poland". The director linked this motif with living in an environment that combines a large shopping mall, a wellness salon and a luxurious hotel. The background for many of the film's scenes were two Dallas Market Center objects: Apparel Mart and World Trade Center. The strolling of a large number of women in short skirts and colourfully dressed men – decisive for the film's climate – was filmed in 1975 in Great Hall and the so-called Arcade in Apparel Mart, a building built in several phases from 1964 to 1972 by the Dallas architects James Pratt, Harold Box and Philip Henderson. Placing happy people of the future in the shopping centre turned out to be a good recognition of the goals of numerous people who are currently enjoying maximum satisfaction in such rooms. The second place for the almost complete happiness of a modern man should be taken by a stay in a luxury hotel, which is reflected in the film's use as a set design the interiors of the Hyatt Regency hotel in Houston, designed by the JV III consortium. (a merger of Neuhaus & Taylor and Koetter, Tharp & Cowell) and realized under the direction of Charles E. Lawrence of Caudill Rowlett Scott.

The geodetic dome under which the film is set was inspired by Richard Buckminster Fuller's 1960 proposal to cover a part of New York's Manhattan from the East River to Hudson River and from 21st Street to 64th Street with such a structure. In 1967, the same architect built a United States pavilion at the World Exhibition EXPO

[25] See **C. W. Anderson**, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–118.

67 in Montreal, using the concept of Walther Bauersfeld, a German engineer. Although it was a German specialist who was given priority to inventing a spherical structure with a combination of triangles, but it was Fuller who patented the construction in 1947 and, by strongly promoting it, led to the creation of a large number of circular buildings all over the world. The use of Fuller's principle to cover the courtyard of the British Museum in London or the 180-metre-high 30 St Mary Axe office building in the same city by Norman Foster shows the general structural correctness of the geodetic dome. While it cannot be denied that Fuller has indeed been a strong promoter of sustainable development, energy saving and the increased role of renewable energy sources, there is something ambiguous about hiding the human population under an artificial dome. On the one hand, it is obvious that covering Manhattan with a dome would bring savings due to the disappearance of the need to clear snow and reduce the costs of rooms heating in winter, but on the other hand, the whole idea can be felt as an excess of rationality and optimistic belief in progress. Floating underwater cities, another of Fuller's ideas, probably also have advantages, but perhaps the solution to some of the civilization's problems lies in limiting the development, rather than just in constant progression. Thus, it can be assumed that Fuller's fantasies have a devastating effect on the critical thinking factor, which could be helpful in eliminating the deficiencies of technical progress, and replace it with concepts that degrade common sense. Like the idea of the linear city of Nikolai Alexandrovich Milutin, Fuller's visions may enchant with rationality, but they ignore the tendency to live in a certain indefinable withdrawal attributed to the essence of humanity.

* * *

The review of film utopias and dystopias points to a surprisingly short perspective in terms of predicting the future. Although visions of the future can be located in remote epochs, they are usually a simple and not distant extrapolation of current problems and opportunities. Moreover, it can be concluded that all forecasts best serve as diagnoses of current conditions. Among the opinions on modernity contained in the films there is a recurring motive suggesting that the source of today's problems is the unrestrained immersion of Western civilisation and culture in rationalism, as if without the possibility of any alternative, and with the growing dangers of such a orientation. Such utopias and dystopias show the current lack of adequate ability to predict or manage the future. They represent helplessness in the face of the anguish of scientific and technical civilization and the premonition of a catastrophe spread over a slow agony.

The films of the discussed type do not prove to be a tool of potential cultural or political changes, because they maintain their con-

nection with the world of entertainment and even pass to the level of advertising videos. It is hard to deny that regarding in the case of the films of the genre in question, there are many more of viewers fascinated with the seductive models of cars than those who are looking for unpleasant opinions about immersing themselves in consumerism[26]. This specific aspect of science fiction films indicates that the recipient of cultural works today desires little more than supplying them with attractive products.

[26] Cars are the second element after architecture to complement film content and have played an important role in films such as *The Spy Who Loved Me* (British Lotus Esprit S1), *Back to the Future* (DeLorean DMC-12), *Minority Report* (Vetter Custom Dimensia based on Lexus 2054), THX 1138 (British sports car Lola T70) or I, Robot (Audi RSQ).

Słowa kluczowe

XX wiek, filmy *science fiction*, utopia, dystopia

Keywords

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Summary

CEZARY WAS (University of Wroclaw) / The Tannhäuser Gate. Architecture in science fiction films of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century as a component of utopian and dystopian projections of the future

The films of science fiction genre from the second half of the 20th and early 21st century contained many visions of the future, which were at the same time a reflection on the achievements and deficiencies of modern times. In 1960s, cinematographic works were dominated by optimism and faith in the possibility of never-ending progress. The disappearance of political divisions between the blocs of states and the joint exploration of the cosmos was foreseen. The designers undertook cooperation with scientists, which manifested itself in showing cosmic constructions far exceeding the real technical capabilities. Starting from the 1970s, pessimism and the belief that the future will bring, above all, the intensification of negative phenomena of the present began to grow in films. Fears of the future were connected with indicating various possible defects and insoluble contradictions between them. When, therefore, some dystopian visions illustrated the threat of increase in crime, others depicted the future as saturated with state control mechanisms and the prevalence of surveillance. The fears shown on the screens were also aroused by the growth of large corporations, especially by their gaining political influence or staying outside the system of democracy. The authors of the films also presented their suspicions related to the creation of new types of weapons by corporations, the use of which might breach the current legal norms. Particular objections concerned research on biological weapons and the possible spread of lethal viruses. The development of robotics and research into artificial intelligence, which must have resulted in the appearance of androids and inevitable tensions in their relations with humans, also triggered fear. Another problem for film-makers has become hybrids that are a combination of people and electronic parts. Scriptwriters and directors likewise considered the development of genetic engineering, which led to the creation of mutant human beings. A number of film dystopias contemplated the possibility of the collapse of democratic systems and the development of authoritarian regimes in their place, often based on broad public support. This kind of dystopia also includes films presenting the consequences of contemporary hedonism and consumerism. The problem is, however, that works critical of these phenomena were themselves advertisements for attractive products.