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BRAZIL AND 12 MONKEYS:
Terry Gilliam's Foucauldian-Baudrillardian Dystopias

A THESIS

The Honors Program

College of St. Benedict/St. John's University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Distinction "All College Honors"

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In the Department of English

by

Brendan Riley

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PROJECT TITLE:

Brazil and 12 Monkeys:
Terry Gilliam's Foucauldian-Baudrillardian Dystopias


Approved by:



Associate Professor of Modern Classical Languages, (English) & Communication

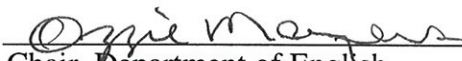


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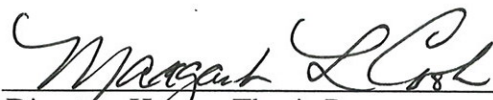


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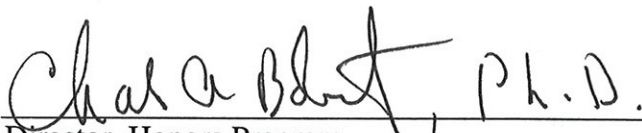
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Introduction

These films cast doubt on the idiot optimism which puts its faith in the notion that technology will save us, will create 'a heaven right here on Earth.'

-“Video, Science Fiction, and the Cinema of Surveillance,” Thomas Doherty

The dystopia is one of our strongest tools for self and societal criticism. A sort-of “anti-utopia,” a clever dystopia examines our society’s fears to show the dangers of societal tendencies; these stories often serve as warnings. From Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* to Tony Scott’s *Enemy of the State*, film has frequently been used to create dystopian narratives. Rarely have dystopia, filmic or otherwise, been so thorough in their exploration of society’s fears as Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*. In these two works, Gilliam has adopted two of the major points-of-view arising from (or leading up to) dystopian narrative – Power and Technological – and in doing so has taken dystopian thought into a new realm.

To best articulate its argument, this paper will distinguish between two primary categories of most dystopia, based on fears that the films play upon. The first category is what I will call “Power” dystopias. In these works, the main concern lies in portraying the structures of power that permeate all levels of society. Power dystopias find hope in life and in existence; they depict power and domination structures as “evil forces” and have the theme that if society does not eliminate the dangerous structures now, those forces will increase in power (or maintain their power) and become unstoppable.

Perhaps the most famous example of a Power dystopia is George Orwell's *1984*. Big Brother is a very identifiable "evil" force in the novel. His policies keep people in poverty, use rigorous mind control to force obedience and his minions take sadistic delight in assuring that *all* of Oceania's citizens follow his laws. The novel *1984* (clearly anti-Communist, championing freedom of thought and action) plays off the post-war fears of communism in America. It also fits very nicely into the category of Power dystopia.

Most dystopias do contend with issues of power – most but not all. The other narratives, the "Technological" ones, concentrate on a different danger to society; these alternate dystopias point to humankind's embracement of technology, particularly communication technology, as the leading cause of our downfall. This second category of dystopia tends to depict the people trying to manipulate power structures to their own benefit (the subjects of Power dystopias) as trapped alongside the rest of humankind by technology – it is technology that is the destroyer, not power structures.

One example of a Technological dystopia is *Blade Runner* (based on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*). In it, like most cyberpunk, is a depiction of a world in which technology has overrun society. It seems as important as the people are, and in some cases, it has become more important. People spend less and less time caring about each other – as though the machinery is draining away humanity. It is society's fear of ever-encroaching technology that is discussed by Technological dystopia.

It is important to draw the distinction between Power dystopia and Technological ones for two reasons. First, neither form fully acknowledges the concerns of the other. The tendency with Technological dystopia is to ignore the issues being discussed by

Power dystopia (the discussion of the dangers of systems of power and surveillance), sublimating the latter's concerns in the argument that the power structures are rendered meaningless by Technological advance, while the tendency with Power dystopia is to ignore the elimination of "meaning" that technology causes. In other words, there is a need to classify these two forms because they are distinctly separate. Second, and more importantly, it is by examining the two forms of dystopia as separate entities that the significance of their combination is brought to light.

Both Power and Technological dystopias utilize society's fears to make their point. These fears are discussed by two theorists; both Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard have written about technology and power. Baudrillard has pondered technology's role in society and its danger – the same issues that Technological dystopia seems most concerned with; Foucault has looked for patterns in the formation of power structures, illuminating important constructions in society. While Foucault avoids placing value judgments on the structures he identifies, those structures are the very discourses usually criticized in Power dystopia.

Foucault's *Power/Knowledge* deals directly with issues prevalent in Power dystopia. He begins by identifying those who attempt to manipulate power as the main foci: they are always looking for ways to improve their hold on those who do not have it.¹ One of the ways that these structures do so is by "defining" truth. He writes, "Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of the truth: it institutionalizes, professionalizes and rewards its pursuit."¹ By defining truth, systems

¹ Power is not meant to suggest an outside or independent actor. Instead, as used in this paper, it refers to societal constructions, power structures that, in sustaining themselves, provide agency for power. It exists as a societal construct rather than as an independent agent.

define normality, relegating to abnormality all that is undesirable. Those trying to utilize power use this technique in all areas – including the body. By gaining control over the body, they began the road to the creation of the most powerful construct in our society – disciplinary society (the society of observation).

Foucault posited that a system of observation came about as prisons replaced the system of brutality (public punishment). He writes, "...it became understood that it was more efficient and profitable in terms of the economy of power to place people under surveillance than to subject them to some exemplary penalty."² Instead of using the punishment of the few to terrify the many, the system expanded to encourage observation (and acquisition, then, of new realms of control). The "registration of the truth" mentioned earlier would lead to the system of worker-surveillance, followed by the surveillance society itself.

The power structures Foucault outlines are clearly visible in Power dystopia. In *1984*, for example, Big Brother's telescreens are the ultimate Benthamite observation system. The sexual restrictions on Oceanean society are also in line with Foucault's theories on body control (I will discuss these in the following chapter). In *Brave New World*, too, Foucault's systems are visible. While the Foucauldian structures of observation and societal norms construct *our* truths subconsciously, Huxley's world defines truth much more overtly. From the moment children are born, the government literally defines truth by implanting statements in the minds of children. Their bodies, too, are manipulated in overt ways as they form (chemical imbalances affect growth, strength, intelligence) – another form of control. The control by means of surveillance in Power dystopia is exactly what Foucault observes.

Power dystopia focus on ideological concerns. *1984*, for example, is anti-communist and *Brave New World* focuses on individuality and personal freedom. They show how power structures can (or might) be manipulated to subvert or destroy the ideological goals of the author. In other words, Power dystopia show how certain ideologies can be promoted by those “in power” through their use of that power. Thus, Power dystopia warn society against the dangers of the power system they target. By searching out and spotlighting structures of intentional domination in our society, humankind can begin to eliminate them, or so Power dystopia say. In fact, they see the attempt at the abusive manipulation of power by those “in power” as one of society’s greatest dangers. While Foucault does not judge the structures he outlines either positively or negatively, Power dystopia go beyond Foucault by positing that by finding and eliminating or modifying the most abusive power structures, perhaps humanity can avoid the harrowing fate described in the narrative. In *1984*, for example, the lesson to be learned is that we need to (as a society) be wary of communism, lest we end up trapped by it; Power dystopia tells us what to change.

Technological dystopians would not agree with Power dystopians. The essential difference between the Power and the Technological dystopia comes from this disagreement. While Power dystopia show structures with the hope that by recognizing them we might change them, Technological ones are much more pessimistic -- as is their central thinker, Jean Baudrillard.ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ Some Technological dystopias may see, or leave open, space for change in society, but such films do not agree with Baudrillard’s central premise, that we are already in the hyperreal. Instead, those films are wary of the approach of the “irreversible moment,” but do not think that society is there yet.

Baudrillard's work focuses on the same issues the Technological dystopia focus on, namely the creeping and overwhelming presence and effect of technology on humanity. He begins his essay, "The Ecstasy of Communication" by discussing the advance of technology. He points out three "irreversible tendencies" that we have involved ourselves in. The first is the simplification and "homogenization" of parts of society. In essence, Baudrillard says that we simplify and combine things as we make them easier to access. The second tendency Baudrillard points out is that of "displacement of bodily movements and efforts into electric or electronic commands."³ In other words, mechanization. Finally, technology is reduced and speeded up; everything is made smaller and faster. We undergo all three of the above processes as technology advances, all the while increasing access to and distribution of information. The proliferation of signs and referents devalues all signs, removing all meaning from communication and leaving us in senseless observation of the orgy of conversation or, as Baudrillard calls it, the "ecstasy of communication."

These processes have been at work, changing the way we look at the world and our part in it. He writes, "This transistorization of the environment, relegates to total uselessness, desuetude and almost obscenity all that used to fill the scene of our lives."⁴ In other words, we are separated and remote from our actions and from their meanings. He implies that in being separated, we lose our humanity. Technology replaces it as we become less and less active. We become biological extensions of technology, nodes for communication.

Baudrillard's theories can be applied to many of the Technological dystopia. *Blade Runner* is a perfect example. In the film, we see the homogenization of cultures,

the implementation (and necessity) of machines, and the miniaturization of technology. For example, the language of the surface, a mix of several different languages, is just such a homogenization. We also see the effects of such actions – people begin to question what it is to be human as the line between machine and human blurs. The few have much and the many have little – with no hope of reversal. Most importantly, no one is safe from the ever-destructive power of technology – even the corporate giant Tyrell, who has perfected the man/machine combination. It is that combination that destroys him.

Baudrillard says we are already so engrossed in the three tendencies and our own mechanization that all activity has long since lost meaning. He writes, “the message that objects deliver...is already extremely simplified, and it is always the same: their exchange value.”⁵ He goes on to write that exchange, circulation, “ecstasy of communication” are so prolific that they too have no value. Baudrillard then posits that the result of the meaninglessness of communication is that meaning is lost, that humanity is lost. It is the loss of humanity that Baudrillard and the Technological dystopia expect and predict. Moreover, because all communication is meaningless, all actions further the communication ecstasy. Action cannot create a change in course; the progression toward the hyperreal has gone too far. The dreary technologically infested nightmare of *Blade Runner* is not imagined; it is coming, and precious few of us have noticed.

Nonetheless, dystopias are still created; society still fears both Power’s structures and Technological gangrene. In looking at both types of dystopias, this paper will show how Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* deal with, or attempt to deal with, both the issues discussed by Foucault and those discussed by Baudrillard. Both films contain

many elements of the Technological and the Power dystopias, lending themselves to a modern, multi-theoretical discussion. By looking at the films through both frames, I will show how Gilliam simultaneously deals with both Foucauldian and Baudrillardian concerns in his dystopias, and how he resolves the problems that arise in referring to both systems. Further, I will show that by using both systems of thought, Gilliam has used Power dystopia to create a way out of Technological dystopia without failing to address the concerns of the latter.

NOTES

¹ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980. p93.

² Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p38.

³ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." Trans. John Johnston. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed Hal Foster. Seattle: Bay Press, 1993. p128.

⁴ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." p129.

⁵ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." p131.

Big Brother is Watching

Seeing is the property of power.

-“Technology and Politics in the *Blade Runner* Dystopia,”
Judith Kerman

Foucault’s ideas about society outline patterns and structures which are often embedded in Power dystopia. By applying Foucault’s ideas to Gilliam’s *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*, we can see how certain structures are active in those narratives; in doing so, it will become evident that the fears represented in Power dystopia are indeed present in Gilliam’s narratives – though they are not the singular concern of the narratives.

Foucault argues in *Power/Knowledge* that methods of controlling power have recently (during the eighteenth century) shifted in such a way that they have become expansionary. He writes of this shift, saying,

Power...was incapable of an individualizing, exhaustive analysis of the social body. But the economic changes of the eighteenth century made it necessary to ensure the circulation of effects of power through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions. By such means power, even when faced with ruling a multiplicity of men, could be as efficacious as if it were being exercised over a single one.¹

Those attempting to control power have expanded its grip on society during the last two centuries. As it spread out, it moved into finer and finer channels. In further expansion, it reaches as far as the individual body, even gaining control over the individual’s physicality. The result of such intimate control is the evolution of observation, of power

by watching, recording. The pervasive presence of surveillance results, then, in a society based on surveillance.

The techniques of power outlined by Foucault are elements in the same structures that dominate societies in Power dystopia. Most often, in these narratives, it is through use of technology that those in power utilize Foucauldian structures. The technology in *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* follows this tradition. Gilliam takes a stance where Foucault does not, depicting the technology in a negative light to protest the growing “demon” of the surveillance society. He includes ample evidence that the societies in his films, and reflectively our world, are the beginning of the situations that people like Orwell and Huxley feared. These films are the harbingers of the information society – they are depictions of the society Gilliam sees as being just around the corner.

Where Power dystopias see the techniques of power as dangerous, it is important to remember that Foucault does not judge them either way. Foucault’s argument is (as Colin Gordon explains it) that in discourses of power, there are two views. The first view is of power as “a benign sociological model... the agency of social cohesion;” the second is “an instance of repression, violence, and coercion.”² Simply put, traditional views say that power is either used for “good” or for “evil.” By acknowledging the possible use of power by either “good” or “evil” and refusing to make moral judgments about power and its uses, Foucault has established himself as neutral. He does not judge power’s position, he only analyzes its effects.

Conversely, Gilliam’s films, along with most Power dystopias, use structures Foucault has outlined to advance the argument that the power constructs we have built are negative; Gilliam shows that the power derived from technology (and its

accompanying surveillance) dominates and pummels those being watched into submission. Such is the case with most Power dystopia – the state (or other sinister organization) is using the technology of observation to maintain their power.

One of Foucault's main points is that while some *do* try to overtly use surveillance to maintain power, many of the ways that power is sustained are through subtle systems, systems such as science. He asserts that science, as well as "power[,] never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalizes, professionalizes, and rewards its pursuit."³ Foucault is saying that science upholds and expands systems of power by always broadening its realms of jurisdiction, its realms of surveillance. One example he offers is modern medicine.

The realm of medical science reinforces power structures in its multiplying fields of discourse. Medicine, which started off trying to cure disease, has by now added nutrition, psychology, physiology, and genetics, among other areas, to its dominion. *12 Monkeys'* Dr. Reilly is the perfect example of the "interrogation" Foucault discusses. As a psychiatrist, part of her job is to ask questions. She is continually probing for answers. She asks James questions in the jail cell at the beginning; the panel of psychiatrists asks questions later; she questions him in the car, the forest, and the sleazy hotel room. Her power, and that of the entire medical profession, comes from always inquiring – and from deciding what the "truth" is. The widening influence of medicine reinforces the larger power structure as it categorizes and normalizes.

Foucault writes that systems of power, in labeling (as medicine does), define truth. Colin Gordon, in his Afterword to *Power/Knowledge*, expresses Foucault's view that "power regularly promotes and utilizes a 'true' knowledge of subjects and indeed in

a certain manner constitutes the very field of that truth.”⁴ In other words, Foucault is saying that science’s structure “creates” truth. The depiction of psychiatry in *12 Monkeys* shows the “truth defining” aspect of power Foucault writes about. The film establishes Dr. Reilly as the bastion of common sense – of our society. When the police, the regulators of the “normal,” don’t know what to do with James, they call Dr. Reilly, who has him moved to the County Mental Hospital where he can be studied – he joins the other people who perceive different (and thus abnormal) truths. She is inquisitive, asking questions and probing James, as well as confident in her background, her worldview. She is also respected by her peers, who attend a lecture she gives on her book about madness. The authority Dr. Reilly exudes in the lecture scene is indicative of her representative position for the scientific and technological world; she stands at the podium and tells others what the truth is. In all, she is portrayed as the perfect scientific mind to represent the role of science in power structures.

The mental hospital, the place where the deranged are sent, also represents the “truth-defining” forces in society. The asylum is the ultimate representation of medical intrusion. The doctors pry into the innermost part of a patient, the mind. Only when the doctors have determined that the person grasps “the truth” can they leave. Those who differ do not get to leave. Jeffrey Goins (Brad Pitt) discusses his experience under the prying eyes of Dr. Reilly et al. in his speech at the FAA. He says, “When I was institutionalized, my brain was studied exhaustively in the guise of mental health. I was interrogated, I was x-rayed, I was examined thoroughly...”⁵ The truth-finding abilities of

science are so well acknowledged that Jeffrey is convinced that as a result of the probing he received in the asylum, Dr. Reilly knows everything he will do in the next ten years.

From the beginning of the film, we see medicine as the defining power, the determinant of normality. As the film opens, three lines are “typed” across the screen. The citation under the words identifies the person who spoke the words as having been a “paranoid schizophrenic.” The speaker is classified by the power structure; the person speaking these words is labeled as crazy, and therefore is abnormal. From the outset, then, the film establishes science as the authority to watch and classify, to define. Gilliam is concerned with science’s role as reinforcer/enforcer of the dominant power system.

The power of surveillance has, Foucault continues, penetrated the human body itself. The process of surveillance and inquiry established early on continued growing and expanding into more personal realms with each passing year. The infiltrating invasion of “knowledge” into bodies is one of the most prevalent forms of surveillance and power in Gilliam’s films.

Two such physical intrusions appear in *12 Monkeys*. The first, which we see in the first scene with Cole, is a tagging system for prisoners based on bar-codes. The second is the tracking device in the teeth. By putting the homing beacon in James’ mouth, the “scientists” can track him, wherever he goes. Such use of high technology to observe the populace is blatant, but effective nonetheless. Similarly, in *Brazil*, Jack’s (Michael Palin) job is to probe into the knowledge of his prisoner, both mentally with questions, and physically with instruments of torture. Thus, Jack’s overt surveillance threatens and explores the physical bodies of those he observes; it is another blatant case

of the invasive nature of surveillance. Advanced technology – like bar-codes and tracking devices in *12 Monkeys* – is used to control, categorize, and otherwise manipulate people without them realizing that things could be different. No one can escape the technology of surveillance, as it now travels with them in their bodies.

Though I have established that Gilliam sees technology and surveillance marching hand-in-hand, the relationship between surveillance and power still remains to be defined. To do so, I turn again to Foucault's *Power/Knowledge*. Foucault writes that the cost of monarchical power (by which some criminals were brutally punished) was too high, that a new form of power needed to be found. He spots that new form in surveillance. He writes, "There is no need of arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual character under its weight [becomes his own overseer] ..."⁶ In other words, surveillance is cheaper and more effective than other means of control, than other techniques of power.

Foucault continues, saying that the surveillance systems were instituted by the middle class – the bourgeoisie. He writes,

The bourgeoisie is perfectly well aware that a new constitution or legislature will not suffice to assure its hegemony; it realises that it has to invent a new technology ensuring the irrigation by effects of power of the whole social body down to its smallest particles.⁷

At the same time he goes on to acknowledge that, though the bourgeoisie thought they were in control, they were as trapped by the system as the lower class whom they were trying to control.

Gilliam plays with these ideas, showing surveillance in the factories, a place Foucault himself saw as a starting place for external and internal surveillance. For example, both types of surveillance can be seen in Kurtzmann, who tries to watch his men work from his office and who also fears being watched by the tubes. The technology in the films does not stop at the simple, ineffective technique for watching the people, but instead evolves in order to observe more efficiently. Constance Penley and Andrew Ross comment on this phenomenon in their book, *Technoculture*. They write, in the Introduction, “the inbuilt principles of...[new] technologies are precisely aimed at deskilling, information gathering, surveillance, and the social management of large populations.”⁸ In other words, many of the innovations in technology are intended to aid in the “management” of the masses. Notice that they cite “information gathering” and “surveillance” among the purposes of new technology. The “principles” Penley and Ross write about are the next step in the surveillance Foucault saw as having started on the factory floor.

That next big step in the building of the surveillance/power structure is the conception of an improvement on modern technology – the panopticon. The idea of an all-seeing prison which puts the power completely in the hands of the watcher is the basis for the anonymous (and seemingly omniscient) surveillance society we see today. While Bentham had good intentions in his ideas – he thought the prospect of constantly being monitored would help reform prisoners – the Power dystopia exploit the negative sides to the panopticon. Janet Semple comments on this flaw in her book about Bentham, writing, “The panopticon can too easily become the prototype of a fiendishly efficient instrument of totalitarian control, of ruthless social engineering, and of psychological

manipulation.”⁹ We see the dark side of surveillance in such works as *1984* and *Brave New World*, in which panoptic environments are manipulated diabolically. The fears that the panopticon can be used to such immoral ends are similar to the fears that look warily upon technological societies in which surveillance is the main form of discipline.

Gilliam uses society’s fear of the dangers of the panopticon throughout his films. Probably the most blatant allusion to Bentham’s idea is the panoptic prison in *12 Monkeys*. At the beginning of the film, we see James in a cell that closely resembles a cage. He is in one of hundreds of them, all visible to anyone in an overhead position to look at them. The guards walk on high girders surrounded by bright lights – even though they are not absolutely invisible to the inmate, as Bentham’s guards would have been, they are nearly impossible to see because of backlighting. This is evident when Cole is talking with the guard, and in the point-of-view (POV) shot, it is difficult to see the guard. This places the guards in the position of watchers, and the places the prisoners in the position of the watched.

Gilliam uses the other surveillance methods of the Panopticon as well. The historian Michelle Perrot, in a conversation with Foucault, observes,

[The] techniques of power used within the Panopticon... [are] [e]ssentially...the gaze; but also speech, because he [Bentham] has those famous “tin tubes”...connecting the chief inspector with each of the cells, in which Bentham tells us that not just a single prisoner, but groups of prisoners are confined.¹⁰

The idea of “tin tubes” seems to be everywhere in *Brazil*. The control that Bentham’s chief guard had is the same control held by the anonymous supervisor at Ministry of Information (MOI). After all, *someone* seems to be listening through those pneumatic tubes. When Sam sends something away, a response arrives immediately. The ducts,

which might even be made of tin (although probably aluminum), also conduct surveillance, as I will establish later. The attention being paid to the traffic in those tubes and the sounds in ducts tells us two things. First, it reinforces the idea that surveillance is occurring, just as in the panopticon. Second, Sam and James Cole (in his panoptic cell) know this to be the case.

This second conclusion, that Sam and James know they are being watched, is immensely important because it reinforces the other idea surrounding the Panopticon's effectiveness: visibility. Thomas Doherty, in his essay "Video, Science Fiction, and the Cinema of Surveillance," points out that although they cannot see their observers, "subjects know they are under observation, and indeed the visibility of the system is essential for its manipulative effect."¹¹ The fact that they know they are being watched is what keeps the system working. Such is the case in both films.

For example, when Sam is ordering food at the fancy hotel, he is annoyed with the waiter and does not want to go through the ordering charade. Despite Sam's obvious frustration, Spiro interjects in frustration, "You have to say the number."¹² He looks around rather nervously and gives the distinct impression that he is being watched. Spiro insists on Sam following the correct ordering procedure because he is afraid of what will happen if the ordering does not go as it is supposed to. It is hardly insignificant that the entire background of the two-shot featuring Sam and Spiro during that scene is ductwork. The ducts are definitely a sinister force on the screen.

The ducts also serve to watch and record. Gilliam said in an interview at the Walker Art Center, "the ducts are there to service you...but also to observe you."¹³ David Lyon, in his work regarding surveillance, shares common ground with Penley,

Ross, and Gilliam when he writes, "Surveillance is strongly bound up with our compliance with the current social order, and it can be a means of social control."¹⁴ Spiro is indeed afraid of some sort of punishment, and his belief that he is being monitored is what makes him afraid. *12 Monkeys* also has characters who know they are being watched. James, for example, is being tracked through his teeth. Jose, in the confrontation at the airport, stresses how important it is to stay in the position to be monitored when he scolds Cole for having removed the teeth.

The computers of *Brazil* also seem to be an instrument for surveying. The computers of *Brazil* all have magnifying screens which enable the person using the computer to read the type on the tube. When Sam is using Kurtzman's computer, the camera moves to a position behind the computer. When it does so, the viewer sees through the magnifying screen, comically distorting the image of Sam. This image has a darker meaning, however, if we consider whether or not the computer could be used as an observation device. The image on the screen implies that it can observe, we see it magnifying Sam (and this implies probing, watching, and recording).

Along similar lines, the television in the film is as visually strange as the computers. In fact, the two are linked – they look the same. In the scene with Kurtzmann, he observes his workers through the computer/televisions. Despite his inability to enforce any sort of discipline on them,¹ he is still able to observe their screens. This implies that all the televisions are set up in a similar fashion. *12 Monkeys* features television as observer, too. When Cole is strapped into the interrogation chair, a large probe with television screens moves closer to him. On it we see both images of the past

¹ Kurtzmann is unable to catch anyone in the act – everytime he goes to the door to catch his workers watching television, they resume work. As a result, he is unable to punish anyone for breaking the rules.

and of the present. It becomes both an arm of the surveyors and an instrument to survey with. Thomas Doherty comments on the possibility that Gilliam makes real, that of television as surveyor. He writes,

The TV-infested futureworlds of the cinema of surveillance are worlds of bureaucratic voyeurism, totalitarian control, and video-bred violence. In the cinema of surveillance, the most watched medium returns the favor and turns its eye on the viewer.¹⁵

The television in *Brazil* can clearly be looked at from this perspective. It is an omnipresent, prevalent example of the possibility for surveillance created by the technology in the film. Thus, *Brazil* tells us through many of its visual technologies that the people in the film, and we ourselves, are being watched by the technologies that, as Gilliam says, “service you.”

The main goal of oppressive surveillance as seen in the films is, as Foucault pointed out, to control people, to maintain power. One of the main ways in which those who try to use power do that is through fear – the same fear that Spiro the waiter felt in the restaurant. It is that fear that paralyzes Kurtzmann. Sam’s inept boss is completely unable to function, either socially (he is shunned by his underlings, who watch movies behind his back) or within his job (he constantly requires Sam’s help to fix the broken computer or give Mrs. Buttle her refund cheque). His worrying and sniveling about his “enemies” in the company show just how worn down Kurtzmann has become. Gilliam portrays him as afraid of any papers which come down the tube and as afraid even of *signing* the check to Mrs. Buttle. His reaction to the working environment he inhabits is just like Lime’s (the man who “shares” his office with Sam) – he is conditioned to expect

the worst. His mannerisms and fears show us just how influential the forces of surveillance are.

The other presumably “normal” reaction to the pressure of the surveillance society is shown in Jack’s character. Jack has acquiesced to the technology in *Brazil* through his very ambition within the system. By having a job in the MOI, he is reinforcing that oppressive superstructure. Gilliam shows the viewer that the system is destructive by obligating Jack to perform his violent and destructive job on Sam. The system is so ingrained in Jack that he blames Sam for his own mental anguish in the interrogation instead of the oppressive atmosphere and technology. Gilliam shows this through Jack’s angry tirade at Sam. Jack says (interrupted by Sam’s pleading, omitted here), “Bastard!...You stupid bastard!...How could you do this to me?...How do you think I feel? You shit!”¹⁶ Despite the fact that he is the one doing the torturing, rather than being tortured, he blames Sam for his own discomfort. The mental anguish Jack faces at the end shows that the surveillance structure in the film is burdensome and destructive.

Having reviewed the “normal” or “acceptable” responses to the dystopian societies, the “typical” dystopian protagonist’s actions can be examined. One of the themes used by many dystopia, as David Desser points out in his analysis of *Blade Runner*,ⁱⁱ is individual rebellion against the system. “The hero is initially linked with the totalitarian forces of conformity....The hero sees the light, in typical movie fashion, when

ⁱⁱ Keep in mind that *Blade Runner* is more of a Technological dystopia, rather than a Power dystopia. The theme Desser points out is prevalent in both types of dystopia, not just in Power dystopia. Nonetheless, the theme’s function in Power dystopia is especially telling.

he falls in love with a woman who represents the forces of freedom and emotionalism.”¹⁷ In *1984*, for example, Winston hides in the corner of his room to write, he rents a television-less room, and he goes out to nature to make love. Despite his careful attempt to escape from surveillance, he is eventually arrested and broken.

Gilliam includes this same theme in both films. In *Brazil*, Sam meets Jill and together, they break several rules, drive through a barrier, kill police officers, and commit computer fraud before the authorities arrest them.ⁱⁱⁱ In *12 Monkeys*, Cole tricks the scientists and pulls out his own teeth to try and evade their surveillance. In the end, though, he cannot escape them. In struggling against the power structures of society such as surveillance by authorities, the protagonists in Gilliam’s films fall squarely into the realm of Power dystopia. It is in “seeing the light” that the protagonists of Gilliam’s films undertake the most common plotline in Power dystopian narrative: an attempt to escape.

The issue of “escape” from the system of surveillance and technological dominance is a primary theme in each of the films. In both *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*, the protagonist attempts to elude the watchful authorities, and in both cases, he fails. There are two types of resistance in the films: blatant defiance of the system by the individual, and seemingly random resistance by an “organized” force. Each plays an interesting role in the film, though neither effectively damages the system against which it protests.

ⁱⁱⁱ There are many similarities between *Brazil* and *1984*— the terrorists/war is one. A second is the similarity in state attitude, like Oceania’s banners and slogans everywhere: “War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength,”ⁱⁱⁱ so too does *Brazil* include banners, the most notable being “Suspicion Breeds Confidence.”ⁱⁱⁱ The elevator at MOI even goes to the 84th floor. Finally, the ever-watching telescreens of Orwell’s dystopia are very similar to the computer screens mentioned earlier in this paper. All of these pieces of evidence imply that Gilliam had *1984* in mind when he made *Brazil*.

I will address the second type of resistance first, as it actually serves to strengthen the technological state's grip on society: group resistance. Constance Penley addresses this issue in her essay discussing Brownian Motion – a term introduced by Michel de Certeau,

Michel de Certeau uses the term “Brownian motion” to describe the tactical maneuvers of the relatively powerless when attempting to resist, negotiate, or transform the system and products of the relatively powerful. He defines *tactics* as guerrilla actions involving hit-and-run acts of apparent randomness.¹⁸

While the Brownian motion does minor damage to the system, it is never intended by its perpetrators to overthrow it, but rather make things slightly better for the perpetrators. The guerrilla actions of the perpetrators in Penley's quote sound very much like the activities of the terrorists in *Brazil*. Seemingly striking at random places, *Brazil's* terrorists instill some fear (although vague disgust might be a better way to describe the emotion) in the hearts of society. Nonetheless, rather than causing the status quo to erode, as it seems their goal would be, the terrorists end up helping support the bureaucratic Ministry of Information, which is given 7% of the GNP despite the fact that the bombings have not stopped (we are told as much in the interview at the beginning of the film). Meanwhile, the invisible terrorists continue to explode things – and Gilliam leads us to wonder if, in fact, the terrorists exist at all or if the government is using the job of fighting the terrorists as an excuse to spend lots of money and interrogate lots of witnesses – in essence, the government uses the terrorist threat to increase its own power

of surveillance – its self appointed purpose.^{iv} He does so by including questions like Jill's, "Have you ever *actually* seen a terrorist?" and Jack's elaborate conspiracy theories which only seem to be backed up by confessions coerced with torture.

The issue of Brownian motion and guerrilla action also arises in the titular organization of *12 Monkeys*. The "army," which conceives and executes an elaborate but useless stunt, does not appear to do anything productive. In fact, they *strengthen* the hold that the surveying technologies have over society, because their prank makes space for the argument that society needs more police, prisons, or psychiatrists – all three of which support the ever-probing control of surveillance. As in *Brazil*, Brownian motion only adds to the strength of the government.

This brings us back to individual resistance. As pointed out earlier, neither Cole nor Sam is able to succeed in his attempt to escape the ever-seeing eye of surveillance society. Are Gilliam's views in line with most Power dystopia? Not quite. Despite the fact that his endings seem to match up with other dystopias (remember *1984*'s Winston sitting in the café, cheering for war or *Brave New World*'s Savage who killed himself), Gilliam's Power dystopia do not quite match. The difference lies in the other characters in Gilliam's dystopia.

The characters who make *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* different from other Power dystopia are those who are able to elude the power structures being critiqued. As a narrative deals with a certain ideology, it will typically convey its message by depicting

^{iv} Such is also the case with the government of Oceania in Orwell's *1984*. According to the book that O'Brian gives Winston, the government has been sustaining the impression that they were at war to keep its stranglehold tight. The book says, "... the consequences of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival."(Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Signet, 1984. p158.)

the ideological enemy as unavoidable. The inevitable capture makes the warning of that particular dystopia much more potent. However, Gilliam does not follow the formula.

In each film, he includes a character who eludes those “in power” to “escape.” In *Brazil*, Tuttle continues his renegade repair business much to the chagrin of the MOI. *12 Monkeys*’ red-haired Dr. Peters “escapes” too, though his escape is suicidal, he does manage to elude the systems he is rebelling against. Gilliam has shown both characters who were unable to escape the system and characters who were able to. The result is that he approaches his subject ideology with a different method than most power dystopia do. The reason is that the ideology Gilliam is working against is, in itself, another realm of dystopia altogether. The target of Gilliam’s power discussion is technology.

NOTES

- ¹ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980. p151.
- ² Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p234.
- ³ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p93.
- ⁴ Gordon, Colin. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p239.
- ⁵ *12 Monkeys*. Perf. Bruce Willis, Madeline Stowe, Brad Pitt, David Morse. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Universal, 1996.
- ⁶ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p155.
- ⁷ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p156.
- ⁸ Penley, Constance and Ross, Andrew. "Introduction." *Technoculture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. p xii.
- ⁹ Semple, Janet. *Bentham's Prison, A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. p316.
- ¹⁰ Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. p154.
- ¹¹ Doherty, Thomas. "Video, Science Fiction, and the Cinema of Surveillance." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. 2:2 Summer, 1989. p72.
- ¹² *Brazil*. Perf. Jonathan Pryce, Robert DeNiro, Katherine Helmond, Ian Holm, Bob Hoskins, and Michael Palin. Writ. Terry Gilliam, Charles McKeown, and Tom Stoppard. Dir. Terry Gilliam. The American Cut. Universal, 1985.
- ¹³ Paraphrased from a Regis Interview with Terry Gilliam at the Walker Art Center on November 5, 1998. (Unpublished).
- ¹⁴ Lyon, David. *The Electronic Eye, the Rise of Surveillance Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. p4.
- ¹⁵ Doherty, Thomas. "Video, Science Fiction, and the Cinema of Surveillance." p71.
- ¹⁶ *Brazil*. Dir. Terry Gilliam. The American Cut. Universal, 1985.
- ¹⁷ Desser, David. "Race, Space and Class: The Politics of the SF Film from *Metropolis* to *Blade Runner*." *Retrofitting Blade Runner: Issues in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner and Phillip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Ed. Judith Kerman. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991. p118.
- ¹⁸ De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984. Paraphrased in Penley, Constance. "Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics, and Technology." *Technoculture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. p139.

Ecstasy and Exchange

Inscribed in all of these [technological] wonders are promises of comfort, convenience, and accessibility, even a common ability to exercise some control over our world rather than to be controlled by it....

- J.P. Telotte, "*Just Imagine*-ing the Metropolis of Modern America."¹

Jean Baudrillard's writings discuss the same topic that most Technological dystopias do: the denigration of humankind by its own obsession with technology and communication. Baudrillard's analysis of the phenomenon of technology and communication in society sheds light on many Technological dystopias. By exploring the way that *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* contain Baudrillardian themes, the originality in the films' combination of Power dystopia with Technological dystopia is demonstrable. In other words, by examining the way that Gilliam's films fit in with Technological dystopia (in light of the previous chapter), it becomes possible to further examine the effects of creating films that fall into both categories.

Baudrillard begins his discussion with an examination of the sign and its progress in recent history. Mark Poster summarizes Baudrillard saying "communicational structure" of the "commodity" is "a departure from the traditional understanding of the sign. In a commodity the relation of word, image or meaning and referent is broken and restructured so that its force is directed not to the referent of use value or utility, but to desire."² In other words, the "commodity" causes the sign to be re-assigned with different meanings, ultimately resulting in a decrease in meaning for that sign – a sign that has many meanings is less significant, essentially.

As technology, particularly communication technology, increases, the “floating signifiers,” those signs which carry too many meanings (and thus no meanings at all) multiply. Dissemination of information leads to depletion of meaning, ultimately resulting in a meaningless “hyperreality” in which all original meaning has been lost. Poster writes, “Instead of a ‘real’ economy of commodities that is somehow bypassed by an ‘unreal’ myriad of advertising images, Baudrillard now discerns only a hyperreality, a world of self-referential signs.”³ This hyperreality, no longer having basis in reality, thus has no meaning. The repercussions of this loss of meaning are thunderous. Poster summarizes,

The...spread of the hyperreal through the media and the collapse of liberal and Marxist politics as master narratives deprives the rational subject of its privileged access to truth. In an important sense, individuals are no longer citizens...they are rather consumers, and hence the prey of objects as defined by the code.⁴

In essence, the entire role of the individual is now that of consumer, and because the meaning in that which he or she consumes, information, is gone, there is nothing left but consumption itself. This overwhelming of information, this overflow of consumption is what Baudrillard refers to as “The Ecstasy of Communication.”

Baudrillard’s writing fits in with many of the themes of Technological dystopia. For example, the writings of Cyberpunk, one of the most common forms of Technical dystopia, also talk about the dominance of technology. Peter Fitting writes in his essay, “The Lessons of Cyberpunk,” that “...images of an almost total physical and psychic dependence on technology...serve to remind us that we ignore these new technologies at our peril.”⁵ In Cyberpunk, the technology that infests the urban cityscapes is so functional that people often overuse it – often at their own peril.

Gilliam's dystopias seem to fall into line with this element of Technological dystopia, but he goes a step further. He stresses that not only has humankind sold its soul for technology, it has done so in exchange for technology that does not work. Stanley Aronowitz makes an important statement about technology in his essay, "Technology and the Future of Work," he writes, "...the key element of the deal was that technology could "deliver the goods" to the underlying population...in return for which culture surrendered its autonomy to the technological imperative."⁶ Baudrillard would say that we have surrendered our autonomy to a technology which has robbed us of all meaning; Gilliam would add, and does so through caricature in his films (with things like the miscalculating time machine and the malfunctioning coffee maker), that humankind has sold its soul for meaningless technology that does not even work.

Technology begins its infiltration in what Baudrillard calls the "irreversible tendency of technological progress, saying that we tend toward three things: the simplification and commercialization of "elements," the mechanization of physical processes, and the "miniaturization" of difficult or arduous tasks.⁷ In other words, society is always trying to make things more accessible (removing their specificity). It is always mechanizing things that were previously done manually and it is making technology smaller and faster. Gilliam exaggerates these ideas in his films, to demonstrate that our society is indeed doing all of the above things with technology. He goes further to say, however, that in evolving as Baudrillard says it must, it also hampers our lives.

Throughout *Brazil* there are innumerable examples of bizarre machinery which have undergone Baudrillard's transformations. One such machine in *Brazil* is Sam's

morning wake-up contraption. When Sam receives Kurtzmann's call from work, he is surprised to find that his alarm clock has stopped, and by tapping it with the phone, he enables it to re-set itself. The toast and the coffee get mixed together, ruining both, and Sam has to head off to work without his breakfast. The breakfast machine removes the physical work and so detracts from the physicality of being. But as Gilliam points out by having it be a piece of faulty technology, it also fails to fulfill its basic purpose, to make life easier; in failing to fulfill its purpose, it becomes meaningless.

The technologies being used by the Ministry of Information are also often lacking in quality. For example, the elevators consistently provide problems for Sam. On his first trip to his new office at Information Retrieval, the elevator stops halfway on the floor Sam is heading to. He has to pry the gate open to get on to the floor. Later, in the same elevator, he is trapped as it goes all the way to the basement where it is labeled "Out of Order." Finally, when Sam sees Jack and wants to step forward and talk to him, the gate of the security device fails to open and Sam has to wrench at it. All of these relatively insignificant failures in simple technologies point to an overall failing in the technologies of convenience in *Brazil*.

In *12 Monkeys* as well, Gilliam points to a failure in not only technology, but in the ideology that accompanies technology. Jeffrey (Brad Pitt) explains the ideology that encourages the technological destruction that humankind brings upon itself. He says,

...commercialism...we're not productive anymore... what are we for then? We're consumers...buy a lot of stuff, you're a good citizen. But if you don't buy a lot of stuff, what are you then? Mentally ill. If you don't buy things: toilet paper, new cars, computerized blenders, electrically operated sexual devices, stereo systems with brain implanted headphones, screwdrivers with miniature built-in radar devices, voice activated computers....⁸

Jeffrey understands the world he lives in. Jeffrey recognizes the societal pressure to conform; the commercialism he rants about is a result of the omnipresent ever-evolving technology in society. His suggestions of products to purchase describe the true nature of our obsession with technological advance: better, faster, smaller, newer. The products Jeffrey recommends in his speech are things we have now which have undergone (and are undergoing) the process Baudrillard outlines. Jeffrey refuses to allow himself to be hypnotized by the communication ecstasy that he sees around him and subsequently is sequestered for refusing to participate in society. By giving Jeffrey the lines that make sense, Gilliam shows us the ludicrous failure of the present system.

This failure, and resultant complications, are part Gilliam's point in discussing technologies in his films: the technological and scientific "innovations" which we are constantly supplying ourselves are, in fact, a stifling and destructive influence on the characters in the films (and by extension, we in society). They fail to aid in the completion of even simple tasks and leave our hero and his peers surrounded by incompetence. A perfect illustration of this absolute lack of usefulness lies in Sam's ride home. As the "bus" leaves Sam's apartment building and he makes a dash for the doors, he is trapped between them – they fail to open even though he's stuck between them. Everyone in *Brazil* seems to be stuck between those doors. In short, the technologies not only fail to accomplish the objectives for which they were created, but they increase the burden on people instead of decreasing it.

One of the ways Technological dystopia shows technology's infestation in society is through their atmospheres. For example, *Blade Runner's* atmosphere was designed with this notion in mind. Syd Mead, the visual designer of Ridley Scott's dystopia

commented on the oppressive atmosphere, saying, "Things have to work on a day-to-day basis and you do whatever is necessary to make it work. So you let go of style and it becomes pure function."⁹ Mead's idea is duplicated in *Brazil*, except that in the latter, the dark atmosphere is more oppressive because nothing works – at least Deckard's elevator stops on the correct floor.

The most prevalent and oppressive part of *Brazil*'s technology are the ducts. An example of the smothering effect of the ducts can be seen by examining the scene in the restaurant, when Sam and his mother are eating. The scene runs approximately 4 minutes and 24 seconds and has about 46 shots. It takes place in a grand dining room setting which would be quite beautiful if not dominated by the "tree" of ducts rising from the center of the room and spreading outward. During the scene, in which Sam, his mother, Mrs. Terrain and Shirley eat dinner, there are 39 shots which include ducts in them. The seven shots that do not include ducts are no longer than 2 seconds apiece. What is interesting to look at is who seems to take notice of the ducts and who doesn't. In the shots with Sam's mother or the two shots with Mrs. Terrain as well, the ducts are small, in the background. They are present, but they do not seem to be bothersome to the ladies. In the shots with Sam, however, the entire background is taken up by two large ducts. He slouches down while he tries to talk to his mother and refuses to participate in the elaborate ordering charade with the waiter.¹⁰ While the others are clearly not bothered by the ducts or the impersonal menus, Sam, the only one at the table who does not wholeheartedly embrace the ideals of *Brazil*-lian society, is visually dwarfed by the technological "necessities" behind him. Technology oppresses him visually, just as Baudrillard says technology oppresses us spiritually.

The intrusive nature of the technology in *Brazil*, its encroachment on space, can be seen as representative of its encroachment on our humanity. Many of the “advances” which appear in Sam’s life are in the form of things which sacrifice space for technology. Sam’s apartment seems small, with low ceilings and only two rooms. His “desk” at Information Services is tiny, with the computer console taking up most of his space and the endless stream of paperwork threatening to pour on to the floor. Even the personal transport, when he uses it, is cruelly tiny. It is so small that Sam could not bring his elbows up to shoulder level. Most of Sam’s life, in fact, is enveloped by small spaces which seem to be that way to increase efficiency.

Robert Arnold points out that “[f]undamental changes have increasingly emphasized technological innovation as a principal means of increasing productivity.”¹¹ His observations about the changes in the automotive industry reflect the path that our society is taking with technology – a path that Terry Gilliam has illustrated in *Brazil* by having so much of the bizarre technology in the film center around efficiency, be it efficiency of fuel, of time, or of manpower.

The pressure to increase efficiency serves as a visual indicator of the squeezing effect technology has on the people in the film. Sam’s office, the best example of this concept, is extremely small. In order to make room for him, it appears as though they cut Lime’s office in half. The desk...the space...even the picture on the wall are halved. The introduction of new and cramping technologies are clearly a negative aspect of society, as we can see they have made Lime into something of a sniveling child. He clings to his desk when Sam enters, crying “No you can’t borrow any more chairs...there’s only one left in here and I need that to sit on!” When Lime shouts about

his chair simply because Sam opened the door, it becomes obvious that Lime is paranoid – he’s a man driven to the edge.

Once again, the same effects are evident in *12 Monkeys*. The depictions of the environment of the future are very cramped. First, the world of the future is entirely underground. Second, whether in the prison-type room, the hospital room, or the interrogation room, we don’t ever see a place where there is much open space; the majority of the action takes place in areas restricted, even bounded, by technology. Technology, in the form of vents, hospital machinery, and see-through exploration suits, seems to be every where. It creates a very oppressive atmosphere, thus falling in line with the depiction of technology in *Brazil*.

What Gilliam has done, though probably not intentionally, is demonstrate the possibility of Baudrillard’s theory about the result of technology. Baudrillard writes, “The vehicle now becomes a kind of capsule, its dashboard the brain, the surrounding landscape unfolding like a televised screen (instead of a live-in projectile as it was before).”¹² His image of a capsule fits well here – the person as interactor with technology rather than reality. The technologies of *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* visually constrict the people in the films. Sam’s office, James’ exploration suit, and the constrictive backdrops of both worlds emphasize the “closeness” of technology. They almost *show* our protagonists in their micro-satellites – interacting with technology to survive. The separation from meaning that Baudrillard foresaw is inevitable in such environments, as Gilliam most likely meant it to be.

Baudrillard reflects on the same issues that James, Sam, and the rest of the characters in *12 Monkeys* and *Brazil* are examining. He writes about the way we perceive

reality, talking about activity. According to Baudrillard, as communication has increased, we have become less active and more receptive; our world is much more about receiving information than about leading meaningful lives. In fact, the change in how and what we consume has made our bodies essentially “superfluous.”ⁱ Once again, Gilliam has developed this theme, still stressing that the disembodied technologies fail to work.

The cumbersome and pervasive presence of communication, of information in our society, is symbolically represented by the system of paperwork in *Brazil*. By showing the ever-increasing amounts of the paperwork and by showing it as oppressive and failing, Gilliam illustrates that the communication society we have created is just that, oppressive and useless. He does so through his depiction of the Ministry of Information.

The institution itself is clearly an overlarge, burdensome part of society. Its cumbersome organization is mirrored in the workings of Central Services. Harry Tuttle laments the utter uselessness of the Central Services system in his first conversation with Sam. He says, “...this whole system of yours could be on fire and I couldn’t even turn on a kitchen tap without filling out a 27B-6...you can’t make a move without a form.”¹³

Harry’s renegade fix-it routine shows his disgust with the system. Even Spoor and Dowser, the Central Services employees, are flabbergasted when Sam demands that they follow procedure. The information society which Sam still believes in (he says, “I suppose you have to expect a certain amount of [paperwork]”¹⁴) is hardly useful when someone’s heater isn’t working. The irony in Sam’s statement about paperwork is that

ⁱ Baudrillard writes “There is no longer any ideal principle for these things at a higher level...this body, our body, often appears simply superfluous, basically useless in its extension...since today everything is concentrated in the brain...” (Baudrillard, Jean. “The Ecstasy of Communication” p129.)

the paperwork which Sam has come to expect is, in fact, the very failing point of the system.

Both Central Services and the Ministry of Information serve to illustrate Gilliam's point about the information society in *Brazil* and the information society toward which we seem to be heading: the bureaucracy created by such systems far outweighs and is far more detrimental than the advantages such a system brings to bear. The utter ridiculousness of the system is best shown during the arrest of Mr. Buttle. The officer in charge hands Mrs. Buttle a piece of paper saying, "This is your receipt for your husband and this is my receipt for your receipt." The stack of paperwork he carries with him represents the overwhelming amount of information he deals with. The mistaken arrest is indeed a solid indicator to us that the Ministry of Information and the other organizations created to ease life in *Brazil* fail to do so just as thoroughly as the mechanical technologies do.

The paperwork is one example of a "technology" that can be seen as a symbolic representation of the "communication society" Baudrillard writes of. Gilliam shows us how ridiculous the amount of energy we put into "communication" is by showing us a physical version of it. Sam's desk at the beginning of the film is overflowing with paperwork, the man who arrests Mr. Buttle has three forms to sign, the file Jack gives to Sam is thick with paper – Sam's fantasy, his escape from the society, involves the destruction of the papers at the MOI. The paper required to conduct all the communication becomes a tangible index of volume – it shows us, visually, the folly of communication ecstasy.

The way Gilliam establishes our society's communication overload in *12 Monkeys* is to create James Cole as the perfect representative of an alternate reality. Sent back to the 1990s to do research, he finds that his mind does not fit in with the minds of those around him. Cole's different world-view, particularly his lack of experience with the obscenity of communication, makes him suspect in the 1990s. Cole's refusal, during the first half of the film, to accept the idea that his "alternate" reality could be wrong made him an outcast, someone to be studied, or, as Dr. Reilly put it, "He's sick...he needs help."¹⁵

In both films, then, Gilliam points out the overload of information and, in line with Baudrillard, the subsequent loss of meaning. He continues to stress that technology is doing all of this while it fails to serve us at all, it is building the constructs of information society and separating us from meaning. Finally in both films, it seems to be eliminating, as it grows stronger, the options for other realities. As we see in Sam's struggle to be different and in James' struggle to be listened to, the society of information merely recognizes that these people do not process or exchange information in the correct way and are thus wrong – it cannot listen to them.

At this point, Baudrillard's "Simulacra and Simulations" becomes particularly pertinent. One of the theories he posits in it regards the "successive phases of the image." He writes,

These would be the successive phases of the image:

- 1 It is the reflection of a basic reality.
- 2 It masks and perverts a basic reality.
- 3 It masks the *absence* of a basic reality.
- 4 It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.

...The transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point ...¹⁶

Baudrillard writes that once society enters the third “phase,” the ‘line has been crossed’ and all relation to reality has vanished. He writes in “The Ecstasy of Communication” that, at that ‘point-of-no-return’ (PONR), “we are no longer a part of the drama of alienation; we live in the ecstasy of communication.”¹⁷ The disenchanted, after PONR, could not find meaningful attachments to anything and would thus be relegated to powerlessness – much like Sam in the beginning of *Brazil*.

Gilliam’s films depict societies on the brink of that turning point. In both *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*, the worlds still have meaningful spaces – love is preeminent in both, as is free will and the mind – for the characters to resist in. The societies themselves, on the other hand, have created (within the structures of communication?) ways to separate those who do resist participating in the communication society. In *Brazil* the MOI hunts down and jails those who do not fit in, the “terrorists.” *12 Monkeys*’ society uses jails and asylums to separate the disenchanted. The treatment of “outcasts” of society acknowledges that there *are* outcasts, and that the societies of the films have therefore not yet moved into stage 3.

Jeffrey Goins is just this type of person whom the films marginalize. In *12 Monkeys*, one of Jeffrey’s speeches in the asylum shows his confusion and disgust, his “failure,” within the 1990s communication/innovation society. He sums it up when he says, “There is no right, there is no wrong, there’s only popular opinion.”¹⁸ He goes on to tell a story about the evolution of a scientific idea, germs. His story makes his point clear: reality is what we expect and want it to be. Jeffrey, along with most of society,

thinks that reality is firmly entrenched in science and technology (which in turn encourages consumerism – he says himself, as previously noted, that “we’re consumers”). The spend-crazy commercialism that Jeffrey identifies can be viewed as the result of Baudrillard’s communication society, and those who do not fit into that society are therefore crazy and must be removed.

Dr. Reilly’s reaction to Dr. Peters’ calm-faced tirade is also indicative of Baudrillard’s constructs. While listening to him talk, she appears not to be listening at all – she is turning the same blind eye to him that society turns toward the “alienated.” She does not say anything in response to him – there is nothing a “rational” person could say. Yet later, we realize just how she did see him, as she describes him to Cole as “an apocalypse nut.” This derogatory description shows that she clearly views him as outside the norm.

Brazil features several characters who become marginalized as well. Once again, we see that they are “dealt with.” Jill, the first character the audience sees become completely disillusioned with the system, shows her frustration in one of the first scenes, as she tries desperately to get the problem with Mr. Buttle straightened out. After the confrontation with the man behind the desk, her frustration with the paperwork, and the society it represents, is physically visible in her angry swat at the camera droid. Despite her attempts to rebel, she is “dealt with” by the system.

Sam, too, falls out of contentment with the system and the paperwork that goes with it. We see that Sam is frustrated with the work he has to do, as the one time it actually becomes useful to him – the one time he is in a position to use his job to benefit himself or others – it fails miserably. Not only does he fail to help Jill, but he loses the

file that Jack gave him and he falls behind on his paperwork. He becomes angry that nothing works right, and he sabotages the pneumatic tubes, attempting to destroy the system. Gilliam uses Sam's rebellious act against the paper cog-works of the MOI to show that Sam is unable to function because the paperwork itself keeps him from doing so. He is also marginalized as he is arrested for crimes and the paper cog-works are unaffected. As Sam is removed from society, Gilliam shows the elimination of the disenchanted. This elimination determines where *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* are on Baudrillard's "succession of phases."

Gilliam's films, then, do not depict societies that have gone past Baudrillard's turning point. Rather, the societies are edging toward it; they have not eliminated all the meaningful spaces for resistance yet. In short, *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* are in-between stage 2 (image perverts reality) and stage 3 (image disguises absence of reality). By occupying the netherworld between the two, Gilliam points out that the dangers that Baudrillard envisions as being here already possess, yet at the same time refuse to acknowledge, that we are *past* that point-of-no-return. The next chapter will detail how it is that Gilliam is able to place his films between the perverted reality of phase two and the irreversible hyperreality of phase 3.

NOTES

- ¹ Telotte, J.P. "Just Imagine-ing the Metropolis of Modern America." *Science Fiction Studies* 23:2 July 1996. p166.
- ² Poster, Mark. "Introduction" *Jean Baudrillard: Collected Writings*. Ed. Mark Poster, California: Stanford University Press, 1988. p1.
- ³ Poster, Mark. "Introduction" *Jean Baudrillard: Collected Writings*. p6.
- ⁴ Poster, Mark. "Introduction" *Jean Baudrillard: Collected Writings*. p7.
- ⁵ Fitting, Peter. "The Lessons of Cyberpunk." *Technoculture*. Ed. Penley and Ross. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. p309.
- ⁶ Aronowitz, Stanley. "Technology and the Future of Work." *Culture on the Brink, Ideologies of Technology*. Ed. Bender and Druckery. Seattle: Bay Press, 1994. p16.
- ⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." Trans. John Johnston. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. Seattle: Bay Press, 1993. p128-9.
- ⁸ *12 Monkeys*.
- ⁹ *Blade Runner Souvenir Magazine*. Ira Friedman Inc., New York: 1982. Quoted in: Pierce, John. J. "Creative Synergy and the Art of World Creation." *Retrofitting Blade Runner: Issues in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner and Phillip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Ed. Judith Kerman. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991. p202.
- ¹⁰ *Brazil*.
- ¹¹ Arnold, Robert F. "Termination or Transformation? The *Terminator* Films and Recent Changes in the U.S. Auto Industry." *Film Quarterly*. 51:1 Fall, 1998. p23.
- ¹² Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." p128.
- ¹³ *Brazil*.
- ¹⁴ *Imib*.
- ¹⁵ *12 Monkeys*.
- ¹⁶ Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations." *Jean Baudrillard: Collected Writings*. p170.
- ¹⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Ecstasy of Communication." p130.
- ¹⁸ *12 Monkeys*.

Resolution

This doesn't make way for the surveillance society, this *is* the surveillance society.

-- Brill (Gene Hackman) in *Enemy of the State*

Both Technological and Power dystopia are represented in Gilliam's films *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*. Michel Foucault's and Jean Baudrillard's systems of thought, which address the same concerns as the two forms of dystopia, are thus theoretically applicable to the texts. Exploring both sets of fears in the same dystopia presents a problem: Foucault and Baudrillard both identify their systems of thought as the preeminent discussion of society, or at least the best explanation of the way things are going and why they are going that way. In that effect, they run parallel to each other, but ultimately one must reconcile the differences between them.

Foucault says, in a nutshell, that society is being overrun by technology because the people trying to manipulate power use technology to strengthen their own hold. The "controllers" of power use surveillance to maintain the status quo (or at least those who are in power *think* they are utilizing surveillance to maintain the status quo – Foucault might argue that they only have cursory control, that they are as manipulated as anyone else). On the other hand, Baudrillard would say that technology is depleting life of all meaning, that we are separating from activity and from reality. He would argue that no one benefits from the results of such constructions, as meaning has long since disappeared; we have gone through all four phases of succession – from representation to

perversion to masking absence to hyperreality. Fighting for Power in Baudrillard's world is like fighting over the key to an empty trunk.

So how can these two trains of thought be reconciled to each other? Either Foucault's theories are more applicable, and the separation phenomenon that Baudrillard spots is a tool that will support power structures, or Baudrillard is right, and the surveillance and domination structures that Foucault sees lack cohesion through meaning because those in "power" are indeed fighting for a meaningless prize – and being destroyed just as thoroughly as those being dominated. Gilliam's films might seem to stand firmly on the Baudrillardian side of things. That is, the structures of power in *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* do indeed function as Foucault says they do, but everyone is abused by the "ecstasy of communication" and the infestation of technology, rendering the benefits or drawbacks of the structures of power meaningless.

In *Brazil*, Gilliam clearly shows that those in "power" are not. One of the ways he does so is to show that the technologies in the film are not, as one might think they should be, entirely under the control of the upper class. While the wealthy do appear to have them somewhat subdued, the underlying evidence in the film suggests otherwise. In fact, it implies the opposite, namely that the technology is as oppressive and domineering to the upper class as it is to the poor – it just manifests itself in other ways.

One way technology keeps the upper classes in its grip is through innovation. Kathleen Woodward comments about the phenomenon of technological superiority in her article about "ageism." She writes, "...in our technological culture there is nothing good about an artifact or a technology that is old." She goes on to argue that because our society stresses the new, the innovative, and looks down upon the old, we begin to see

everything old, including people, as useless.¹ Like the wealthy in our society, the privileged in *Brazil* must keep up with technology to maintain their position. In trying to do so, they are as controlled by technology as are the members of the working class.

The predominant example of technological constriction of the elite is plastic surgery. The wealthy women in *Brazil*, Sam's mother and Mrs. Terrain, are obsessed throughout the film with plastic surgery. They spend so much time working on making themselves younger and prettier that they even give "medical gift tokens" as Christmas presents. Wolfgang Schirmacher echoes Woodward's words about our (and their) society's preoccupation with youth when he writes, "Our culture is fascinated by the immaterial body which knows no aging process and may overcome even death. Modern technology seems to be as hostile to the body as premodern Christianity."² Applied to *Brazil*, we see that while Mother and Mrs. Terrain undergo repeated surgeries, their bodies deteriorate, Mrs. Terrain's to the point of death. The obsession with new technology, in this case age-defying technology, dooms the wealthy women to a dependence on a flawed technology – a situation reminiscent of the doomed status of the working class. The obsession with physical beauty is as meaningless as *Brazil*'s obsession with communication.

The ambitious men of the upper class must also submit to the technologies of the film if they wish to survive. Sam's friend Jack is the best representation of this. His family is the ultimate representation of the technological family. His wife has had plastic surgery (see above) and he cannot resist telling everyone about it. When he does, as in the scene at Mother's party, he is essentially shouting, "Hey look, we're technologically adept too!" Jack's children, too, are representative of his commitment to technology.

When Sam says to say hello to the twins, Jack replies, "Triplets." Rather than be shocked that Jack's twins have evolved into triplets, he merely replies, "Triplets? God, how time flies!" This response implies two things. First, that there is a technology that Jack would have access to that would add another child of identical makeup to the family and second, it implies that Jack has made use of that technology. In doing so, he has strengthened the image that he uses a lot of technology (he and his wife could have just had another child, but Jack needed to show that he was involved with technology), an image critical to his advance at the MOI. Of course, in line with Baudrillard's thinking, that image is just that, an image. The true meaning that might have come from technology's ability to give him another child – the joy of a third child – is lost in the communication society.

Even the most powerful man in the film, Mr. Helpmann, is visually trapped by the communication society. In a world where technological imperative supplies all sorts of devices (although, admittedly shoddy devices), the symbolic trap of the wheelchair is especially profound. The fact that Mr. Helpmann, the man of ultimate power, must have Sam, the man of least communication, help him go to the bathroom shows the uselessness and meaninglessness of the communication society. All of Mr. Helpmann's power still cannot supply anything "real." The fact that Mr. Helpmann cannot, even in the technological wonderland of *Brazil*, escape his body through technology, adds to Gilliam's argument that technology not only fails to provide meaning, it fails to provide anything. Thus, we see in *Brazil* that those who appear to be in power are as trapped by the system that put them there as the people in the shoddy apartment building of the Butties. The same is true in *12 Monkeys*.

The people who appear to be in power in *12 Monkeys* can be identified in two groups. One is the group of scientists in the future, the other is the group of doctors and scientists in the 1990's. The latter, the doctors and scientists, are so thoroughly entrenched in the system of observation, surveillance, and information gathering and exchanging that they can not fathom the possibility of a real meaning outside their own hyperreality. They refuse to see the possibility of James' reality, and thus perish in the viral outbreak.

The scientists of the future are in a similar trap. Gilliam gives us several clues to this. First, he depicts them as the physical manifestations of Baudrillard's satellite. They sit behind their tables and use communication technology to observe and interact with the world. They even use James as a sort of biological probe, sent to find out information and communicate it with them. They use technology to interact with the world – they are separated from it.

Second, the depictions of the scientists are usually as groups. They exist almost as a network rather than as a group of individuals. They exchange ideas and look for more ideas to exchange. When James is going back in time, for example, they each spout a piece of instruction or advice at him – they are almost one voice. It doesn't matter which one says the information, the meaning in their lives is gone. The collection and recycling of information is the only meaning they have. In being information mongers, as Gilliam depicts them to be, we see that they are as trapped by technology as James is. They cannot go above ground just as Mr. Helpmann cannot stand up. The techniques of Power that Foucault has related, then, do not free those in Power from their slavery to

Baudrillard's meaningless exchanges. Thus, Baudrillard's would be, in Gilliam's eyes, the stronger theory and the one that dominates his films.

Yet, at the same time that the theory of Technological dystopia dominates the films, the ideas presented by Baudrillard do not completely fit Gilliam's worlds. Where Baudrillard sees our world as having already entered phase four – that of hyperreality – *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* are distinctly *not* at stage four. In fact, they are not even at stage three yet; Gilliam's films are somewhere between stages two and three. They are worlds which are stampeding toward "communication ecstasy" but have yet to cross the boundary between the perversion of reality of phase two and the masking of reality's absence that phase three represents. The evidence for this netherworld between phases comes from the characters who rebel.

It is the characters who are outcasts, the rebels, who represent the loopholes in Baudrillard's argument. They are the proof that *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* do not depict phase four worlds. With each character that conducts a meaningful act of resistance, Gilliam shows that hyperreality is *not* present. When Sam finds love with Jill, he creates a meaningful place in his life; James does the same. By trying to resist the communication societies, the characters show themselves to exist before Baudrillard's turning point, before phase three. At the same time, society's inability to cope with the rebellion and the "communication ecstasy" that is entrenched in these films place them beyond phase two. Thus, we see that Gilliam has found a borderground between the two, a spot just before Baudrillard's PONR, and has set his films there.

There is further evidence in the films that Gilliam believes that a no PONR exists at all with regards to hyperreality. He includes characters such as Tuttle and Jones who

operate within the system that has (or seems to have) gone into phase three or four (at parts). These characters nonetheless find meaningful action in that world. By physically connecting with their actions (Tuttle with his furnace and Jones in actually going to meet the red-haired Dr. Peters), the revolutionaries succeed where Baudrillard says that they should not. In worlds where they have embraced phase three or four outlooks, Jones and Tuttle succeed in doing something meaningful – both for themselves and for society.

Gilliam allows for characters like Tuttle and Jones by creating films that carefully dissect power structures and ask questions about them utilizing Foucauldian themes throughout the film. The computer/televisions of *Brazil* and the Panoptic prison of *12 Monkeys*, for example, lead to questions about the nature of surveillance: should we be careful about how much we institute surveying technologies? What are the dangers of too much surveillance? And so on. Gilliam's use of Power dystopia leads to an examination of the overarching theme of the works, namely Technological dystopia.

NOTES

- ¹ Woodward, Kathleen. "From Virtual Cyborgs to Biological Timebombs: Technocriticism and the Material Body." *Culture on the Brink, Ideologies of Technology*. Ed. Bender and Druckery. Seattle: Bay Press, 1994. p58.
- ² Schirmacher, Wolfgang. "Homo Generator: Media and Postmodern Technology." *Culture on the Brink, Ideologies of Technology*. Ed. Bender and Druckery. Seattle: Bay Press, 1994. p68.

Conclusion

... The cartographers of the Empire drew up a map so detailed that it ends up exactly covering the territory (but where, with the decline of the Empire this map becomes frayed and finally ruined, ...)

“Simulacra and Simulations”

--Jean Baudrillard

Brazil and *12 Monkeys* are hardly happy films. Each one is rather depressing in its own way. The latter shows the modern world as we know it, but depicts us as so short-sighted and self-consuming that we are unable to guess what is in store for us. The former is more remote, with giant ducts and obscenely small cars; yet there is something insidious about *Brazil*, its depiction of paperwork, office life, and the like is too close to reality for taste. No one will argue that these films are not dystopias – they clearly are. What makes *12 Monkeys* and its counterpart stand out against other dystopias is that these films cover so much *more* than most – they encompass both of the classifications for dystopia mentioned in this paper.

There are two different types of dystopia. The first is Power dystopia. Focusing on an ideology, Power dystopia examines the structures and systems in society that allow those in power to attempt to use power to maintain their position. Michel Foucault's writings reflect upon this issue. When Power dystopia is examined using a Foucauldian lens, it becomes evident that Foucault and Power dystopia are concerned with the same structures in society.

The second type of dystopia is a Technological one. Technological dystopia is concerned with the infiltration and adoption of technology in our society; it addresses effect the proliferation of technology has on humankind. Once again, the writings of a theorist coincide with the issues at hand in the type of dystopia. The theorist who writes about technology and its effect in society is Jean Baudrillard. As with the Foucault/Power dystopia pairing, Baudrillard's writings show the same concerns that Technological dystopia do, leading me to pair the two.

In examining the films, it becomes evident that many of Foucault's principles apply. He conjectured that as those who use power expanded its influence, it permeated many different places and filtered down to the individual him/herself – then it delved into the body itself. To enhance the “filtering down” process, those who try to control power used systems of power such as science, religion, and even medicine to increase their power over individuals. These steps are clearly visible in *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*. In the latter, the profession of psychiatry is well established as a “truth-defining” part of society. In the former, those in power literally penetrate the body by torturing it to derive another form of “truth.” In both, then, it is evident how power is exerted over the individual at the lowest levels.

Another technique Foucault outlines and Power dystopia uses is surveillance. Foucault notes that a system of surveillance arose in order to enable a less expensive punitive system. As technology and techniques grew and developed, so did the opportunities for surveillance. The panopticon was born and the idea of total surveillance became somewhat feasible. Again, both films use this theme to discuss the dangers of power structures in society. *12 Monkeys* actually uses a panoptic prison; *Brazil's*

computer/televisions are another form of surveillance within the films. (It is important to keep in mind that Foucault stayed neutral throughout this argument. He thought that technology (and the panopticon) could be used for either good purposes or villainous ones. Nonetheless, he did not take sides in any of these debates.)

Power dystopia, on the other hand, always sees surveillance and other controlling power systems as “bad.” The systems do, after all, prevent the dystopian hero from escaping his fate either through group resistance, which did little more than bolster the status quo, or through individual escape, in which case he would be caught. Either way, the protagonist does not get to escape. Yet despite his dying protagonists (a must in dystopia), Gilliam is undercutting the traditional Power dystopia by showing characters who can survive and do well (Tuttle and Jones).

Technological dystopia and Jean Baudrillard concern themselves with an entirely different set of foci. Baudrillard is very concerned about the effect communication technology and the ensuing “obscenity” will affect, is affecting, and has affected our society. He sees our three tendencies in technology: homogenation, mechanization, and miniaturization as part of an “irreversible” journey toward what he calls the “hypperreal.” These three tendencies appear consistently in *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*. In the former, the progress toward the “capsule” from which all mechanization can be done is symbolically represented in the lack of space. *12 Monkeys*, on the other hand, uses its dialogue to discuss the same phenomena.

As technology moves us further from physical activity and personal communication into mechanical activity and communication technology, Baudrillard sees society as progressing through four phases: the image imitating reality, the image

perverting reality, the image hiding the absence of reality, and finally the hyperreal.

These four phases represent the level of meaning in society's communication. As society passes into the third and fourth stages, all connection with anything real, anything meaningful, is lost and people get lost in the "obscenity of communication."

Technological dystopia, in general, agrees with this outline, depicting a meaningless society. But *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys* center around characters that are still able to feel, still able to rebel – Sam and James. Since Baudrillard says that "alienation" is impossible after the society has moved into hyperreal, then Gilliam's worlds must necessarily be grounded in a phase before that hyperreal. At the same time, there are characters in the film who seem to be in the hyperreal already, like Jack and Mother. Thus, we see that Gilliam's films occupy the borderland between phase two and phase three.

Gilliam creates an exception to Baudrillard's rule as well, however. It seems as though Gilliam not only places his worlds on the border between phase 2 and phase 3, but he bores holes in the idea that Baudrillard's hyperreal is founded on – that it is irreversible. By creating characters who operate within the communication society and still find meaningful activity – like Tuttle and Dr. Peters – Gilliam certainly suggests that all is not lost; in creating a character who has lived in the hyperreality of the future and found a meaningful activity there, in creating Jones, Gilliam testifies that he does not see a point of no return, but instead always sees loopholes.

What distinguishes Gilliam's films among dystopia is that he has used the Foucauldian structures that encourage deconstructive thought about our society within a Technological dystopia in order to allow for deconstructive thought in a world where

thought is hardly possible. By creating the possibility of individual dissension in a world as intolerant as *Brazil* or *12 Monkeys*, Gilliam has created spaces for meaningful action to push through. Gilliam sees the world below Baudrillard's map as ever-present. Even when it seems as though the map of the world (in reference to the epigraph) has been there so long that the real world below has long since dissolved away, Gilliam would say that the real world below the map will peek through, just like Jones did.