

POSTCYBERPUNK UNITOPIA

A Comparative Study of Cyberpunk and Postcyberpunk

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M.A. THESIS

THESIS SUPERVISOR:
TUNA ERDEM, MA

February, 2006

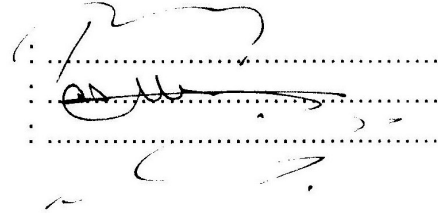
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POSTSİBERPUNK UNITOPYA
Karşılaştırmalı Siberpunk ve Postsiberpunk Çalışması

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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih (approved on):
Şubat (February) 17, 2006

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 134

Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1) Siberpunk
- 2) Postsiberpunk
- 3) Teknokrasi
- 4) Technopoli
- 5) Heterotopya

Key Words

- 1) Cyberpunk
- 2) Postcyberpunk
- 3) Technocracy
- 4) Technopoly
- 5) Heterotopia

ABSTRACT

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by
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In early 1990s, a new wave emerged within the cyberpunk genre and in 1998 it was detected by Lawrence Person as “postcyberpunk.” The aim of this study is to discuss this generic deflection and inquire its characteristics within the context of social environment of the era.

The subject of the study is established around four films which I claim that should be considered as postcyberpunk: *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997), *Code 46* (Michael Winterbottom, 2003), *Girl from Monday* (Hal Hartley, 2005) and *The Island* (Michael Bay, 2005). Through comparing these films with their cyberpunk ancestors, it is argued in the thesis that while the essence of cyberpunk is chaos and disorder -an oceanic flow resembling the multiple interacting elements of the matrix-, in the world of postcyberpunk order is re-established and chaos is eliminated by a monolithic system of centralized power which is exercised through panoptic structures of new cyber technologies.

This study discusses this backlash in the imaginary world of the films in terms of philosophy of culture and social ordering, mainly through the guidance of Neil Postman’s and Michel Foucault’s ideas and hopes to provide an insight on the reception and the evolution of Cyberculture through the 1980s to today.

ÖZET

POSTSİBERPUNK UNITOPYA Karşılaştırmalı Siberpunk ve Postsiberpunk Çalışması

Naciye Gülelgül Altıntaş

1998 yılında Lawrence Person yazdığı manifestoyla, 1990'ların başlarından itibaren siberpunk türünün göstermeye başladığı değişimin yeni bir alt-türe işaret ettiğini öne sürerek, bu yeni türü 'postsiberpunk' olarak adlandırmayı önerdi. Bu tezin amacı bu türsel sapmanın işaret ettiği radikal değişimi, çağa rengini veren sosyal değişim bağlamında ele alarak tartışmaktır.

Bu tartışma postsiberpunk olarak kabul edilmesini önerdiğim dört film üzerinden gelişmektedir: *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997), *Code 46* (Michael Winterbottom, 2003), *Girl from Monday* (Hal Hartley, 2005) and *The Island* (Michael Bay, 2005). Tartışmaya zemin oluşturacak temel saptama, aynı matrisin sürekli etkileşim halindeki düzensiz bileşenleri gibi, siberpunkta içkin olan her şeyin özünde kaos ve düzensizlik olduğu, buna karşıt olarak postsiberpunkın tahayyül ettiği gelecekte her şeyin düzen ve birlik üzerine kurulu olduğudur. Filmler, imgeledikleri dünyalardaki sosyal yapılanma ve toplumsal kültürdeki farklılıklar ekseninde, temel olarak iki kuramcının; Neil Postman ve Michel Foucault'nun düşüncelerinin sunduğu perspektif çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır. Bu çerçevede, yeni siber teknolojilerin panoptik benzeri yapılanmalarıyla tahakküm kuran merkezî otoritenin, nasıl postsiberpunkın dünyasında kaosu yok ederek görünürde ütopyik bir toplum düzeni sağladığı tartışılmaktadır. Bu tartışma aynı zamanda 1980'lerden günümüze siberkültürün gelişimi ve algılanışı konusunda da verimli bir tartışma zemini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writing process of this thesis became one of the most distinguished experiences of my life. I would like to present my gratefulness for the ones who made it so valuable, productive and joyful. First of all I would like to thank to all my professors who shared their ideas with me and enlightened my way; among all especially to Prof. Dr. Nurçay Türkoğlu, Doç. Dr. Tül Akbal Sualp, Doç. Dr. Selim Eyüboğlu and off course to Tuna Erdem; my supervisor whom I admire the lucidity and the beauty of her mind more and more everyday.

I also would like to thank to my family for supporting me in every way and believing in me. And to my precious ones: Gözde Onaran, Zeynep Dadak, Övgü Gökçe and Senem Aytaç who shared so many sleepless nights discussing with me and became my greatest source of strength. And at last my not at least, to Yüce, without your love and patience none of this would be possible. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

“I'm looking for a party, I'm looking for a side
I'm looking for the treason that I knew in '65”

From the lyrics of “1984” by David Bowie

The milieu of 80s, where, with a playful irony Derrida and his followers had already deconstructed the building structures of modernism which were previously revealed by Foucault. The cavities left behind were filled with postmodern abysses, creating a heavy centrifugal force. Baudrillard was on the stage, announcing *the end of the social, in the shadow of the silent majorities*; who were put to bed over four decades ago, numbed by the paranoia of Cold War, having nightmares about an industrialized giant named Japan. Meanwhile a group of young people, who had tumbled down from the gulf of social injustice, were trying to disturb the long lived sleep of the silent majorities with a ‘very noisy music’ called Punk; “the explosion of hatred and grief”¹ as they have expressed it.

In 1981, the first Personal Computers (PCs) hit the shelves, ushering a new way of doing almost everything. Techno culture became the popular culture. Computers began to proliferate on every desk, transforming personal spaces to stations and individuals to message sending/receiving entities. The

inextricable bound established between human and machine was strengthened, creating an ever increasing symbiosis. This process was the beginning of a communication breakthrough, which would connect the entire human population through a single network. Thus, *cyber* became the motto of the era, acknowledging the formation of the new social as a servomechanism reflecting Norbert Wiener's, -the father of *Cybernetics*- utopia.

The popularity of *Cybernetics* in the cultural ground was an outcome of the pervasive digital technologies and the accommodation of the cyborg culture as an unavoidable scientific fact. The new technologies opened up the possibilities of a new, emancipatory experience and a certain escape from reality. But at the same time, the analogy established between human and machine devastated the privileged status of humans and partook its place in the list of anxieties and confusions of the era.

Wiener's theory was founded on the base of control through communication; the scientific formulation of the post-industrial information age's politics. He constructed a scientific ground to realize the utopian notion of an ideal society based on an effectual transmission of information. His dream was to formulate the secret of the unison in a beehive and determine the possible laws and regulations of a system which would create the same unison in a human society. He claimed that this is only possible through a common nervous system which will provide the topography for permanent relations; a bound which would function more effectively than language (or culture in

general terms); a physical correlation which would establish a ground for intercommunication based on a process of feedback.²

In his critically acclaimed novel *Neuromancer* (1984), William Gibson denominated Wiener's utopia as *cyberspace*. He described the word he coined as "a global nervous system"³, the net, the matrix. However, Wiener's bee hive turned out to be a place of chaos and disorder. The battlefield of the *governors* (the massive cooperate power) and the *pilots* (cyberpunks).⁴ The success and the popularity of *Neuromancer* brought a rapidly growing interest directed to a genre which has been on the circulation for a while, namely cyberpunk. As a result of this interest, cyberpunk exceeded the limits of fiction and the one's who have been 'looking for a treason' carried the revolt of the cyberpunk characters to the cultural climax of 1980s.

Thus, the term cyberpunk does not only refer to a sub-genre of SF but it has also been considered to be a counter-culture, a political act of rebellion that grasps the energy revealed by the acceleration of the technological innovation in 1980s. Bukatman detects this fact and suggests that: "Perhaps we should not regard this movement [cyberpunk] as a closed literary form, but rather as the site where a number of overdetermined discursive practices and cultural concerns were most clearly manifested and explicated."⁵

But, the excitement that cyberpunk had caused did not last long. The site which was opened by the marginal use of technology in 1980s is closed by a pervading commodification throughout 1990s. The emancipatory outcomes of new technologies failed to fulfill their promise and the weapons of cyberpunk

rebels became the products of the free market. The fictional world also followed this turn and a new wave emerged within the cyberpunk which is manifested by Lawrence Person as *postcyberpunk*.

Person published *Notes Toward a Postcyberpunk Manifesto* in 1998 and argued that cyberpunk fiction entered a new era as a result of the generation gap between the founders of the genre and their successors. I believe debating the distinctions that Person remarks between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk may also serve as a prolific ground to discuss the evolution and reception of cyberculture through two ensuing decades, since cyberpunk is about 1980s and postcyberpunk is about 1990s. In order to open ground for further discussions on the subject matter, this thesis aims to provide a comparative study of cyberpunk and postcyberpunk fiction in film.

For this purpose, in the first two chapters I will inquire cyberpunk and postcyberpunk separately and will try to acquire an understanding of my approach to these terms. Throughout the contradictions that will be portrayed as a result of this inquiry, I will claim that the differences between the two are dramatic especially considering cinema.

Cyberpunk depicts near future, from a passage of radical social change where entrenched dichotomies (i.e. human/machine, virtual/real) have to be redefined and the securing distinctions start to blur. In case of postcyberpunk, this threat is rendered obsolete. There remain no lines to be blurred in the world of postcyberpunk where technology becomes the habitat of everyday life and the inhabitants will themselves become technology. In the world of

postcyberpunk, technology and its practices become invisible; established as a form of power which would enforce unity and order. As opposed to, in the case of cyberpunk technology is considered to be a force to decentralize power that opens a ground for struggle.

In the following chapters, I will inquire these differences and their implications from two different frameworks. In the third chapter my guide will be Neil Postman. Postman coins the term *technopoly* in order to depict the transformation of technocratic societies into societies which are ruled according to the objectives of technological determinism. I will argue that the transformation of the genre follows a similar path. Thus, while cyberpunk conveys a society at the threshold of this change with all its agonies and confusions, the society in postcyberpunk becomes the exact counterpart of Postman's technopolic society.

Postman defines *technopoly* as the disappearance of the traditional world and the submission of culture to the requirements of technology. In the technopolic culture humans can only be defined and valued according to their efficiency and productivity within the system. Thus, human becomes a mechanic part of the system that its value can only be determined by the experts of technopoly through statistics. Postcyberpunk fiction is a warning against the inflection of the technopolic society as a result of the unprecedented pace of technological change. This warning becomes most apparent through the portrayal of characters as the 'human machines' and their interactions with the society they live in. I will also argue that postcyberpunk's approach can also be

regarded as a response to the technological utopianism which is immanent in cyberpunk in spite of all its reservations.

In the last chapter, I will look at the disparities between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk from a different perspective which will include the implications of the social ordering in the filmic worlds, through the analysis of the representation of fictional spaces. By doing this, I will inquire not only the topos in the fictional worlds but also the social community that inhabits that topos, which is already a generic tendency. For this purpose, I will approach to cyberpunk as a *heterotopia* relying on Foucault's determination of the term as 'a place of Otherness' and compare it with postcyberpunk through a term which I will coin as *unitopia*.

Cyberpunk, which is neither a utopia nor a dystopia in its classical sense, is a *heterotopia* which visualizes places for Otherness that emerges from an environment of chaos and disorder. In the case of Postcyberpunk, where the order is re-established through a monolithic system of centralized power, topos becomes the site of power to enforce unity. This power is exercised not only through the panoptic structures of new cyber technologies but also through the inhabitants, who themselves have become cybernetic machines; and thus in postcyberpunk power extends its practice from architectural space to the space of the body.

To conclude the introduction and start the debate; The subject of this study will be established around four films: *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997), *Code 46* (Michael Winterbottom, 2003), *Girl from Monday* (Hal Hartley, 2005)

and *The Island* (Michael Bay, 2005). I will argue, following Person's manifesto, that these films should be considered as postcyberpunk via comparing them with their cyberpunk ancestors. Throughout my inquiry, I will argue that while the essence of cyberpunk is chaos and disorder, an oceanic flow resembling the multiple interacting elements of the matrix, in the world of postcyberpunk order is re-established. I will set this depiction central to my understanding of cyberpunk and postcyberpunk, and from the vision it sustains I will compare the differences between the fictional worlds of the films in terms of ideology of culture and social ordering. According to this, I will claim that cyberpunk conveys a still technocratic society at the peak of a social change, and reflects both the excitements and confusions of its world to a heterotopia where a utopian endeavor to ensure chaos as a durable (dis)order is reflected. In the case of postcyberpunk, heterotopia is vanquished by a monolithic system of governance where alternative forms of social ordering are reduced to one. Within this topos, social system is 'perfected' according to the objectives of *technopoly* and creates what I will call *unitopia*.

NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

¹ O'Hara, Craig. *Punk Felsefesi: Gürültüünün Ötesinde*. tr. Amy Spangler. (İstanbul: Çitlembik Publishing, 2003) p.28

² Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics*. (Cambridge & Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1965) pp.155 – 160

³ Gibson, William. *Neuromancer* (London: Harper-Collins, 1995) p.51

⁴ The word *cyber* is coming from Greek word κυβερνήτης; *kybernetes* or *kubernetes*, meaning steersman, pilot, or rudder. Timothy Leary in his article “The Cyberpunk: The Individual as Reality Pilot” gives a detailed account of the alterations and variations of the word *cyber* from Greeks to the modern study of *cybernetics*. Leary explains that in its Hellenic origin a *kubernetes* – is a pilot, a steersman who sails through the seven seas without a map or sufficient navigational equipment. The courageous Greek pilots developed a certain way of independence and self-reliance which was necessary to fulfill their dangerous tasks, and became the role models of their time reflecting the “democratic, inquiring, questioning nature of their land.” (p.531) Leary argues that the word *cyber* lost its essence and mutated (or whether “corrupted” in his words) to a completely different context in Latin. The Latin translation of the word *kubernetes* is *gubarnare*, which means “to control the actions or behavior of, to direct, to exercise sovereign authority, to regulate, to keep under, to restrain, to steer,” so “the Greek word *pilot* becomes *governor or director*” in Latin while “the word *to steer* becomes *to control*.” (p.535) Leary, Timothy. “The Cyberpunk: Individual as reality pilot” in *Cybercultures Reader* ed. Bell & Kennedy (London; New York: Routledge, 2000)

⁵ Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p.137

Chapter I

Defining Cyberpunk

Open an empty page in Google. Write “cyberpunk definition” and hit the “I’m feeling lucky” button. Well, this time you are not that lucky! It is the *Cyberpunk Project’s* site which will open and you will come upon a comment by Thomas Eicher:

Gibson said it in a short story somewhere. Cyberpunk is the stuff that has EDGE written all over it. You know, not edge, it's written EDGE. All capital letters. (...) Well, EDGE is not about definitions. To the contrary, things so well known that they provide an exact definition can't be EDGE. SO DON'T TRY TO DEFINE IT!!!¹

I will grant a right to Thomas Eicher’s caution and I will not attempt to define cyberpunk. But my reasons are quite different than Eicher’s, because I believe, in spite of its inclination to stay on the EDGE, cyberpunk often fails to transcend its origins.² Thus, rather than being on the edge, cyberpunk is at constant cycling between the edge and the center. It is a conglomeration of the conflicting energies that mostly shaped 1980s phenomenon; the collusion of political conservatism that insists on the acceptance of traditional morality and punk sensibility that stands out against that insistency; the conjunction of the

confusions and the anxieties of the postmodern condition and the accelerated technological change; the mystical revelation of a coming apocalypse -or the beginning of a new posthuman era- and the attempt to cope with the anxieties it had caused through restoring the comforts of the traditional world. Discordance, collusion, acceleration, anxiety, fluidity and hybridity might be taken as the keywords to understand cyberpunk, yet not to define it. The endeavor to define cyberpunk stipulates a kaleidoscopic amalgam rather than a coherent view. As looking through a kaleidoscope, looking at cyberpunk would reflect loose fragments arranged so that the changes of position exhibits its content in an endless variety.

The term cyberpunk refers to a Science Fiction (SF) sub-genre that can be positioned within the utopian-dystopian tradition; a body of fiction which inclines to stay on the EDGE. Besides, on the part of its advocates, cyberpunk also refers to an individual who has a dissident sensitivity to see reality in a different way; an individual who considers her/himself as a “technological rat, swimming in the ocean of information”³ and aims to design chaos and to fashion her/his own personal disorders with cybernetic tools.⁴ Thus, cyberpunk has also been regarded as a sub-culture or a counterculture which is an amalgam of 1980s punk and hacker cultures; an attitude, a stance, a life-style. The complication is, cyberpunk is not one of these things at one time, but all of these things at the same time. It is this ‘endless variety’ that resists any attempt to define. This being said, my purpose is not to give a definition, but rather to

wander around the variety of debates in order to provide an understanding from the bits and pieces that they would provide.

The first possible approach to cyberpunk is to set it as a sub-genre of SF that belongs to the utopian-dystopian tradition. Thus, cyberpunk refers to “a body of fiction built around the work of William Gibson and other writers, who have constructed visions of the future worlds of cyberspaces, with their vast range of technological developments and power struggles.”⁵ Considered primarily as a literary genre, it is the inheritor of the two traditions within SF, “the so called ‘hard’ science fiction of vast technical detail and extrapolative power which dates from the 1930s” and “the openly experimental writing of the New Wave of science fiction writers which arose in the 1960s.”⁶

The word *cyberpunk* was originated from the title of a short story written by Bruce Berthke in 1983.⁷ But it was the publication of *Neuromancer*, the William Gibson novel with Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick awards, which brought the worthwhile attention to cyberpunk. Even if the birth of the genre is dated to the publication of *Neuromancer* in 1984, the first cyberpunk film *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott) was released in 1982.

Beside *Blade Runner*, films such as *Liquid Sky* (Slava Tsukerman, 1982), *Tron* (Steven Lisberger, 1982), *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1983), *WarGames* (John Badham, 1983) and *Brainstorm* (Douglas Trumbull, 1983) can be listed among the early examples of cyberpunk. Although cyberpunk remains largely as a 1980s phenomenon, many of the most popular cyberpunk

films were added to the list in 1990s and even 2000s: *Circuitry Man* (Steven Lovy, 1990), *Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990), *Hardware* (Richard Stanley, 1990), *Until the End of the World* (Wim Wenders, 1991), *The Lawnmower Man* (Brett Leonard, 1992), *Strange Days* (Kathryn Bigelow, 1995), *Johnny Mnemonic* (Robert Longo, 1995), *Hackers* (Iain Softley, 1995), anime movie *Ghost in the Shell* (Shirow Masamune, 1997), *New Rose Hotel* (Abel Ferrara, 1998), *The Matrix Trilogy* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999/ 2003) and *Ghost in the Shell's* sequel *Innocence* (Mamoru Oshii, 2004) are among the popular examples of the genre which were released after the 1980s. Also, TV series such as *Max Headroom* (Annabel Jankel & Rocky Morton, 1985) and *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* (Kenji Kamiyama, 2002), anime series *Bubble Gum Crisis* (Katsuhito Akiyama et al., 1987), and computer role-playing games like *Cyberpunk 2020* and *Shadowrun* can be considered among the other examples of cyberpunk in different medias.

Of course there are many other films that I have not mentioned. Making a list of cyberpunk films is not less inconvenient than defining cyberpunk and it is not my primary concern. The list can be expanded according to the different definitions of the genre. It is possible to see that films such as *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985), *The City of Lost Children* (Marc Caro, 1995), *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998) and even *Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971) are also referred as cyberpunk in many fan sites. The consistency of these films with the genre may be controversial, but again, there are no strict definitions for cyberpunk. In fact, according to the recent arguments on genre theory, the very

definition of the genre takes a broader designation and defies the attempt to make any clear demarcations. Steve Neale is among the genre theorist that emphasizes the hybrid nature of genres. In order to underline the issue Neale quotes R. Cohen who argued that genres are open categories:

... since each genre is composed of texts that accrue, the grouping is a process, not a determinate category. Genres are open categories. Each member alters the genre by adding, contradicting, or changing constituents, especially those of members most closely related to it.⁸

Thus, the difficulty of defining cyberpunk starts from the pervious nature of genres; according to this perspective a difficulty that cyberpunk shares with any other genre. However, I found it still possible to give an account of emblematic cyberpunk themes in order to provide a better understanding of the world of cyberpunk -of course with the acceptance beforehand that there are many films which establishes a different imagery world than the one that I will describe-.

In general, cyberpunk stories are set in a near future which is characterized by the alienating high-technologies. The world of cyberpunk is ruled by cooperates. In this world, cities are ruined and the social sphere is moved to the abstracted data space of several matrixes, namely the *cyberspace*. The heroes of the stories are usually hackers, technological loners, new age ninjas, console cowboys. They are technologically skillful outlaw characters. They are the “first

generation of cyborgs”⁹; human beings enhanced with neuro-surgeries. They have biochips and wet wire implants in their bodies. They live in Sprawls -cities without a recognizable center-, sleep in ‘coffins’, feed with Amphetamine and work for/with Artificial Intelligences (AIs). They wear black chroma leather. They are punk. They are anti-heroes. They don’t try to save the world, they try to save themselves. They live in a state of panic and disorder. They are inexpiably wretched with the corporeal reality. They praise the pleasures of disembodiment in cyberspace to skies. They are often obsessed with telepresence and/ or haunted by remediated memories.

All these images of cyberpunk are strictly bound to 1980s cultural phenomenon. Sterling refers cyberpunk as an “an integration of technology and 1980s counter culture.”¹⁰ This ‘unholy alliance’, which blurs the distinctions between the different levels of culture, also appoints a diagnostic feature of postmodernism. Through his inquiry on cyberpunk, Brian McHale remarks that what is distinctive of postmodernism is “the technologically enhanced speed of the traffic in models between the high and low strata of culture”¹¹ and argues that “the term ‘cyberpunk’ has been constructed according to this incongruity principle.”¹² From the same perspective, Claudia Springer defines cyberpunk as “the unique exemplar of postmodernism”¹³ and draws attention to the fusion that cyberpunk states as a combination of “aggressive, anti-authoritarian punk sensibility rooted in urban street culture with high technological future.”¹⁴ The outcome of these remarks point cyberpunk as a passage of radical social change,

which is positioned in the 1980s and marked by discordant customs with dissolving distinctions. And it was not only the distinctions between the different levels of culture that were blurred in the world of cyberpunk, but also the dichotomies between human/machine, organic/mechanic, real/virtual were also under attack as a result of the technological development. The world of cyberpunk represents an amalgam of the confusions and the despairs of postmodern condition together with the revolutionizing force of equally confusing new technologies.

The saturation of cultural life with technology can be seen as the central theme of cyberpunk and also the epitome of 1980s cultural experience. Cyberpunks witnessed the dawn of the technologies which their ancestors could not even dreamed about. While the digital technologies and computer sciences were changing the organization of life, Cognitive Science and the studies of Cybernetics were changing the way that people interact with those technologies. In his book *Terminal Identity* Scott Bukatman underlines the characteristic of the digital technologies of the Information Age as *invisible*; “circulating outside of the human experience of space and time.”¹⁵ Bukatman argues that this characteristic created a cultural crisis, problematizing the status and power of the human over “a new electronically defined reality.”¹⁶ Cyberpunk depicts the cultural crisis that was pointed by Bukatman through the stories of individuals who are challenged by the bewilderment of the milieu they live in and the acceleration of technology beyond control. Claudia Springer argues that “loss of control is a central trope of postmodern existence and something that SF films

have warned against for decades.”¹⁷ More than a caution, cyberpunk is an ascertainment; the declaration of the fact that technology had evolved into a self-controlled entity and we are obliged to understand the fact that everything can be done when the required sources are obtained. After then, it is just a matter of time. Emancipated from any idealist value preserving humans’ sake, science and technology, which became the actors in capitalist free market, are now steering for their own sake, creating the social values required for their own well being.¹⁸

Brooks Landon emphasizes the fact by claiming that the message of cyberpunk was *inevitability* of a future which “could not fail to be.”¹⁹

For the real message of cyberpunk was *inevitability* – not what the future *might* hold, but the inevitable hold of the present over future.- (...) What cyberpunk fiction (...) ‘brandished’ was so much as simple, unhysterical, unsentimental understanding of the profound technological and epistemological implications of accomplished and near-accomplished cultural fact: what if they gave an apocalypse and nobody noticed?²⁰

The predicament creates panic; “an acute form of anxiety”²¹ which incorporates with the “psychological mood of postmodernism”²² also expressed with a longing for a way out, a craving for explosion, for apocalypse. The apocalyptic imagery of the cyberpunk is such an expression.

Springer aligns the elements that incorporate the cyberpunk’s apocalyptic world as “a combination of environmental destruction, late

capitalist corruption, drug resistant diseases and increasingly sophisticated electronic technology.”²³ Cyberpunks believed that the environment of chaos would provide a venue of struggle through the decentralization of power and hence, they revered the devastating energy of the ever accelerating technological change and the apocalypse scenarios attached to it. However, apocalypse is not represented as an ultimate end in the imaginary world of cyberpunk which would change everything; but it becomes a consensual condition. This condition, which is characterized by a constant change that does not change a thing, is considered to be the “supreme *literary* expression if not of postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself”²⁴ by Jameson.

Jameson employs Gibson’s phrase *When-it-all-changed* to elucidate “the postmodern pursuit for shifts and irrevocable changes.”²⁵ He underlines that postmodern consciousness “consists primarily in the sheer enumeration of changes and modifications”²⁶ and lacks the modern interest on the substantial outcomes of these changes. As Jameson puts it, the world of cyberpunk bears away the ‘distracted’ manner of postmodernism which “only clocks the variations themselves.”²⁷ With its tendency to enumerate changes and modifications without being “interested in what [is] likely to come out of such changes”²⁸ cyberpunk mirrors the postmodern scenario. Jameson’s understanding of postmodern condition is echoed in Barbara Kennedy’s writings: “a continual and processual existence”²⁹ without a sequential progress of events leading to an ultimate ending; an existential state at which “sequentiality is replaced with a concern with the rhizomatic, with difference

and repetition, the machinic and the endless proliferation of complexity and multiplicity.”³⁰

The characteristics of postmodern condition which were depicted by Kennedy are evident in cyberpunk and can also be traced through the narrational features of the genre. In opposition to literature which sticks out with its rhizomatic plot structures, the narratives in the films are mostly locked into the classical drama’s three-act plot structure. But the proliferation of complexity and multiplicity is expressed through the scenery of the films which visualize and validate Sterling’s remarks on cyberpunk’s “willingness to carry extrapolation into the fabric of daily life” through “a carefully constructed intricacy.”³¹ The world of cyberpunk looks almost like, as if the time had ruptured in 1980s, got frozen on that turnout and started to sink with its gravity, getting heavier and heavier with a grotesquely ever increasing detail. In the imagery world of cyberpunk this state is visualized through a Futuristic style, picturing a perpetual apocalypse.

The devastating energy of technology first appeared in art through the works of Futurists who believed in the inadequacy of not only the existing social institutions but also the former artistic styles for reception of the coming age; the ‘age of steel and speed’ as they had labeled it.³² In order to capture the beauty they were attributing to technology and to the speed of innovation, Futurists highlighted in their works “the formal and spatial effects of the motion rather than source.”³³ As a result of this, the figure became “so expanded,

interrupted, and broken in plane and contour that it disappears, as it were, behind the blur of its movement.”³⁴ Cyberpunk adapts the Futurist style into its own fictional world with a postmodern attitude. The spatial effects that Futurists experimented suit the postmodern scenery of cyberpunk and become most evident through the representations of city.

In the world of cyberpunk the architectural space of the city disappears behind the blur of crowds’ movement in the streets, creating a fluid, organic architecture. This movement is propped up with an image flood that covers the surfaces of the buildings through giant advertisement screens. Within this scenery, the individual also dissolves beneath the pace of city’s movement and its situation also literalizes the extended and interrupted state of the postmodern subject.

Cyberpunk embellishes these spatial effects through temporal plays and in a postmodern manner incorporates the representations of different styles from different periods through eclectic pastiche. Bruno argues that “with pastiche there is an effacement of key boundaries and separations, a process of erosion of distinctions” which also emphasizes a schizophrenic temporality that characterizes the postmodern condition as Jameson suggests.³⁵ The emblematic iconography of the cyberpunk city “creates an aesthetic of decay”³⁶ and visualizes “an immense dilation of its sphere (the sphere of commodities)”³⁷ which is expressed by Jameson as an important clue for tracking the postmodern.

Giuliana Bruno discusses the issue over *Blade Runner* and argues that the representation of narrational spaces in the film involves a consideration of the relationship between postmodernism, architecture and post-industrialism. Bruno emphasizes that the ‘garbage’, the ‘waste’ -that the characters constantly step- represents of the production; the movement and the development at increased speed. This representation exposes the ‘logic of postmodern position’; an aesthetic of recycling as Bruno remarks; “consumerism, waste and recycling meet fashion, a ‘wearable art’ of late capitalism, a sign of postmodernism”³⁸ and delineated through the production design of the film including the settings and costumes. Bruno’s determinations on *Blade Runner* points the characteristics that are common for cyberpunk films and can also be traced in *Strange Days*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, *Hackers*, *Total Recall*, *Ghost in the Shell* and *Until the End of the World* together with many other cyberpunk films.

The fashion of recycling is also extended to a generic level in cyberpunk. *Tech Noir*³⁹ and *Future Noir*⁴⁰ are among the many labels which have been attached to cyberpunk films, underlining cyberpunk’s tendency to quote the classical Film Noir genre. There are many cyberpunk films which developed their plots from detective noirs replacing the outlaw loner hero of the story with hackers, console cowboys and cyber ninjas instead of detectives. The “emphasis of atmosphere or milieu”⁴¹, the bleak representations of the city -not only as a background but also as one of the main characters of the story-, the expressive

lighting techniques are among the other qualities that set up a certain kinship between cyberpunk and Film Noirs.

Forest Pyle argues that this cross generic play can be seen as an attempt to displace the thematic authority of the genre itself.⁴² Following Pyle's remark, this attempt -or the stance of "cultural mongrelization" as Gibson expressed⁴³- can be placed within the context of a discussion about the "persistence of genres in postmodernism."⁴⁴ But I will not go on with that discussion since it is beyond my inclination. My inclination is to show how every possible approach to cyberpunk raises questions of hybridity by incorporating the difficulties of defining cyberpunk.

I had previously mentioned that cyberpunk is not regarded as a mere sub-genre of SF. The romantic tale of technological rebels exceeds the limits of fiction and considered to be a life style, a political act of revolt which became a comforting source of hope and inspiration, after the defeat of 1960s' and 1970s' liberation movements and the re-establishment of neoconservative policies, starting from the early 1980s. It is possible to find many attempts to situate cyberpunk as a new resistance culture.⁴⁵ Christian Kirtchev's *A Cyberpunk Manifesto* is such an example. In the manifesto Kirtchev proclaims that "cyberpunk is no literature genre anymore, not even an ordinary subculture"⁴⁶, and that cyberpunks will unite as the members of the "offspring of the new age"⁴⁷ in order to stand out against the sicknesses of society. During the 1980s, cyberpunks' hacker culture resourced several organized hacking crimes, centering a disorganized dissent.⁴⁸

But neither the genre, nor the revolt could resist against the pervading comodification of the 1990s.

Even if there are still some works referred as cyberpunk, it was rather a short-lived genre. In 1991, Fitting wrote that within SF cyberpunk no longer exists as a conclusion of the specificity of William Gibson's success and "the failure of other writers to duplicate what he has done."⁴⁹ Fitting's argument targets literature, but I believe his determination is also valid considering cinema. Although many of the most remarkable examples of cyberpunk films were released during 1990s, it does not change the fact that cyberpunk stayed largely as a 1980s phenomenon. Through the end of the 1990s, the new age Ronins, console cowboys of cyberpunk took off their black chrome jackets, wore black suits instead and became anti-virus programmers in IBM. The fictional world also followed this transformation, and a new genre emerged within cyberpunk, which I will suggest to call as *postcyberpunk* following Lawrence Person, "at least until someone comes up with a better name."⁵⁰

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I:

¹ Eicher, Thomas. Quoted from “Cyberpunk Definitions” in *Information Database: The Cyberpunk Project*.

<http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/definition.html> cited on 16.12.2005

² For further discussion see Chapter 3, title “I remember therefore am I?” and Chapter 4, title “Looking through cyberpunk heterotopia.”

³ Kirtchev, Christian. *A Cyberpunk Manifesto*

<http://www.fuchsiashockz.co.uk/articles/cyberpunk/A%20Cyberpunk%20Manifesto%20-%20Christian%20As%20Kirtchev.shtml> cited on 27.04.2004

⁴ Leary, Timothy. *Chaos and Cyberculture* (Berkeley, Calif. : Ronin Pub., 1994) p.xiii

⁵ Featherstone, Mike & Burrows, Roger. “Cultures of Technological Embodiment: An Introduction” in *Cyberspace Cyberbodies Cyberpunk*, ed. Featherstone & Burrows (London: SAGE Publications, 1995) p.3

⁶ Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002). p.138

⁷ First published in AMAZING Science Fiction Stories, Volume 57, Number 4, November 1983

⁸ Neale, Steve. *Genre and Hollywood*, (London ; New York : Routledge, 2000) p.217

⁹ Thomas, David. “The Technophilic Body” in *The Cybercultures Reader* ed. Bell & Kennedy (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), p.175

¹⁰ Sterling, Bruce. “Preface From Mirrorshades” in *Storming The Reality Studio: A casebook of cyberpunk and postmodern science fiction*, ed.

McCaffery, Larry. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991) p.345

¹¹ Mc.Hale, Brian. “POSTcyberrMODERpunkISM” in *Storming The Reality Studio*, p.311

¹² *ibid.* p.310 *original emphasis*.

¹³ Springer, Claudia. *Electronic eros: Bodies and desire in the postindustrial age* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) p.31

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Bukatman. p.2

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Springer, Claudia. “Psycho-Cybernetics in the Films of 1990s” in *Alien Zone II: the spaces of science-fiction cinema* (London; New York : Verso, 1999) p.205.

¹⁸ For further discussion see Chapter 3, title “Technological Development and Cultural Crisis in Cyberpunk”

¹⁹ Landon, Brooks. “Bet On It: Cyber/video/punk/performance” in *Storming The Reality Studio*, p.239.

²⁰ *ibid.* *Original emphasis*.

²¹ Genosko, Gary. *McLuhan and Baudrillard: Masters of Implosion*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) p.63

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- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ Springer, Claudia. "Psycho-Cybernetics in the Films of 1990s" p.201.
- ²⁴ Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The cultural logic of late capitalism* (London : Verso, 1994) p. 419
- ²⁵ *ibid.*, p. ix
- ²⁶ *ibid.*
- ²⁷ *ibid.*
- ²⁸ *ibid.*
- ²⁹ Kennedy, Barbara. "Introduction II: The virtual machine and the new becomings in pre-millennial culture" in *The Cybercultures Reader*, p.19
- ³⁰ *ibid.*
- ³¹ Sterling, *Storming The Reality Studio*, p. 348
- ³² Gardner, Helen. *Gardner's Art Through The Ages*, ed. Kleiner & Mamiya & Tansey, Eleventh Edition. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 2001) p.1021
- ³³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴ *ibid.*
- ³⁵ Bruno, Guiliana. "Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner" in *Alien Zone: cultural theory and contemporary science fiction cinema*, ed. (Kuhn London ; New York : Verso, 1996) p.184
- ³⁶ *ibid.*, p.185
- ³⁷ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. x
- ³⁸ Bruno, *Alien Zone*, p. 185.
- ³⁹ See Penley, Constance. "Time travel, primal scene and the critical dystopia" in *Fantasy and the Cinema*, ed. Donald (London: BFI Pub., 1989) p.198
- ⁴⁰ See Straiger, Janet. "Future Noir: Contemporary Representations of Visionary Cities" in *Alien Zone II*, p.97-120
- ⁴¹ Penley, *Fantasy and the Cinema*, p.198
- ⁴² Pyle, Forest. "Making Cyborgs, Making Humans: of Terminators and Blade Runners" in *Cybercultures Reader*, p. 132
- ⁴³ Mc.Hale, *Storming The Reality Studio*, p.311
- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ Almost all the writings of Timothy Leary can be regarded as a part of this attempt. Leary believed that the new cyber technologies raise opportunities to fight back against the repressive Reagan-Bush years governance, thus he promoted the chaos culture of cyberpunks. He considered himself as a cyberpunk guru and inspired the cyberpunks of the era with his writings. His book *Chaos and Cyberculture* (Berkeley, Calif. : Ronin Pub., 1994) which collects Leary's several articles from different periods is a useful source to understand the evolution of cyberpunk as a counter culture and a dissident life-style.
- ⁴⁶ Kirtchev, Christian. *A Cyberpunk Manifesto*
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ See Hafner, Katie & Markoff, John. *Cyberpunk : outlaws and hackers on the computer frontier* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995)

⁴⁹ Fitting, Peter. "The Lessons of Cyberpunk" in *Technoculture*, ed. Penley & Ross (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) p. 296

⁵⁰ Kirtchev, A *Cyberpunk Manifesto*

CHAPTER II

Postcyberpunk in Film

In 1998, SF writer Lawrence Person published *Notes Toward a Postcyberpunk Manifesto* in the 16th issue of Hugo-nominated SF magazine *Nova Express* which he was the editor. In his article, Person argued that cyberpunk fiction entered a new era with the publication of Bruce Sterling's *Islands in the Net* (1988) and therefore the term *postcyberpunk* which was first applied (circa 1991) to describe Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash* should be brought to a wider use to label this new wave.¹ He was aware that this attempt can be understood as "label-mongering"². He showed his foresight by beginning his article with a quotation from Bruce Sterling's preface for cyberpunk anthology, *Mirrorshades*, saying the reason that most of the critics, including himself, "persist in label-mongering, despite all warnings" is because "it's a valid source of insight - as well as great fun."³ His foresight was reasonable. Postcyberpunk didn't find wide acceptance as a sub-genre and the employment of the term stayed limited with Neil Stephenson novels along with a couple of other SF writers. The majority chastised the stated distinctions as ill-defined and found the attempt to label this new wave superfluous, since every genre would eventually come to a point of adolescence. In a web discussion opened up by Person, some arguers claimed that it should not be seen as "post but adolescent cyberpunk."⁴

Person himself also underlined the issue of generation relevance. He wrote that “cyberpunk was about early 1980s, while postcyberpunk is about the 1990s.”⁵ Cyberpunk writers were in their 20s or 30s, by the time postcyberpunk emerged they reached their 30s and 40s. But more importantly, the new generation had started to have their stories and books published. The technological revolution conveyed by cyberpunk was neither alienating nor fascinating for them, since they were born into it. It is almost ironic that Gibson wrote *Neuromancer* with a typewriter; the novel in which the word *cyberspace* first appeared. He wrote *Neuromancer* in 1983. It was only after 1993 that the World Wide Web (www) opened up to public use. The generation gap between 80s and 90s which was caused by the rapid growth of technology is therefore inevitable, but in my opinion this should not necessarily make a discussion on the emergence of postcyberpunk as invalid. On the contrary, understanding the evolution of the genre by expressing a set of disparities may serve as a very prolific ground to discuss the reception of cyberculture through two ensuing decades.

Lawrence Person’s *Postcyberpunk Manifesto* was defining postcyberpunk era for literature and all the subsequent discussions were mostly on literary works. The discussion on the (sub) genre has not been brought into the territory of cinema yet. I believe Person’s manifesto was a very early attempt to label this new wave and especially considering cinema, it suffered from the lack of accurate counterparts. I will attempt to reconsider applying the term in a different context in the light of the recent films. For this purpose, I will analyze four films: *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol,

1997), *Code 46* (Michael Winterbottom, 2003), *Girl from Monday* (Hal Hartley, 2005) and *The Island* (Michael Bay, 2005). I believe these four films are akin to each other and different from their ancestor cyberpunk films. They have a certain bound established through the repetitions and variations of certain formal, narrative and thematic contexts. Thus, they fashion the new face of cyberpunk, which I will call *postcyberpunk* following Person's manifesto.

The distinctions between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk that were asserted by Person are related to the apprehension of the technology, the portrayal of the characters and the establishment of the plot structures. I will pursue Person's remarks and use them as a point of departure in order to elaborate the distinctions between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk considering these four films.

Accordingly, as it is in cyberpunk, the subject matter of postcyberpunk films is based on the technological innovation and the impact of new technologies on social life. But postcyberpunk fictions' approach to technology is radically different from cyberpunk. As Person notes, the distinguishing quality of cyberpunk lies in its ability to build an immersive world impacted by rapid technological change. As Person quoted from Pat Cadigan, the world of cyberpunk visualizes "the burning presence of the future"⁶ through elaborately complex details. In the case of postcyberpunk, technology is rendered invisible and through this, both the curiosity and the skepticism about technological innovation implicit in cyberpunk are rendered

irrelevant. Technology is not alienating, fascinating, exciting or promising anymore; it is absorbed by daily life. Wet wire implants and fancy consoles are exchanged with genetic and nano technologies which are not the 'fabric' of the story, but the habitat of daily life.⁷ The depiction of technology generates one of the most apparent distinctions between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk, and enables us to distinguish these two worlds from each other at the first look.

The settings of the films in cyberpunk, literalizes the chaotic nature of the narrative world. The scenery establishes a discordant whole through the juxtaposition of contradicting fragments that are bound together with an aesthetic of decay which is a result of the over-saturation of spaces through technological infrastructures. As opposed to the postmodern sceneries of cyberpunk, the settings in postcyberpunk have a modern style which visualizes a clean sense of geometry that implicates the welfare and sanity.⁸ Within this purified spaces, technology becomes invisible.

I have previously declared following Person that the cyberpunk was about 1980s while the postcyberpunk is about 1990s. Thus, I will claim that the disappearance of technology from the social environment in postcyberpunk settings follows the evolution of technology from 1980s to 1990s and depicts a phenomenon that becomes increasingly evident in our era. Bertram C. Bruce comments on the merge of technology with daily practices and argues that:

The disappearance of technology is more than a metaphor. We cannot see most microprocessors because they are now hidden in artifacts such as telephones, fax machines, cars, dishwashers, and even athletic equipment. Such hidden microprocessors have been called embedded systems because they are not obvious in these devices and their function may be invisible to the user. Thus, the infrastructure of the larger world is becoming infused everywhere with software.⁹

The world of cyberpunk is woven with the technological infrastructures, but when we look at the world of the postcyberpunk, we cannot see these structures; not because that the technology is not in use anymore, but because it is established and embedded. Bertram argues that this disappearance effect disables us to see the ways how technology creates abilities and disabilities; thus also hides from the view the power relations that surround technology's practices and as a consequence disempowers the user.¹⁰ This distinction which follows the evolution of technology through 1980s to 1990s, points one of the main divisions between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk and points the difference between the essences of these two fictional worlds.

In the world of cyberpunk, technology appears as a constituent that is not completely established yet, hence becomes an agent that unsettles the social ordering and engenders chaos. In cyberpunk the practice of the technologies in question is represented either during the experimentation or as illegal. But the laws cannot prevent the heroes to access technology or to use it for their own purposes, since in the world of cyberpunk technology is

not in control of any power, on the contrary, it is represented as an instrument to destabilize power and to subvert control. As against, in postcyberpunk technology is established, stabilized and becomes the foundation of society. While the world of cyberpunk is characterized by chaos and disorder, in case of postcyberpunk order is re-established. Chaos and disorder is defeated through the laws and regulations that are authorized by technological determinism. The emancipatory force of technology that was implicated in cyberpunk is diminished in the world of postcyberpunk and the implementations of technology are represented as the tools to enforce unity and order, in order to ensure a monolithic system of governance. In the world that is depicted by postcyberpunk, this power is governed by complex business organizations which are characterized by massiveness, rigidity and total uniformity. The policies of these companies' represent -if not determine- the value system of society which the social ordering is founded on.

Accordingly, *Gattaca* is a film about genetic engineering of human beings. In the film the Gattaca Company is a space navigation company which employs its navigators according to their genetic quotient. The policies of the company also represent the value system of the film's fictional world where efficiency and perfection becomes the mere valuable qualities that can only be built by genetic engineering.

Code 46 is a film about the Code 46. In the world of the film, the Code 46 aims to prevent incestuous reproduction which becomes very difficult to avoid as a result of the cloning of humans. In the film, Sphinx is

an insurance company which has the administrative authority to operate the laws and the regulations that the society is ruled with, including Code 46.

The Girl from Monday is a film about a different social ordering which is determined by the policies of the 'revolution'. The Triple M (Major Multimedia Monopoly) is represented as the maker of the revolution and the governor of the authority which is exercised through new media technologies.

The Island is a film about cloning technology. In the film, the Merrick Institute is a company which clones the elite members of society as a part of their insurance policies. The Merrick Institute keeps the clones in an *arcology* which is controlled with high tech surveillance systems. The clones in the film are unaware about the truth about themselves and they live in a seemingly utopian world where the social ordering is founded on the myth of 'The Island' and ruled according to the objectives of the Merrick Institute.

In all of these films the characteristics of the fictional world are established in relation to a business organization which has an administrative power that is derived from the authority of technological determinism. The establishment of the characters follows a similar path, and the heroes of the films are represented as productive members of the society who are always connected to these massive business organizations which centralize power. This characteristic of the films appoints another fundamental difference between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk, and can be

discussed through Person's depictions considering the development of the characters.

According to Person, far from being alienated loners –as it is in cyberpunk-, postcyberpunk characters are integral members of society who live in an existing social order with families, jobs and responsibilities. Thus, postcyberpunk heroes are more attached to the society they are living in, even 'anchored' as Person puts it, while the cyberpunk heroes are adrift in it. Person claims that in postcyberpunk, both the characters and the settings "frequently hail from the middle class"¹¹ who have families, jobs, responsibilities, while cyberpunk tells the stories of the characters who are living on the edge of the society. Person claims that cyberpunk characters "seek to topple or exploit corrupt social orders"¹²; in contrast, postcyberpunk characters "tend to seek ways to live in, even strengthen, an existing social order, or help construct a better one."¹³

This contrast between the depictions of characters becomes also evident in the films which I have specified as postcyberpunk. In all of these films, as opposed to outlaw, rebellious characters of cyberpunk, the characters of the films are introduced as decent members of the society who are always associated (often as being an employee) to the business organizations which retain the authority in the world of the film. While the cyberpunk characters strive to topple social order from the margins, postcyberpunk characters fight from the 'inside'; either using their status for their own purposes or for the purpose of building a better social order.

In *Gattaca*, the hero of the film, Vincent (Ethan Hawke) is the son of a middle class family. In the film, he is introduced as an elite member of the society, who works for the Gattaca Company as a navigator first class. It is only after revealed that, Vincent is not who he seems to be, but he is really an 'invalid' member of the society with a genetic deficiency. The story of the film is based on Vincent's struggle in order to overcome his destiny. Instead of living on the margins which he is pushed to, Vincent 'seeks ways to live in' and achieves to be a space navigator with the purpose of leaving the world which he was never meant to be.

In *Code 46*, the hero of the film, William (Tim Robbins) is a family man; a bellowed husband and a father of a middle class family. He is one of the most successful investigator's of the Sphinx Company. The conflict of the story is established when William has an affair with Maria (Samantha Morton), who turns out to be the clone of William's mother. William goes after Maria although he knows that it is prohibited by the Code 46, with the purpose of escaping her to a world where the prohibitions of the society cannot forbid their relation. But at the end of the film he cannot accomplish his will, because they get caught by Sphinx and 'anchored' back to the place where they belong in the social order.

In *The Girl from Monday*, the hero of the film, Jack (Bill Sage) is an employee of the Triple M Company. While being one of the most successful employees of the company, Jack lost his confidence in the policies of the Triple M -thus, the policies of the revolution- and strives to construct a better social order by secretly leading to the counter-revolutionary

movement. At the end of the film, Jack learns that the movement he has been leading has never been uncoupled from the policies of Triple M, which from the very beginning has been manipulating the counter-revolutionary movement. When Jack learns the truth, instead of trying to go back to the planet Monday -where he comes from- he rather stays 'anchored' to the social order he has been leaving in, because he believes that he became too much 'human' to go back.

The Island is a slightly different example. The hero of the film, Lincoln Six-Echo (Ewan McGregor) is not a family man and he does not belong to a social class, since in the world of The Merrick Institute, the notions of class and family are rendered totally obsolete. But nevertheless, Lincoln is represented as an integral member of the society. The conflict of the film is established when Lincoln starts to have dreams about the things that he should not have an idea about. As a result of an unexpected genetic evolution, Lincoln realizes the truth about the world he lives in and he strives to reveal this truth in order to save the other clones.

As a result, the representation of the heroes in all of these films affirms Person's remarks on postcyberpunk characters. Vincent, William, Jack and Lincoln are introduced as integral members of the society who live in an existing social order, often with jobs, families and responsibilities. Only after when the conflict of the story is established, the heroes of the films start to get alienated from the world they live in. When they become alienated, they do not start drifting in the society, on the contrary, they struggle to overcome the circumstances which are the reasons of their

estrangement. During this struggle, the postcyberpunk hero moves towards the margins of the society; they break the laws, abuse the privileges they have -the privileges that were ensured by their status-, leave their families and their position in the society. As a result, they either accomplish their goal and leave the social order through 'the margins' -as it is in the case of Vincent and Lincoln who escapes to another 'world' where the restrictions of the world they were living in will be invalid- or they cannot achieve their goal and pulled back to the center -as it is in the case of William and Jack who stays 'anchored' to their former social status-. The development of the stories as it is portrayed, setup a ground to discuss another important distinction that Person points.

Person remarks that cyberpunk and postcyberpunk share the quality of being "social fabric fiction"¹⁴, but the difference between two becomes apparent through the plot devices employed. As Person puts it, while cyberpunk "uses classic plot devices (plucky young rebels topple decaying social order)", postcyberpunk plots are "arising organically from the world they are set in."¹⁵

This distinction becomes apparent through the establishment of the conflict into the story. In the case of cyberpunk, the hero of the character is represented as an already alienated member of the society and his/her story is set in an apocalyptic scenery which gives its characteristics to the fictional world. The plot devices are usually derived from classical detective noirs; the hero of the story either masses up with the Yakuza (the Japanese mafia) who works for an evil cooperate or blows up a job and involves

her/himself into trouble, and her/his motivation is usually depicted as to save a beloved (wo)man.

Whereas, in the case of postcyberpunk, the conflict of the story is established always as a result of the restrictions of the social ordering that prevents the hero to accomplish a goal. The introduction of the hero as emplaced to the center of social ordering -through her/his relation to the business organizations which maintains (or represents) the order in society- strengthens the vital bound between the world of the film and the journey of the hero. As opposed to cyberpunk films which reveal the characteristics of its diegetic world immediately through the representations of a world in the blink of an apocalypse; the characteristics of the postcyberpunk's world remains sealed at the beginning of the story and unfolds throughout the narrative, establishing an 'organic' bound with the hero's itinerary.

This narrational style is evident in films; *Gattaca* employs a very long flashback sequence, where the voice over of Vincent informs us about his backstory and as his story unfolds, the social ordering in the world of *Gattaca* is revealed and 'genoism' (the discrimination according to one's genes) which the conflict of the story is established on is also conveyed. *Code 46* opens with a sequence which the text of Code 46 is expounded through intertitles. The text overlaps with the image of the desert following William who is approaching to the city. The text of the Code 46 which is 'written' on the nothingness of the desert implies that Code 46 becomes the only means to define the diegetic world of the film. But only after the genetic bound of William and Maria is disclosed, through their relation, the

Code 46 and its applications are revealed in the diegetic world of the film. Again in both *The Girl from Monday* and *The Island*, our knowledge about the world of the films remains fragmentary and insufficient; however within the process of heroes' journey, we discover together with the hero about the facts that constitutes the film's world.

In all of the examples, the characteristics of the diegetic world, the laws and regulations that constructs social order, is exposed throughout a process of hero's interaction with her/his world. This organic bound incorporates with the essence of postcyberpunk and constitutes unity in a narrational level. As opposed to, the essence of cyberpunk is chaos and disorder. The constituents of the fictional world are disintegrated and do not compose a coherent whole. The story of the hero also becomes a marginal, an autonomous fragment of this chaotic world, whereas, the components of the fictional world in postcyberpunk are integrated to form unity and do not have a marginal presence that is independent from the rest of the fictional world.

As a result, following the distinctions that were set by Person, so far I have stated that postcyberpunk worlds are characterized by unity and order. The technological innovation and its implications on social life becomes the central theme of the stories as it is in cyberpunk. But the technologies in question represented as established and become invisible in the narrational world of the film. The characters of the stories are represented as integral members of the society and they fight against a rigid social system which

restrains their personal rights and freedom of choice. Additional to these, the films does not endorse their fictional world which is dominated according to the authority that is derived from technological determinism and criticize the social system depicted in the film by raising humanist values.

Person also determines the humanist sentiment of postcyberpunk and writes that: “It could even be argued that postcyberpunk represents a fusion of the cyberpunk/humanist schism of the 1980s,”¹⁶ but right after he states this, he also writes that he would be happy to leave “that particular can of worms to braver (or more foolhardy) souls.”¹⁷ I am intended to open that can of worms, and object to Person’s determination; not the determination he made on postcyberpunk but to the one that is implicated in the expression of ‘cyberpunk/humanist schism’. In the next chapters, I will argue that in spite of its inclination, cyberpunk often fails to stand on the edge and moves towards the center by reconstituting the humanist paradigms in its fictional worlds. But criticizing cyberpunk is not my primary concern. My primary concern is to inquire the evolution of the genre through cyberpunk to postcyberpunk in order to establish a set of disparities. With this purpose, I will approach these four films as the examples of postcyberpunk and consider them as the successors of the cyberpunk films. I believe the permanence which bounds cyberpunk and postcyberpunk to each other is the dramatic conflict of the stories which depicts the impact of technological innovation on social life.

According to Schatz “each genre film incorporates a specific cultural context (...) in the guise of a *social community*.” He explains:

Although all drama establishes a community that is disturbed by conflict, in the genre film both the community and the conflict have been conventionalized. Ultimately, our familiarity with any genre seems to depend less on recognizing a specific setting than on recognizing certain dramatic conflicts that we associate with specific patterns of action and character relationships.¹⁸

Postcyberpunk continues the cyberpunk's tradition by preserving its 'dramatic conflict' that accommodates our familiarity with the genre. But the differences between the 'social communities' are dramatic especially considering cinema. Thus, I will look at these differences, and question the implications they make which becomes most apparent through the depiction of technology. For this purpose, I will propose two disparities to thicken the line between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk. In the third chapter, I will approach to the issue from the perspective that Neil Postman draws and will claim that the disparity between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk can be discussed through the disparity that Postman draws between technocracies and *technopolies*. And, in the forth chapter I will propose another perspective to inquire the subject in respect to the differences between the representation of fictional spaces; accordingly I will employ Foucault's term *heterotopia* in order to define cyberpunk and propose a new term to characterize postcyberpunk, which I will call *unitopia*.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II:

¹ There is no clear reference about who/when/where coined the term *postcyberpunk*. The only reference I was able to reach about the usage of the term was the online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, in which it is stated that it was used circa 1991 to describe Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash*.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcyberpunk> cited on July 12, 2005

² Person, Lawrence. *Notes Toward a Postcyberpunk Manifesto*
<http://slashdot.org/features/99/10/08/2123255.shtml> cited on June 4, 2005

³ *ibid.*

⁴ In 1999, one year after the publication of *Notes Towards a Postcyberpunk Manifesto*, Lawrence Person posted the manifesto to a web site called *slashdot.org* and opened the issue to discussion. The text of the discussion is still online and can be reached at
<http://slashdot.org/features/99/10/08/2123255.shtml> for further reading.
cited on November 6, 2005

⁵ Person. *Notes Toward a Postcyberpunk Manifesto*.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ For further discussion on the architectural spaces in cyberpunk and postcyberpunk see Chapter 4.

⁹ Bruce, C. Bertram. "The Disappearance of Technology: Toward an Ecological Model of Literacy" available at
<http://www.isrl.uiuc.edu/~chip/pubs/disappearance.shtml> cited on December 7, 2005

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Person. *Notes Toward a Postcyberpunk Manifesto*.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Quoted from Neale, Steve. *Genre and Hollywood*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000) p.210

CHAPTER III

1. The Sovereignty of Technology: From Technocracies to *Technopoly*

I had declared that there is permanence between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk particular to their subject matter. They both question the shifting position of individual subject in a relatively new social community which is dominated by technological innovation. But beyond this permanence, the distinctions between two is dramatic especially considering cinema and lies in the very essence of the fictional world which was created by the films.

The first critical distinction I would like to speculate will be about the differences between technology's status and its relation to culture in cyberpunk and postcyberpunk societies. The key text for my inquiry will be Neil Postman's book, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*¹ where, Postman analyzes the alterations of the relationship between culture and technology throughout modern history. In his survey Postman classifies culture into three categories: tool-using cultures, technocracies and technopolies. Although his placement of these categories is chronological and follows in some sense the improvement and proliferation of technology through centuries, Postman declares that his major concern is not the quantity of technology available to a given culture, but technology's interaction with the belief systems and ideology in that culture.²

According to this, Postman claims that in tool-using cultures, tools are invented to increase efficiency and productivity. The integrity and dignity of culture or the legitimacy of its social organizations are not threatened by technology; since technology is still conducted by culture in order to solve the problems in the physical environment. But this relationship becomes tense in technocracies when the social and symbolic worlds become increasingly subject to the requirements of technological development. Postman states that in technocracies “tools are not integrated into the culture; they attack culture, they bid to *become* culture.”³ In other words, as tools come to play a central role in the thought world of the society, they begin to demand their merit from the authorization of social life. But in technocracies there is still a place for resistance, since technology is limited in scope and the speed of innovation is not accelerated beyond control; since technology is not totally equipped to “alter the needs of inner life or to drive away language, memories, social structures of the tool-using life.”⁴

Postman credits Alfred North Whitehead’s suggestion that the “greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the idea of invention itself”⁵; he explains that after we learned how to invent things “the question of why we invent things receded in importance.”⁶

It was receding, but was not yet entirely abolished. Technocratic societies are rather societies in transition where the profound belief in the principles of scientific thought is in constant conflict with the values and belief systems of the old world. The traditional thought world and the institutions it

has been encircled are still there, in some degree, still fighting back. The fears and superstitions of the traditional world have not been totally rationalized and rendered obsolete by the triumph of reason. Postman writes: “one can hear the groans of religion in crisis, of mythologies under attack, of a politics and education in confusion, but the groans are not yet death-throes.”⁷ In case of technopoly the transition is completed and the dead has been buried for long.

Postman defines technopoly as “the submission of all forms of cultural life to sovereignty of technique and technology.”⁸ By this, he suggests that technopoly eliminates the traditional world, together with the values it bears and the institutions it is surrounded. Technopoly does not declare them immoral, illegal or unpopular; technopoly “makes them invisible and therefore irrelevant.”⁹

While pulling attention to the most vital difference between technocracy and technopoly, Postman remarks that:

Technocracies concerned to invent machinery. That people’s life is changed by machinery is taken as a matter of course, and that people must sometimes be treated as if they were machinery is considered a necessary and unfortunate condition of technological development. But in technocracies, such a condition is not held to be a philosophy of culture. Technocracy does not have as its aim a grand reductionism in which human life must find its meaning in machinery and technique. Technopoly does.¹⁰

Therefore in technocracies, contrasting with the culture it struggles to replace, technology -yet- deprives the ability to enlighten the meaning of life and purpose of human. Technocratic societies are rather societies where the “traditional and the technological worlds coexist with an uneasy tension.”¹¹ However, in case of technopoly this complication is eradicated with the disappearance of the traditional world. Technopoly discredits human judgment as unreliable and ambiguous, thus consequently invalidates the expositions provided by humane tradition. Postman writes:

Philosophers may agonize over the questions ‘What is truth?’ ‘What is intelligence?’ ‘What is the good life?’ But in technopoly there is no need for such intellectual struggle. Machines eliminate complexity, doubt, and ambiguity. They work swiftly, they are standardized, and they provide us with numbers that you can see and calculate with.¹²

Therefore, technopoly attempts to reduce the determining qualities of life to the principles through which invention succeeds, thus promotes a profound belief in objectivity, efficiency, expertise, standardization, measurement and progress. What is more important, technopoly does not only assert these principles as the inherent features of life, but also avows them as human virtues. Hence, the ‘grand reductionism’ of technopoly is based on the idea that “society is best served when human beings are placed at the disposal of their techniques and technology.”¹³ Postman declares that the first clear statement of the idea that “human beings are, in a sense, worth less than their

machinery” can be found in the work of Frederick Taylor,¹⁴ and reminds that Taylor and his followers “hailed their discovery as the beginnings of a brave new world.”¹⁵

I will claim that postcyberpunk worlds are that brave new worlds. The society depicted in postcyberpunk echoes Postman’s definition of technopoly in every aspect. Cyberpunk society can still be considered as technocratic, but the velocity of transition from technocracy to technopoly is accelerated beyond control with the speed of technological innovation. The environment of chaos and disorder in cyberpunk is an acute symptom of this transition. Before giving an account of postcyberpunk societies, first I would like to provide a closer look at the environment of cultural crisis in cyberpunk and the anxieties it creates.

2. Technological Development and Cultural Crisis in Cyberpunk

Scott Bukatman states that the very nature of technology is unsettling. He refers to Daniel Bell who argued that “technology governs change in human affairs while culture guards continuity. Hence technology is always disruptive and creates a crisis for culture.”¹⁶ Technology’s interference in culture was considered to be the primary requirement of progress and therefore the very logic of modernity depends on this dialectic relationship which creates temporal crisis. But this mutual dependence is disrupted when the speed of technologic innovation accelerates beyond the capacity of culture to renovate itself. It is rather a helical process than a cause and effect relationship, but as a result of this process technology becomes the intruder, defenses of culture get broken and technopoly emerges.

I had claim that cyberpunk societies are situated on the very last stage before the emergence of technopoly; a still technocratic society at the peak of the clash. In order to prove this I would like to provide a closer look to the milieu of 1980s, the homeland of cyberpunk, and give a brief account of the technological development and its cultural repercussions.

It was first in the 1980s that the commercial use of academic findings started to be considered. Besides teaching and academic research which was driven by mere curiosity, universities started to regard entrepreneurship as their major objective. The newly established synergy between academy and industry has radically increased university patenting, licensing, spin-off creation and

university-industry contract research.¹⁷ When the demand and the founding increased noticeably, consequently both the speed of the development and the instancy of their applications accelerated.

Major developments occurred in the field of cybernetics through the evolving digital computer technologies. Most of the big companies started to have their own networks, which provides direct digital control systems and efficient communication control.¹⁸ The growing demand from the industry also accelerated Artificial Intelligence (AI) studies and inflated notion of intelligent machines that can function independently of humans.¹⁹ The growth of Cognitive Science was also fundamentally a 1980s phenomenon, which can be considered closely connected with both the developments in cybernetics and the posthumanist fantasies. It is not surprising that groups like Extropians and transhumanists began to emerge also in 1980s, which sanctified the symbiosis of human and machine in order to increase the quality and length of human life.²⁰ The proliferation of Life Extension Institutes nourished the fantasies of these groups, and in return they nourished these institutes with founding.

The idea of scientific research as a commercial enterprise also entailed the public interest and popularized a notional world for fanciful scientific fantasies. I believe Bruce Sterling's determination that cyberpunks might be "the first SF generation to grow up not only within the literary tradition of science fiction, but truly in a science fictional world"²¹ was essentially based on this characteristic of 1980s. Technological world became the popular culture in 1980s and the social world became increasingly subject to its prerequisites.

Cyberpunks grasped the energy of this transformation and contravened with a punk attitude.

Beside these developments, one of the most important improvements that impacted social life in 1980s was the opening up of personal computers (PCs) to commercial use. Computer culture turned personal spaces into stations (or 'terminals' as Bukatman would call) and individuals to message sending-receiving entities in a global complex. Hacker culture emerged instantly and overwhelmed the concept of self-reliant, skillful, technological rebel who strives to resist the invasion of personal and cultural life by the constraints of technology. Hackers believed that the most efficient vehicle of rebellion is the usage of technology for their own individual interest; therefore they struggled to guard their individuality. The bleak energy of cyberpunk is derived from this struggle. The blurb of the cyberpunk TV series *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* is a clear reflection of this resistance and the challenge it bares:

It is the time when, even if nets were to guide all consciousness that had been converted to protons and electrons toward coalescing, standalone individuals have not yet been converted into data to the extent they can form a unique components of a larger complex.²²

That 'larger complex' is the Norbert Wiener's dream of bee hive which conceptualized the ideal society according to the laws of control and communication that was provided by cybernetic theory. I will argue that this dream is realized in postcyberpunk; but in cyberpunk there is still some place

for resistance in favor of the free spirited individuals. Jacques Derrida argues that the theory of cybernetics itself ousts all metaphysical systems “including the concepts of soul, of life, of value, of choice, of memory, which until recently served to separate the machine from human.”²³ Cyberpunk is the ‘individual pilot’²⁴ who strives to preserve those concepts in order to preserve her/his humanity and intercept the reduction of cybernetics.

In order to do this, cyberpunks struggles to find a coherent answer to the question ‘what makes us human?’ If the algorithm of human brain is calculable; if there is a mathematic formula for not only human thoughts but also for human feelings as cognitive science claims; if human actions can be controlled with the same equations that cybernetic controls its machines; if the totality of the body is disappeared forever and if the memories can be implanted, erased and simulated, then how can we still claim that we are human?

Although cyberpunks welcome the erosion of social order and the chaos created by the blurred lines of entrenched dichotomies as a ground to criticize modern utopia and reflect dismay against it, they at the same time constantly preserve these distinctions in the search for the answer to the question ‘What makes us human?’ Dani Cavallaro draws attention to this quality of cyberpunk and emphasizes that through cultural change initiated by technology the conventional notions are reassessed in cyberpunk fiction. However, “the rhetoric through which these changes are narrated and charted reverberates with images drawn from older traditions and belief systems.”²⁵ He remarks that cyberpunk is a radical rejection of the Enlightenment ethos. But it does not

render the principles of reason and progress totally ineffectual. Rather it “amalgamates in often baffling ways the rational and the irrational, the old and new.”²⁶

This tendency of amalgamation that Cavallaro underlines is the basis of my assertion that cyberpunk is a still technocratic society. The environment of disorder; the integration of two different worlds –the technological and the traditional- with an uneasy tension, designates the society depicted in cyberpunk fiction as technocratic according to Neil Postman’s definition.²⁷

Therefore, cyberpunk does not preserve the utopian notion of modernity that technological progress can be controlled -that can be conducted by mere humane purpose-; but nevertheless, preserves the belief that we can profit from the opportunities that are raised by technology in order to enhance our powers and still avoid the dehumanizing consequences of them.

Bukatman depicts this belief and declares that the utopia to be found in the American SF film in 1980s is *being human*.²⁸ He also declares that this utopia is more than ever challenged by the new technologies which dislocate the foundations of Western culture and creates moral breakdown as a consequence:

By the 1980s the ontological certainties of earlier science fiction cinema yielded to increasingly tortured attempts to content with challenges to human definitions that remain rooted in Western, masculine, heterosexist -‘natural’- paradigms. (...) The loss of power over the form of the human, the visible sign of being,

combines with the absence of the moral certainties that once guided that power.²⁹

Cyberpunk constantly rebuilds these 'moral certainties' by certifying social institutes such as family, law, religion and the social identities ensured by these institutes that remains "rooted in Western, masculine, heterosexist - 'natural'- paradigms." This is how cyberpunk seeks to overcome the anxieties produced by ontological uncertainties that are challenging the human definition.

At the end of his book *Technopoly* Postman writes that the most crucial question which is posed by the accelerated speed of technological innovation is: "Can a nation preserve its history, originality, and humanity by submitting itself totally to the sovereignty of a technological thought world?"³⁰ In the world of cyberpunk where the notion of 'nation' is already rendered obsolete by the globalizing effect of technology; where the world is not ruled by governments but by cooperates, cyberpunks are not concerned with preserving any national identity. In fact national identity is only one of the social identities that are challenged in cyberpunk. Gender, class, race, they all dissolve in the disembodied reality of cyberspace declaring the decease of the former definitions of 'subject'. Therefore in case of cyberpunk, it is the individual subject who strives to preserve her/his *history*, *humanity* and *originality*, in order to hold on the new slippery designations of 'self'.

With its emphasis on personal history and originality, *memory* and its implications becomes the most crucial, most popular and most speculative subject in cyberpunk fiction. Cyberpunks declares anxiety against the commodification, manipulation, preservation and replication of the memory and sustains the belief that authentic memory is the key answer in preserving the authenticity of the human.

Thus, cyberpunk films attempt to situate a difference between the ability to remember as mere process of recalling information and the ability to recall the awareness connoted to that memory; an awareness which resonates in a certain temporal/spatial context. The implant memory lacks the quintessential knowledge of social experience, therefore the knowledge of ideological conventions which preserves social ordering. Whereas memory earned by actual experience which has a verifiable origin is praised as the source that provides us with an identity therefore resources our humanity.

2.1. I remember therefore am 'I'?

“Are you sentient, or not?”

“Well, it *feels* like I am, kid, but I’m really just a bunch of ROM. It’s one of them, ah, philosophical questions, I guess...” The ugly laughter sensation rattled down Case’s spine. “But I ain’t likely to write you no poem, if you follow me. Your AI, it just might. But it ain’t no way *human*.”

The conversation between Case and Dix’s Personality Rom Construct
from *Neuromancer*³¹

Blade Runner can be seen as one of the most important films which speculate on memory. In the film, The Tyrell Cooperation produces replicants which are “designed to copy human beings in every aspect, except their emotions.”³² But it is discovered that after a couple of years replicants gain the ability to develop their own emotions. However, because their emotions do not evolve with in a natural process, they are emotionally underdeveloped than human beings. In order to make them “more human than human,”³³ Tyrell experiments on giving replicants implant memories, as he expresses, he “gift(s) them with a past”³⁴. The results of the experiment are remarkable. The object of the experiment is a replicant named Rachel (Sean Young), who is unaware of her artificiality. But her superiority can not deceive the Voight-Kampff test; a test which is designed to detect replicants according to their emotional responses to certain questions.

The film challenges its audience with the question ‘Is Rachel human?’ She can suffer, regret, and even hesitates to kill; therefore has moral

reservations. But we 'know' that she is not human, since she is detected by Voight-Kampff test. Therefore her inhumanness is a 'scientific fact'. But relying on this information, would declare that our humanity is now something that can only be detected by machines. Thus, we the spectator have no idea what the 'correct' answers to the questions are, which proves the questions are culture specific. Therefore it is impossible for the spectator to believe in this 'scientific fact'.

Postman's asserts that lie detectors are among the most ambitious machines of technopoly (I consider Voight-Kampff test as a lie detector since it works under the same principles) and discredits subjective individual judgment as an unreliable form of knowledge.³⁵ *Blade Runner* is a cyberpunk film and therefore still technocratic in its approach to technology; so film does not poses belief on the Voight-Kampff test in order to evaluate Rachel's humanity but establishes different requirements driven by the 'old traditional world' as Postman would express.

Tyrell's experiment establishes a close connection between replicants' repertoire of memories and the adequacy of their emotions, therefore the degree of their humanness. But Rachel's implanted memories do not legitimize her humanity, since they are not authentic and lacks an origin which would provide her with an identity. Giuliana Bruno argues that the replicants in *Blade Runner* seeks to find the foundations of their memory, of their personal origin; thus the itinerary of the replicants in the film is that of an Oedipal journey. She writes;

“that of all the replicants, only Rachel, succeeds in making the journey. She assumes a sexual identity, becomes a woman, and loves a man.”³⁶

Rachel shows the picture of her mother to Deckard (Harrison Ford) as an evidence of her humanity; as “the proof of having existed and therefore of having the right to exist.”³⁷ But Rachel’s memories of the past are dislocated from their social context therefore provides only a degree of acquaintance but lacks the quintessential knowledge of the experience. When Deckard wants to kiss Rachel for the first time, Rachel runs away. Deckard catches her but she resists and says, “I can not rely on my memory.” Deckard forces her to say “I love you”, “I want you” and “I trust you.” The dialogues between the two are almost like a ritual of Rachel’s entrance into the Symbolic world (Lacan). She atones for her humanity when she surrenders to Deckard; when she executes the requisites of her sexual identity. Therefore, Rachel is distinguished from the other replicants in the film that fails to fulfill their itinerary, not because of her implanted memories but because of her love to Deckard which enables her to have an origin.

Johnny Mnemonic is very similar to *Blade Runner* in its approach to the relation between memory and identity. The film is about a cyborg, Johnny (Keanu Reeves), who is a data courier. In order to open space for his wet wire implant, Johnny had to erase his childhood memories. The film is about Johnny’s urge to restore his memory, in order to find his ‘home’, his origins; thereby to restore his humanity.

Johnny goes on a last run to save the money he needs for the restoration procedure, but the information he carries turns out to be the cure for NAS (Neural Attenuation Syndrome- a fatal disease that strikes almost the entire human population) which was stolen from Pharmakon, the medical cooperate. Pharmakon hires Yakuza (the Japanese mafia) to prevent the cure to be seized by resistance fighters. Johnny wants to cooperate with Pharmakon in order to save his own life. He does not care about the people who would be saved with the cure since he lacks any moral reservation and the motives to be a hero. But when his intimacy with Jane (the bodyguard he hires to have protection from Yakuza) improves, things start to change for Johnny. He learns that Jane also has NAS and he decides to help her. With Jane's love and affection Johnny becomes a 'man' and learns to make sacrifices in order to protect his beloved. At the end of the film he saves Jane, he saves the world; he maintains justice by destroying Pharmakon and he is rewarded with his childhood memories. NAS is a disease that is caused by a certain individual's incompatibility with the technological environment; implants, life enhancing medicals, the over use of computers and inhabitation in cyberspace gives occasion to NAS. Therefore, the happy family portrait that the film closes on (Jane and Johnny watching explosions in the Pharmakon's skyscraper after they broadcasted the cure of NAS and revealed the conspiracy of Pharmakon) once again assures that humanity will be safe from the intrusion of technology and its evil cooperate companions, as long as we manage to preserve our origins that are rooted in humanist paradigms.

2.2. Recording Heaven

Forest Pyle argues that most of the cyborg movies assert that: “the knotting of cyborg and human is inextricable” and hence “the triumph of humans and humanism is made dependent on the humanizing cyborg.”³⁸ In *Blade Runner* and *Johnny Mnemonic* this is accomplished when Rachel and Johnny acknowledge their social identity and start to perform the roles assigned them by their gender. The threat is neutralized when they became humanized and their existence became something definable according to certainties of former paradigms. It is also assured that implanted memory can not supplement authentic memory; therefore the belief in the originality of human is renovated.

Until the End of the World and *Strange Days* are among the other films that deal with this issue in a similar context. Through these films it is suggested that implant memory is not only an ineffective source to maintain humanity, but it is also dangerous; it can not humanize cyborgs but it can dehumanize humans. *Lawnmower Man* which suggests the same determination about the disembodied experience of Virtual Reality can also be added to the list.

The imagery world of implanted memory -or disembodied experience- supplements language and sanctifies the annihilation of space; therefore breaks the temporal/spatial continuum that the subject is positioned. The sheer quantity of images and sounds “swaps the dams of memory” and directs “the threat of overwhelming or suffocating the subject.”³⁹ Without a coherent subject position, subject is driven out from the Symbolic order to the Imaginary one

(Lacan), to the realm of fantasy and desire. Jobe (Jeff Fahey), the lawnmower man who gets fixated in a narcissistic stage in the realm of VR, or the overdose victims (people who get brain dead because of excessive VR use) in *Strange Days* are among the best examples of this issue.

In all of these films implant memory becomes a corruptive addiction and the process leads to the self-destruction of the subject through a moral breakdown. Consequently subject fails to perform her/his social obligations and lose her/his identity. Like cyborgs, humans find their way back to The Symbolic usually through the help of a loving (wo)man.

Brainstorm is a distinguishing example which deals with the issue. In *Brainstorm* Dr. Michael Brace (Christopher Walken) is a science man who is experimenting on a device which can record memories as real time sensory experience. Film acknowledges the risks that implanted memory carries, since one of the doctors in the institute was almost killed when he gets addicted to an illicit record of a sexual intercourse. Michael's child has also a serious trauma when he tries one of the records by mistake. But in the hands of idealist, self-assured doctor Michael, implanted memories function as a tool to restore dysfunctional social institutes. Michael records his memories about his wife, Karen (Natalie Wood), and gives it to her as a gift. When Karen plays back this record, she 'understands' him and their marriage gets recovered and starts to function again. But soon he gets obsessed with the record of his colleague's death, and with the help of Karen he accomplishes to steal it from the institute. In the last scene of the record -and the film-, he sees heaven and thousands of

souls flying towards a light beam. Strangely enough, film assures the existence of heaven and its grace with a scientific invention. I believe this scene is the best example to Cavallaro's conviction that cyberpunk "amalgamates in often baffling ways the rational and the irrational."⁴⁰

Bukatman credits Spinrad who noted for Philip K. Dick's universe that "the distinction between human and android produces an ontology grounded in *morality* and not on *biology*."⁴¹ Without hesitation Philip K. Dick is the most influential SF writer on cyberpunk fiction and cyberpunk derives many of its characteristics from his universe. Especially his emphasis on human morality resonates in cyberpunk fiction and coalesce traditional and technological worlds. This alliance marks cyberpunk society as a still technocratic one. But in postcyberpunk the traditional world disappears and the designations of human which could have been defined only within the paradigms of traditional world changes radically.

3. Postcyberpunk and Technopoly

Postcyberpunk societies are cyborg societies where the whole population becomes a cybernetic superorganism made up of smaller organisms and bounded together with a system of communication; the Wiener's utopian bee hive. A world that is translated into a problem in coding; one that is organized according to the fundamentals of cybernetic theory, as Haraway points, which is "condensed into the metaphor C3I (command- control- communication- intelligence)"⁴²

Postcyberpunk cyborgs are the ultimate cybernetic machines. They declare the boundary between machine and human is intruded to its bitter end. They cannot be haunted as their cyberpunk ('pre-cybernetic' as Haraway would call) antecedents, since there remains no "spectre of the ghost in the machine" that "structures the dialogue between materialism and idealism that was settled by a dialectical progeny, called spirit or history, according to taste."⁴³ Thus, their identity cannot be placed within the hierarchical dualism of naturalized identities as Rachel's or Johnny's. Because now, it is not only the cyborg that "has no origin in Western sense,"⁴⁴ but also the society is without an origin, "embodied in non-oedipal narratives."⁴⁵ Therefore cyborg ontology requires a new grounding other than traditional Western epistemologies would provide.

Donna Haraway's cyborg manifesto provides a revolutionary appreciation of this fact; a progressive ground, an emerging utopia "rather than a simple masculine fantasy of 'natural' mastery and domination."⁴⁶ Haraway

asserts that her “cyborg myth is about transgressed boundaries”⁴⁷ and sanctifies the proliferation of communication technologies and biotechnologies as the new tools of crafting the body: a new body, a new language, a new ‘self’.⁴⁸ She writes:

It is no accident that the symbolic system of the family of man - and so the essence of women- breaks up at the same moment that networks of connection among people on the planet are unprecedentedly multiple, pregnant and complex. ‘Advanced capitalism’ is inadequate to convey the structure of this historical moment. In the ‘Western’ sense, the end of man is at stake.⁴⁹

While commenting on Haraway’s manifesto Bukatman quotes Foucault who declared that; “man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge; he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form.”⁵⁰ That ‘form’ is cyborg according to Haraway. But we also know, since Foucault revealed, that “reorganizations of knowledge also constitute new forms of power and domination.”⁵¹ Far from being a naïve technophile, Haraway foresees the danger and makes special emphasis on the politics and social aspects of new technologies. She asserts:

I used the odd circumlocution, ‘the social relations of science and technology’, to indicate that we are not dealing with a technological determinism, but with a historical system depending upon structured relations among people. But the

phrase should also indicate that science and technology provide fresh sources of power, that we need fresh sources of analysis and political action.⁵²

Therefore Haraway suggests that the cyborg politics should give rise to an ongoing struggle for language; the struggle against perfect communication, persistence on noise and advocacy of pollution. She remarks that “cyborg stories have the task of recording communication and intelligence to subvert command and control.”⁵³ Haraway brings to mind that every kind of domination is constituted chiefly on the dualism of self versus other. Thus, any kind of totality should be avoided and boundaries should be kept permeable, in order to give way to illegitimate fusions:

One should expect control strategies to concentrate on boundary conditions and interfaces, on rates of flow across boundaries - and not on the integrity of natural objects. ‘Integrity’ or ‘sincerity’ of the Western self gives way to decision procedures and expert systems.⁵⁴

Far from being Haraway’s utopia, postcyberpunk societies are those expert systems; technopolies which are ruled under the totality of scientific determinism or Scientism as Postman would call.⁵⁵ An utopia gone awry; a society of technopoly where scientific discourse becomes a hyper-narrative and totalizes the worldviews into a whole in accordance with its own perspective; a “totalitarian technocracy”⁵⁶ that authorize its dominion through taxonomic

identifications of self and other (valid/invalid in *Gattaca*, revolutionaries/counter-revolutionaries in *The Girl from Monday*) or strictly established boundaries (city/desert in *Code 46*, outside (the island) /inside (archeology) in *The Island*).

As Postman puts it, in technopolic societies which is ruled under the tyranny of expertise, “management becomes an aspect of natural order of things,”⁵⁷ and “massive and complex business organizations are [becomes] the tangible manifestations of advanced technology.”⁵⁸ Gattaca in *Gattaca*, Sphinx Company in *Code 46*, Triple M in *The Girl from Monday*, Merrick Institute in *The Island*; they all validate the authority of technopoly and its necessities as the principal foundation of social ordering and become an apparatus of dominion through being a part of -if not the center of- mastering C3I chain. Thus, there remains no noise to subvert command and control. Communication flows are established and controlled by bureaucracies and expertise; and as Postman remarks this is the way that “technopoly provides itself with intelligibility and order.”⁵⁹

Cyborg body becomes a mere object of control in technopolies rather than a new form of knowledge as Haraway suggests; a feedback loop that provides the necessary information in order to receive its future conduct. It is not only the mind but also the body that is wired in to the communication network; a power apparatus which is perfected as a surveillance system. There remains no politics, no social or individual progress. It is believed that society can best be organized through the ‘reliable’ and ‘predictable’ knowledge that

science will expose. Thus, in technopoly “precise knowledge is preferred to truthful knowledge”⁶⁰ and numbers become the ultimate test of objectivity in order to solve the predicament of subjectivity. In short, knowledge becomes statistics and life becomes probabilistic that would be measured by experts.

As I have already defined, technopoly is the submission of culture to technology in Postman’s terms; disappearance of traditional thought world and the reign of technological one. In that reign, the beliefs and myths of the old world and the social institutions that had surrounded them becomes invisible, rendered obsolete or redefined so that their definitions would fit their new context. In technopoly, culture and social ordering seeks to find their authorization in technology and so do humans.

The totality of technopoly degrades human identity into a mere designation in accordance with its own objective. In the societies that are depicted by the films, human become a mere genetic design/ a machine (in *Gattaca* and *Code 46*) a consumer (in *The Girl from Monday*) or a product (in *The Island*). In postcyberpunk society, -like it is in any other autocracy- individuality is not something desired and the autonomy of the self is not an option.

Previously I had declared that, in cyberpunk film the hero strives to preserve the human - machine segregation in order to preserve the originality and privileges of her/his kind. Whereas, in case of postcyberpunk film, the hero becomes the ‘machine’ who lives in a society where social ordering is radically different than cyberpunk’s. Originality is not something designated to human

kind in technopolies and privileges became something statistically determined according to one's compatibility within the system. Individual is degraded to a mechanic part of the system which is reproduced organically. As Haraway points; "cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction. Modern production seems like a dream of cyborg colonization work, a dream that makes the nightmare of Taylorism seem idyllic."⁶¹ In the 'brave new postcyberpunk world' the human agency becomes a colonized worker, a station; a mechanical part of a complex system that is inherent in technology to designate an identity. The foremost anxiety depicted in postcyberpunk film is raised by the fact that human now becomes the machine; one that is far from being Haraway's cyborg.

3.1. The Human Machine

Postman writes; “In a culture in which machine, with its impersonal and endlessly repeatable operations, is a controlling metaphor and considered to be the instrument of progress, subjectivity becomes profoundly unacceptable.”⁶² In order to solve the problem of subjectivity, technopoly establishes objective standards for identity that can be measured statistically, and thereby strives to restrain the diversity, complexity, and ambiguity of humans.

Gattaca is one of the films that this issue is discussed most thoroughly among the examples that I will be analyzed. The film is about a Eugenic⁶³ society where almost every human is genetically designed, and the ones who were conceived in natural ways are marked as invalid members of the society. Postman makes assertions on the science of Eugenics and claims that Francis Galton’s - the founder of ‘Eugenics’ - work as the most abusive example of the use of statistics and the first clear proclamation that no limits have been placed on the use of statistics in technopoly.⁶⁴ The social system in *Gattaca* certifies this conception through its world where it is believed that the qualitative differences between humans only value as a numeric quantity that can be determined through one’s genes.

In the world of *Gattaca* when a baby is born, only after a several minutes the possibilities that await for her/him are ascertained statistically. Life expectancy, neurological and psychological condition, fatal potential becomes the only means that would define a human being. One’s genetic profile

determine one's social status, profession, who s/he can love, or in short who s/he can be.

In the film, Vincent⁶⁵ is surprised when he figures out that the interview to get the job in Gattaca is a mere blood test to screen his profile. Within few minutes he accomplishes his life long dream with a drop of Eugene's blood. What matters to the system of Gattaca are not the personal skills, experiences, knowledge or education of Vincent but only her/his genetic quotient. In the world of the *Gattaca* it is believed that perfection is the objective of human progress and something that could be built only genetically.

In the world of the film genetic profile becomes the determining fact in every aspect of human life. Irene gets Vincent 'sequenced'⁶⁶ and asks him to do the same thing and let her know if he is still interested in her. Thus, coupling becomes a statistical match, which is of course, the most appropriate for a Eugenic society. In the scene where Irene gets Vincent sequenced, the local geneticist hands the result to Irene and says, "9.2, quite a catch!" Irene is upset with the result because she thinks she does not have a chance with Vincent who has a "genetic quotient second to none." But what she does not know is that it was not Vincent's body material⁶⁷ that she got tested but Eugene's, since Vincent uses Eugene's identity (Jerome Marrow) in order to hide his 'invalid self'. When Irene finds out the truth about Vincent, she runs away. Vincent tries to stop her but she resists and says to Vincent: "I don't even know who you are." Vincent answers "I am the same person that I was yesterday." The fact that Vincent's personality would still be substantial without the

determinations of his genes is beyond Irene's understanding, because she does not have any criterion (call it subjective) to evaluate one's personality other than the ones that are assigned by science. Postman remarks that the proclamation of Scientism is that the numbers are the ultimate test of objectivity means that "the way we have defined the concept will recede from our consciousness- that is, its fundamental subjectivity will become invisible, and objective numbers itself will become reified."⁶⁸ In the diegetic world of the film, the personality of the individuals recede beyond the reification of their virtual self, their genetic identity and their machinery becomes the only means of their existence.

In one of the scenes, Vincent's supervisor appreciates the flight plan that Vincent did. But he does not praise his work's originality or creativity - since these are among the human characteristics which technopoly tries to eliminate-, he rather glorifies that Vincent did not make one error in a million keystrokes; in other words he praises Vincent's machinery. In another scene, the company's doctor monitors Vincent's heart beats while he is exercising with the treadmill. He says "Jerome (Vincent) the metronome, I could have play piano with this heart beat." Through several scenes like these, it is implied that in the diegetic world of the film, Vincent's success as a navigator first class depends on his build in perfection and ability to recreate standardized behaviors and not on his personal qualifications. But on the other hand, Vincent does not have 'a build in perfection,' on the contrary he is an 'invalid', imperfect, with a heart condition. But he succeeds what many valid cannot, and accomplishes his

dream with a cost of what ever it takes. Postman states that “technopoly depends on our believing that we are at our best when acting like machines.”⁶⁹

The film’s attitude does not endorse the system in its diegetic world and strives to prove this belief wrong through praising willpower and individual strength as the privileged human powers that cannot be supplied or enhanced by technology.

The human-machine analogy can also be discussed over the world of the film *Code 46*. William, the hero of the film, is one of the best investigators of Sphinx Company. However his success is not dependent on his personal qualifications but on the virus he was injected which makes him psychic and enables him to read suspects’ minds. His education, judgment, intelligence is not the measure of his achievement but what only matters is his compatibility with the virus; which means he functions as a mere ‘lie detector’, the most ambitious machine of technopoly as Postman asserts. According to Postman, lie detectors declare that “subjective forms of knowledge have no official status, and must be confirmed by tests administered by experts.”⁷⁰ Ironically the lie detector that can not determine Rachel’s humanness in *Blade Runner* becomes a human in *Code 46*. The difference between Deckard and William also represents a crucial difference between cyberpunk and postcyberpunk (also between technocracies and technopolies); Deckard is the expert -the operator of the technology-, William is the machine -the technology itself-.

In the world of *Code 46* (as it was in the world of *Gattaca*) science determines the personal life of the characters as it does determine their

professional life. Coupling is arranged according to Code 46, which is a code that aims to prevent genetically incestuous reproduction. Couples are obliged to get authorization before they procreate in order to avoid any violation of Code 46. When Maria gets pregnant it is revealed that Maria and William are genetically fifty percent identical, which means Maria is a clone of William's mother. Their relation becomes a violation of Code 46 and according to law, the Sphinx Company as the operator of laws, terminates the fetus and erases Maria's memories of William and the pregnancy. There arises another subject of discussion, one that I have largely discussed in accordance with cyberpunk: *memory*. In *Code 46*, memory -as it was in cyberpunk- is considered to be a source of humanity. But we are dealing with postcyberpunk heroes, the machine humans which their humanity is under repression, something that is rendered obsolete. Thus, memory also becomes a tool of repressing humanity and body becomes a domain of control. In the world of *Code 46* memories can be erased and the gaps are filled with implant memories. Thus, as it is in cyberpunk, the dehumanizing effect of implant memory is acknowledged in the film, but now it becomes an apparatus of administrative power.

When William discovers Maria's pregnancy, he finds her and escapes her. They together go to JebelAli where Maria knows only from her father's stories. Her voice over tells us that, JebelAli is place where "you can do anything, as long as you wanted it enough." But they get caught by Sphinx while they are trying to escape to desert. At the end of the film, Maria is excluded from the city, left out in the desert and William goes back to his

family after his memories about the whole case is erased. Doctors explain the situation -William's 'selflessness', autonomous, rebellious actions- as a malfunction of the virus he was injected, which seems to be perfectly expository for everybody in the film; William's wife, doctors, the Sphinx Company. William, in a sense, is not any different than the cyborgs in *Blade Runner*; his itinerary is an Oedipal journey, but one that is made in a society which is 'embodied in non-Oedipal narratives' as Haraway would call. The result may not be changed with our reading; William re-compromise with 'the Father' and directs his sexual desire to another women (film closes with a scene while William and his wife having sex.) But the definitions of the 'the Father' and 'the Law' are now radically different from Lacan's assertions. It should rather be put as: William's obsession to Maria is rationalized as a virus malfunction; he is repaired and re-located within the system. Postman declares that science undermines "the whole edifice of belief in sacred stories and ultimately swept[s] away with it the source to which most humans had looked for moral authority."⁷¹ Code 46 can be seen as an attempt to reestablish that source which was threatened by the new genetic technologies. After all Code 46 is nothing but the taboo on incest which becomes very difficult to hold when there is cloning technology. The repression that Code 46 ensures is the substitute of the 'psychoanalytic' meaning of repression and maintained through the conditioning of the body. Thus, in the world of postcyberpunk Scientism becomes the moral authority and deprives us of "the social, political, historical, metaphysical, logical or spiritual bases for knowing what is beyond belief."⁷²

There is nothing beyond the belief in postcyberpunk; obedience is not assured by belief but obtained by mechanic manipulation, hence human is not a believer but a machine.

3.2. The Human Product

The Girl from Monday and *The Island* are slightly different visions of a technopolic society, but ones that can still be placed within the framework that Postman established.

At the beginning of *The Girl from Monday*, the hero of the film, Jack informs us that “America has just been liberated by Triple M.” This declaration is rather a strange one since Triple M (Major Multimedia Monopoly) is not a political organization but a commercial one. Other than that, the so called liberation is not one that can be approached from the perspective of human rights but now what becomes ‘consumer rights’ -which in the world of the film, becomes the only norm to define one’s rights.

The whole idea of the revolution is based on the principle of thinking every individual as an investment. This idea indicates that the only domain of existence that an individual can acquire an identity within this system, is the one that is determined inside the market place. World becomes a market place: “World becomes flesh. Body becomes what?”⁷³

Human is now defined as an economic value: the product and the consumer, all in one packet, the ultimate *homo economicus*. Not much different than the ‘human machines’ of the worlds of *Gattaca* and *Code 46*; only now their ‘machinery’ entails a different labor. As an investment, every individual in the system is responsible with increasing her/his economic value -personal value as it is called in the film- in order to enhance the revolution’s principles:

one has to consume and one has to be consumed in order to be 'valued'. In this strange world -or dreadfully familiar enough- the medium of economic exchange is not denominated as 'money' but as 'personal value', a virtual unit determined according to one's status in the system. Professional life, credit history, consumer behaviors, criminal record, physical and physiological condition and even sexual life is the means to increase personal value, therefore functions as 'national resource.' Thus, according to "revolutions (therefore Triple M's) right to know personal value,"⁷⁴ personal life is strictly inspected, controlled and recorded. Engaging any social activity -including sexual intercourse- without the expectation of economic profit is considered to be immoral, inhuman, anti-social, pervert, if not considered completely as treason. In order to protect revolution's principles, Triple M becomes the policy maker and imposes its policies not through a brute force but through highly influential advertisement campaigns.

Postman remarks that commercial enterprise and technopoly are akin to each other with their apprehension of tradition as an obstacle. Advertising becomes "both a symptom and a cause of the loss of narratives."⁷⁵ The trivialization of cultural symbols -and the symbol drain created as a consequence of this- generates a cultural void. Postman declares:

Into this void comes the Technopoly story, with its emphasis on progress without limits, rights without responsibilities, and technology without cost. The Technopoly story is without a moral center. (...) It cast aside all traditional narratives and

symbols that suggest stability and orderliness, and tells, instead, of a life of skills, technical expertise, and the ecstasy of consumption.⁷⁶

In the world of *The Girl from Monday*, the ‘ecstasy of consumption’ is the essence of life, foundation of society and the policy of the revolution. The culture in the film is defined by the lack of satisfaction which is necessary to perpetuate this ecstasy. In one of the scenes where the employees of the company work on a campaign to increase the demand for heart surgery, the supervisor of the company pronounces the objective of the campaign as to convince people to have heart surgery whether they need it or not. He stands up for his idea by saying: “God dam it! It is their right.” Freedom by its definition is “the absence of necessity in choice or action.”⁷⁷ Therefore the supervisor’s logic becomes inevitable since technopoly striped away the aspect of ‘responsibility’ from the equation, surgery becomes a right and the ‘tyranny of medical necessity’ is eliminated.

The narration of the film also successfully contributes to convey the unprecedented pace of its narrative world. Discontinuities in editing, camera movements altered by blurred-motion effects and mis-framed shots interrupts the temporal/ spatial continuum of the film. Narrative unfolds in a way to completely confuse the classical dramatic structure and narrative repetitions contributes to exhaust the audience’s endeavor to move toward a coherent whole which is already absent in the narrative world of the film.

I have declared that postcyberpunk worlds are brave new worlds, 'nightmares that would show Taylorism idyllic' where human becomes a colonized worker, valued according to their efficiency in the production chain; an agent whose identity is constituted through statistical measurements and whom labor is specified and contented according to this. *The Island* is a film which gives direct reference to the 'brave new world'; not only to Taylor's, but also to Aldous Huxley's.

In *The Island*, humans are reproduced organically and contained in a virtual world; an arcology which is called the Merrick Institute. Through the end of the film it is revealed that the Merrick Institute is a clone factory, a commercial enterprise which gives cloning service to the elite members of society. There are two worlds inside the film: the virtual one -that is the one which is assumed by clones, the technopolic one- and the 'real' world -the outside world which resembles our world in many aspects, a technocratic one. - Clones are not considered as humans in the real world; they are considered as products, insurance policies, archives to conserve and supply the necessary organs for real humans. In the arcology, a cognitive world and a social life is provided for them, because it is discovered that organs cannot survive without emotions. However clones are unaware of the truth about themselves, they believe that the world is contaminated and they are the lucky humans who managed to survive. As it is in Huxley's *Brave New World*, every resident of the arcology is conditioned before they were born -or rather before they

become an end product-. The Institute implants fake memories about an imaginary childhood in order to restrain clones from knowing the truth.

The clones live in a seemingly utopian society which is manipulated with the myth of The Island: the last uncontaminated spot on earth. Their life is full of pleasures -“Garden of Eden” as Dr. Merrick called-; spas, fancy clubs, entertainment halls, fitness centers, health care programs. But in order to prevent unwanted consequences, -like pregnancy- (of course if it is not a part of the insurance policy of the customer) their natural progress is kept under control. They are unaware of their sexual identity and deprive any notion that might lead them to question the world they live.

However there becomes an unexpected consequence; one of the clones’, Lincoln Six-Echo’s memories -or rather Tom Lincoln’s, his ‘original’s- begin to be recovered genetically. This unexpected, certainly unwanted and inexplicable development changes the whole situation for Lincoln. He begins to have dreams about ‘his’ past life, he begins to question things, he begins to become a ‘human.’ Again, the film perpetuates the cyberpunk tradition and connects humanity with authentic memory. But this time it is rather more complicated since Lincoln’s memories are not authentic, they are copied like Lincoln himself, but they are also not ‘implanted.’

After a while, Lincoln assures himself that something is certainly going wrong and escapes with another clone, Jordan Two Delta in order to find his ‘original’, Tom Lincoln and ask for his help. However, the Institute which did not take an event like this to account, keeps the ‘policy holders’ unaware of the

fact that clones are not vegetables but social beings; because the Institute wants to protect its customers from unnecessary ethical discomfort. But any how it does not matter to Tom Lincoln when he learns. He has a fatal health condition; he needs his insurance policy in order to be healed. He is not unaware of the ethical inconvenience and the illegibility of the situation, but it is a matter of survival and after all he lives in a technocracy where such a circumstance is considered as a necessary and unfortunate condition of technological development.⁷⁸ The conversation between Dr. Merrick (Sean Bean) -the science man who invented the clones- and Albert Laurent (Djimon Hounsou) -the leader of the special force which Dr. Merrick hired in order to catch the escaped clones- provides a fruitful ground to discuss the philosophy of technocratic culture. I would like to give a full transcript of the scene for further discussion:

Dr.Merrick: I love that Picasso. (shows a reproduction of *Guernica* hanged on the wall) Do you like Picasso Mr. Laurent.

Albert: (answers with a dour facial expression)

M: You delivered your promise, well done. I am very pleased, thank you.

A: What about the client, Sarah Jordan?⁷⁹

M: She is doubtful. Even if the transplants would be successful her brain damage may be too severe for any real recovery.

A: So the girl I brought in, you are going to harvest... you are going to kill her anyway even if it won't make any difference.

M: That is the privilege my clients pay for Mr. Laurent. Now, if you excuse me I am busy...

A: You know my father was a part of the Bucanabi rebellion. And when he was killed me and my brothers were branded (he shows the stigma on his hand) so the others would know- we were less than human. I have seen and done things that I am not proud off but at some point you realize that war ... is business. So when did killing become a business for you?

M: Oh! There is so much more than that. I have discovered the holly bowl of science Mr. Laurent. I give life! The Agnets (clones) they are simply tools, instruments. They have no soul. The possibilities are endless. In two years time I will heal children's leukemia. How many people on earth can say that Mr. Laurent?

A: I think just you and God. That's the answer you looking for, isn't it?

M: Your check is waiting for you downstairs.

Albert Laurent is a hired soldier, a 'barbaric' muscle power, paid soldier, 'not civilized enough to appreciate Picasso', a man of a 'tool using past' with moral reservations he derived from traditional thought world. However, Dr. Merrick is a science man who has 'a sophisticated taste of culture' and 'God like powers' which he derived and authorized from the technological thought world. The characterization of Dr. Merrick and Mr. Laurent can be read as the embodiment of two opposite poles of technocracy; the men of two different worlds: the traditional world and technological world. They are in 'uneasy tension' but they 'coexist' since they live in a technocracy; after all they make business together. The existence of the traditional thought world makes everything ethically uneasy. But in technopolies with the disappearance of that

world and when numbers becomes the only tools for adjudication, discrimination becomes rationalized. Postman asserts:

Technology searches for a source of authority and finds it in the idea of statistical objectivity. (...) The only plausible answer to that question why we use statistics for such measurements [such as researching how smart *groups* of people] is that it is done for sociopolitical reasons whose essential malignancy is disguised by the cover of *scientific inquiry*. If we believe black are dumber than whites, and that this is not merely our opinion but confirmed by objective measures, than we can believe that we have an irreproachable authority for making decisions about the allocation of resources. This is how, in Technopoly, science is used to make democracy *rational*.⁸⁰

It is not coincidental that Albert Laurent is a black man. *The Island* makes a clear manifestation about the connection between the discrimination against humans and the discrimination against clones. Albert decides to help clones after he sees the stigmata on Jordan Two Delta's wrist, a sign that every clone has so it would be known that they are "less than human." Film contravenes the determinations of science and strives to raise doubts about rationality of clones' inhumanness. It is also implicated through the scenes where the whole generation of clones is terminated in the gas chambers because of 'manufacturing defect.' The scene gives direct reference to Holocaust and its implications can also be discussed through *Gattaca* with a connection of Nazi's special interest on Eugenics. It is not any different in the world of *Gattaca*

where discrimination is rationalized through the authority of science and the “God’s children” become the invalid members of the society. The invalids are marked with a sign of Cross on their identity card, while the valid members of society are marked with the sign of eternity. This iconography also implicates the invalidity of tradition thought world to determine one’s value. Vincent does not have a mark on his wrist or hand; he is stigmatized through his ‘invalid’ genes.

This discussion may not seem new. After all it is a topic derived from technocracies agenda. But the difference lies in the logic of the narrative worlds of postcyberpunk. It becomes not a matter of ‘allocation of resources’ among humans anymore, since the technopolitic cyborg, the human machines or the human products of the postcyberpunk becomes the ‘resource,’ a colonized worker whose labor is determined according to the objectives of the system. Haraway draws our attention to the fact that: “Cyborg worlds are embodied in non-oedipal narratives with a different kind of repression, which we need to understand for our survival.”⁸¹ Postcyberpunk does not make a suggestion for survival, -at least no new suggestions other than cyberpunk did- but I believe the narrative worlds of the films are fertile grounds in order to inquire that ‘different kind of repression.’

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

¹ Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, (New York : Vintage Books) 1993.

² *ibid.* p.19-25

³ *ibid.* p.29

⁴ *ibid.* p.47

⁵ *ibid.* p.42

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.* p.47

⁸ *ibid.* p.52

⁹ *ibid.* p.48

¹⁰ *ibid.* p.52

¹¹ *ibid.* p.48

¹² *ibid.* p.93

¹³ *ibid.* p.52

¹⁴ Frederick W. Taylor, the industrial engineer who is acclaimed for his influential book *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), was the advocate of the idea that efficiency in industrial production can be achieved through scientific management which is based on precise measurement and analysis of each aspect of a job and to content workers according these measurements. (Encyclopedia Article Center, Encarta®, encarta@conversagent.com)

¹⁵ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.52

¹⁶ Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002). p. 3

¹⁷ Kohl, Jacqueline. Universiteit Gent,

<http://www.ugent.be/ca93/nl/iploca2.htm> cited on 29.12.2005

¹⁸ Chapman, Robert E. Benefits and Costs of Research: A Case Study of Cybernetic Building Systems <http://www.nist.gov/director/prog-ofc/nistir6303.pdf> cited on

¹⁹ Havenstein, Heather. Applications,

<http://www.aaai.org/AITopics/html/applications.html>

²⁰ Deering, Mike. Future Hi: Celebrating the Birth of Psychedelic Futurism, <http://www.futurehi.net/archives/000117.html>

²¹ Sterling, Bruce. "Preface From Mirrorshades" in *Storming The Reality Studio*, ed. McCaffery, Larry. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991) p.344.

²² *Ghost in the Shell*. DVD booklet.

²³ Derrida, Jaques. "From of Grammatology" in *Storming The Reality Studio*, ed. McCaffery, Larry. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991) p.194

²⁴ See Leary, Timothy. "The Cyberpunk: The Individual As Reality Pilot" in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. Bell, David, Kennedy, Barbara M. (London & New York: Routledge, 2002) pp. 529-540.

²⁵ Cavallaro, Dani. *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture* (London: Athlone Press, 2000) p.xi

²⁶ *ibid.* p.xi.

²⁷ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.48

²⁸ Original emphasis, Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p.16

²⁹ *ibid.* p.17

³⁰ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.183.

³¹ Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. (New York: Ace Books, 2000) p.131

³² From Tyrell's conversation with Deckard in *Blade Runner*.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.93

³⁶ Bruno, Giuliana. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, (London & New York: Verso, 1996) p.190

³⁷ *ibid.* p.191

³⁸ Pyle, Forest. "Making Cyborgs, Making Humans" in *Cybercultures Reader*, ed. Bell, David, Kennedy, Barbara (London & New York: Routledge, 2002) p.134

³⁹ Doane, Mary Ann. "Temporality, Storage, Legibility: Freud, Marey, and the Cinema" in *Endless Night*, ed. Bergstrom, Janet. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, p.57

⁴⁰ Cavallaro, *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture*, p.xi

⁴¹ Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p.248

⁴² Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century" in *Cybercultures Reader*, ed. Bell, David, Kennedy, Barbara M. (London & New York: Routledge, 2002) p.303.

⁴³ *ibid.* p.293

⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 292

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p. 323

⁴⁷ Haraway, *Cybercultures Reader*, p.295

⁴⁸ *ibid.* p.302

⁴⁹ *ibid.* p.300

⁵⁰ Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, p.323

⁵¹ Rouse, Joseph. "Power/Knowledge" in *The Cambridge companion to Foucault* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p.92

⁵² Haraway, *Cybercultures Reader*, p.304

⁵³ *ibid.* p.311

⁵⁴ *ibid.* p.302

⁵⁵ Postman defines *Scientism* as the moral ground which would legitimize social life in technopolies and answer "when or how we must decide, or when it

may be right or wrong to obey.” He declares: “to ask of science, or expect of science, or accept unchallenged from science to answer to such questions is Scientism. And it is Technopoly’s grand illusion.” Postman, *Technopoly*, p.162

⁵⁶ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.48

⁵⁷ *ibid.* p.142

⁵⁸ Postman explains: “Management functions as does any technology. It is not made up of mechanical parts, of course. It is made up of procedures and rules designed to standardize behavior.” Postman, *Technopoly*, p.141

⁵⁹ *ibid.* pp. 90-91

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 158

⁶¹ Haraway, *Cybercultures Reader*, p.292

⁶² Postman, *Technopoly*, p.158

⁶³ Eugenics is “the ‘science’ of arranging marriage and family so as to produce the best possible offspring based on the hereditary characteristics of the parents.” *ibid.* p. 129

⁶⁴ *ibid.* p. 129

⁶⁵ In the film Vincent borrows Jerome’s identity. Time to time, both Vincent and Eugene is called Jerome in the film, in order to prevent any confusion, I will call the ‘original’ Jerome with his second name Eugene (which means ‘good gene’) and Vincent with his real name.

⁶⁶ To have someone’s genetic profile screened through a ‘found’ body material: hair, saliva, skin particles... etc.

⁶⁷ A single hair of Eugene, that is placed to Vincent workstation by himself, in order to be found.

⁶⁸ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.131

⁶⁹ *ibid.* p.115

⁷⁰ *ibid.* p.93

⁷¹ *ibid.* p.160

⁷² *ibid.* p.58

⁷³ From the film *The Girl From Monday*.

⁷⁴ From the film *The Girl From Monday*.

⁷⁵ Postman, *Technopoly*, p.173

⁷⁶ *ibid.* p.179

⁷⁷ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriamwebster.com/>

⁷⁸ I have quoted this passage before, but I would like to quote it again as a reminder of Postman’s understanding of technocracy: “Technocracies concerned to invent machinery. That people’s life is changed by machinery is taken as a matter of course, and that people must sometimes be treated as if they were machinery is considered a necessary and unfortunate condition of technological development.” Postman, *Technopoly*, p.52

⁷⁹ In the film Sarah Jordan, Jordan Two Delta’s policy holder, has a serious car accident and enters to coma.

⁸⁰ Original emphasis, Postman, *Technopoly*, p.132

⁸¹ Haraway, *Cybercultures Reader*, p. 292

Chapter IV

1. Looking Through the Cyberpunk Heterotopia

“How would you like to live in Looking-glass House, Kitty? (...)Oh, Kitty! How nice it would be if we could only get through into Looking- glass House! I'm sure it's got, oh! such beautiful things in it!”

*Through The Looking Glass*¹

Heterotopia² is a term which is coined by Foucault in his article *Of Other Spaces*.³ Foucault defines heterotopia as a site that is between utopia and ‘quite other sites’, “a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror.”⁴ He employs mirror as a metaphor to explain his understanding of utopia, heterotopia and their relation to each other:

The mirror is after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface (...) such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is

on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself where I am.⁵

Thus, according to Foucault heterotopia and utopia are uncoupled. Heterotopia is the space where we occupy when we are dreaming of utopia; a space that gives rise to our dreams; the space of dreaming. Behind the surface of heterotopia, where we directed our gaze, our hopes, our delusions, dilates a new space; that is not 'really' a space, the space of the dream, the space where the 'self' is absent, a virtual realm that consigns a reconstructed 'self'. I will argue that cyberpunk spaces, which are neither utopia nor dystopia in classical sense, is rather heterotopia which "only exists in this space-between"⁶ and its uncoupled utopia is cyberspace.⁷ My employment of the term is also inspired from Kevin Hetherington's construction of Foucault's term in his analyses of 'bad lands of modernity' as heterotopias.⁸ Hetherington explicates Foucault's term as "the Places of Otherness" as "sites of contrast whose existence sets up unsettling juxtapositions of incommensurate things within either the body of society or within a text."⁹

Cyberpunk heterotopia manifests itself through its temptation to juxtapose things and sanctify their discordant energy. "An unholy alliance of the technical world and the world of organized dissent -the underground world of pop culture, visionary fluidity, and street level anarchy"¹⁰ as Sterling declared, characterizes the world of cyberpunk. This world conflates both the

terror and the excitement that is resulted by the uncontrolled growth of technology. Cyberpunks were upset, disturbed and anxious about the unprecedented pace of events, but at the same time they believed that technological revolution reshaping society “is based not in hierarchy but in decentralization, not in rigidity but in fluidity.”¹¹ Thus, they welcomed the devastating energy of technology, glorified social decay and environment of chaos as a “powerful source of hope.”¹² They reflected their hope and positioned their Otherness to a place of heterotopia, into this in-between space, among the ruins of cities, into the interzones where “street finds its own uses for things.”¹³

Hetherington argues that “heterotopia come into existence when utopian ideals emerge in spatial play and are expressed as form of difference which offer alternative ideas about the organization of society.”¹⁴ Cyberpunk’s utopian ideal is to resist any kind of social ordering that is centralized and enforces the unity of appointed behaviors. The utopian endeavor of cyberpunk is to ensure chaos as a durable (dis)order that would provide a harmonious whole out of differences, ambiguities and contradictions. They express their utopia through sceneries that resist spatial order and subvert places of order into forms of differences through a spatial dynamic play. Thus, they place their Otherness into a apocalyptic scenery, to the city carcasses which became a “futuristic labyrinth, eclectic and playful in its spatial organization and use of architectural style.”¹⁵ The apocalyptic scenery of the films give cyberpunk its dystopian features but at the same time opens up ‘places of Otherness,’ a place

to dream another means of social ordering and procreate a heterotopia. The city represented in *Blade Runner*, *Strange Days* and *Johnny Mnemonic* -which the iconography of cyberpunk city can mostly be identified- satisfies both Foucault's and Hetherington's determinations on heterotopia in a devoted manner. The stratification of the city in these films "create[s] an aesthetic of decay,"¹⁶ as messy, ill constructed, and jumbled which is at the same time monumental and meticulous in its "willingness to carry extrapolation into the fabric of daily life."¹⁷

The cyberpunk heterotopia embodies the craving for 'change' through the representation of the city at the 'dawn' of apocalypse. In *Strange Days* streets filled packed with crowds, cheering up for the coming millennium, thrilled with both the fears and pleasures that are promised, a parade of rage and ravage -cars on fire, garbage everywhere- commingling with the glamour of new year ceremonies. In the film the architecture of the city is veiled by the frenzy of crowds, constructing an organic architecture which creates a *sublime* terror, a Gothic agglomeration which echoes Cavallaro's determination on the construction of space in William Gibson's writings: "an 'amorphous' yet 'startingly organic' architectural 'carnival' endowed with a 'queer medieval energy'."¹⁸ Also in *Johnny Mnemonic* the 'organic architecture' of the city is composed of crowds, demonstrating against Pharmakon, and its queer energy that is resulted by the terror of NAS which gives rise to the 'bridge' as the place of Otherness. The Gothic ruin of bridge fashions an ultimate amount of 'turning in', "a pathological growing inward"¹⁹ responding Foucault's assertion on

heterotopia as “a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all sites inside of which human life is partitioned.”²⁰ Cavallaro argues that the terror in Gibson’s literature “is linked to a sensation of awe and wonderment, to an individual’s encounter with something breathtakingly incomprehensible.”²¹ That ‘breathtakingly incomprehensible’ thing is revealed as the coming of new digital technologies and the incomprehensible impact they would produce on social life. *Strange Days* discerns this feeling of terror through its literal expression; the coming millennium, a new milieu, which is very similar to Gibson’s own statement in the documentary, entitled *No Maps for These Territories*:

Non mediated world is become a lost country. .. a country that we can not find our way back. There is a pervasive of loss, we don’t know what we lost, and pervasive excitement as what we seem to be. Two feeling seemed go together, part of the same feeling. Sense of loss and a sense of Christmas morning at the same time...²²

The cyberpunk’s preoccupation with memory is also related with this ‘pervasive of loss.’ Gibson argues:

I think it is difficult for us to know what we lose. We are constantly losing things, and often, as we lose them, we can’t remember what they were.²³

The spatial play in cyberpunk heterotopia acquires a temporal form to utter the anxiety raised by this feeling of loss through “Gothic Revival as eclectic pastiche”²⁴ and perpetuates the arguments on memory²⁵ on a narrational level. *Blade Runner* is a very fertile example to discuss in this respect. The city of *Blade Runner* extends its Gothic immersion through all over the city, with its organic architecture as crowds on their daily routine. The film noir look, the postmodern architecture of the city which incorporates different styles from different periods and the signs of oriental mythology occurs in the film through pastiche, which quotes dead styles as an attempt to recollect the past, memory and history.²⁶ Foucault states that “heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time -which is to say that they open onto what might be termed *heterochronies*.”²⁷ The temporal aspirations of *Blade Runner*’s spatial ordering generate a heterotopia that opens onto heterochronies which are accumulated by a ‘Gothic Revival of eclectic pastiche’. In *Blade Runner* “time never stops building up its own summit”²⁸, visualizing the idea of heterotopia that is expressed by Foucault as “accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages.”²⁹ Foucault argues that this experience would unfold the history and thus “the entire history of humanity [would] reach back to its origins.”³⁰

The spatial play in the film opens a place of Otherness, that is a place to imagine a different social ordering and a different self in that order, but at the

same time challenges the idea that this spatial play may give rise to the utopia that is expressed by Foucault as ‘going back to origins’. Thus, the argument on memory which film opens and discusses through its narrative; the impotence of recreated memory to restore origins is repeated in a narrational level through the use of eclectic pastiche. Forest Pyle argues that “this intertextual reference or cross-generic play situates the viewer as knowledgeable, capable of mastering cinematic codes and generic traditions.”³¹ But at the same time, Pyle asserts that, film uses pastiche “only to displace the thematic authority of the styles it quoted” and hence, insists “on the inability of memory to restore the presence of what is past, an inability shared by all who live and remember in this movie.”³² The inability of the memory to restore the presence of what is past is caused by its being broken off its historicity. Like Rachel’s past memories motivated by a photograph, we derive the knowledge we have about the styles quoted in the film from their images, mostly from other films and not by our personal experience. These images are not authentic, they are copied, recreated, thus, they cannot supply an origin which is required to form a new self.

Blade Runner’s employment of eclectic pastiche in order to create heterotopia can also be traced in other cyberpunk films as a general style of the genre as well. This spatial play opens up a place of Otherness; a place to imagine a different social ordering and a different ‘self’ in that order, which also expresses the belief that this utopia requires the “rediscovery of time.”³³ A time/space that cannot be obtained through the recollection of memory, but

requires a different kind of experience; like the experience of mirror, “an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface,”³⁴ a ‘no-place’, a utopia.

This utopian endeavor is reflected to cyberspace in cyberpunk fiction. Kevin Robins argues that the narrative space of cyberpunk moves through the fictional architecture of cyberspace. He defines cyberspace as “a utopian vision for postmodern times,”³⁵ a better domain where “the frustrating and disappointing imperfection of the here and now”³⁶ is transcended; in which the self is “reconstituted as a fluid and polymorphous entity.”³⁷

Conrad Russell makes a very similar claim with Kevin Robins. Russell asserts that “cyberpunk appears to represent a reinvention of ‘counter-modern’ spatial utopia in the form of cyberspace, where both space and the practice of subjects within it are dynamic, non-hierarchical and fluid,” marked by “the dreamlike quality of the ghostly landscapes” which would provide grounds “of a new society rooted in a spatial (dis)order of creativity and play.”³⁸ Such a vision of cyberspace is largely absent in cyberpunk. As a place of utopia, by definition, cyberspace is a ‘no-place,’ and obtains the utopian credentials that are attributed to it from the very idea of “imagining a space that cannot ‘really’ exist.”³⁹ Thus, cyberspace resists to be visualized neither through the possibilities of cinema nor through the possibilities of written language. Russell’s inquiry is an attempt to prove that William Gibson’s writings fail to provide a vision of cyberspace as such. He concludes with declaring that “the Gibsonian spatial order remains locked in capitalist Modernity just as much as cyberpunk’s aspirations to transcend it itself have modern origins.”⁴⁰ I believe

Johnny Mnemonic is the cinematic counterpart of Russell's determination, also as the film which Gibson himself is also credited as screenwriter. Cyberspace in *Johnny Mnemonic* -and also in other cyberpunk examples that tries to visualize cyberspace, such as *Tron* and *Lawnmower Man*- appears as a mere interface, "a graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system"⁴¹ that cannot transcend its material origins which gave rise to it, just as cyberpunk which cannot transcend its modernist origins.

Ghost in the Shell and its sequel *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* appears as distinctive films in this panorama. Both films never attempt to visualize cyberspace, thus preserve its utopian credentials. In the first film of the sequel, Major Motoko Kusanagi, a top operative in Section 9 -a special anti-cybernetic terrorism unit of the Japanese government- seeks to find a cyber terrorist called Puppet Master. It turns out in the film that Puppet Master is a program developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; an AI who reached sentience and committed several crimes in order to embed a life form. At the end of the film, Puppet Master proposes a merger with Kusanagi. Kusanagi accepts Puppet Master's proposal and the two merges in cyberspace creating a new life form. The first film ends with the rebirth of this new entity, and in the sequel *Innocence*, 'it' comes back to save Kusanagi's ex-partner Batou by hacking into a doll's cyber brain. Batou recognizes Kusanagi -or what he still strives to see as Kusanagi- and asks "What are you now?" The entity replies that the answer to this question is beyond Batou's understanding; in fact what is talking with Batou right that moment is only a part of what Kusanagi had become.

Because 'its' entity exceeds the limits of the doll's cyber brain, 'it' could download only a part of its entity to that form and the rest is still inhabits in cyberspace. 'What Kusunagi had become' is the exact reciprocation of Haraway's cyborg and the fact that we are unable to call it/he/she with an appropriate pronoun within the limits of our language is the precise confirmation of the fact that this *utopia* cannot be visualized within the limits of any language -including the language of film- at least that can be attained by humans.

Therefore, more than appointing a topos, the *utopia* 'realized' in *Ghost in The Shell* series appoints a new form of being which surpasses language. The representation of this utopia can only be possible through a partial manifestation of this new form of being, since it would always transcend what we can articulate or comprehend through the language. This new life form which consists of a mythic consciousness is the mirror which Foucault designates as utopia. Thus, the in between space, the places of Otherness which are created by cyberpunk heterotopia becomes the place where we occupy, when we are looking at this utopia. However, in the case of postcyberpunk, all the in between spaces will be foreclosed by a rigid system of governance and thus heterotopia will be defeated by what I will call *unitopia*.

2. The Escape from Postcyberpunk Unitopia

In the previous section, I have claimed that cyberpunk heterotopia is a place where chaos and disorder opens up places for Otherness that new forms of orderings can be imagined and reflected to the formless realm of cyberspace. This formless realm becomes cyberpunk's challenge because it resists to be defined within the hierarchies of language, and the individual too acquires a formless 'form' in this limitless space much like Haraway's cyborg; and entails a new identity since its fluid and polymorphous essence can not be segmented through dichotomies.

In the case of postcyberpunk order is re-established. Chaos and disorder is defeated by the totality of a new form of power. 'Heterotopia' is vanquished by a different order, creating what I will call, *unitopia*.⁴² By proposing the term unitopia, I intend to appoint that the rising inflection in postcyberpunk is that the alternative forms of social ordering are reduced to one, to a monolithic system of governance. In the totality of this *topos* where its essence is *unity*, there remains no interzones, no gaps to place Otherness, no place to dream another kind of social ordering.

As opposed to the cyberpunk heterotopias which can only be positioned in the place opened up between utopia and dystopia, postcyberpunk unitopia pronounces its vision clearly as dystopian. The critical vision of postcyberpunk against the welfare utopianism follows the dystopian tradition in modern SF and can be argued over the texts such as, Zamyatin's *We* (1924) and Orwell's

Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) which Jane Staiger's identifies as 'anti-Wellsian' in posture. Staiger argues that what these writers:

...objected to in Wells's welfare utopias were the implications that in spite of their 'planned, ideal, and perfected' social systems, people 'are conditioned to obedience, freedom is eliminated and individuality crashed; ... the past is systematically destroyed and men are isolated from the nature; ... science and technology are employed, not to enrich human life, but to maintain the state's surveillance and control of its slave citizens'.⁴³

Similarly, postcyberpunk depicts a society -that in the previous chapter I have identified as technopolic- where the social system is 'perfected' according to the vision of technological determinism. In postcyberpunk societies, people are conditioned to obedience through the application of new technologies; notions that could sustain an individual position is 'systematically destroyed' together with the 'traditional past'; culture seeks to find its authorization in *Scientism* and not in the humane tradition; instead of being a force to decentralize power -as it was in cyberpunk-, technology becomes an effective apparatus of power to maintain surveillance and control. Thus, the critical stance that postcyberpunk takes against the technologically enhanced, 'idealized' posthuman society succeeds the depictions of the dystopian tradition. But, in spite of this permanence, there remains one disparity which makes postcyberpunk distinguished in the 'anti-Wellsian tract.' This disparity

which becomes evidenced by the structuring of hegemony in social ordering compensates a vulnerable point of the modern dystopian tradition. Bukatman detects this vulnerability and argues that:

...works such as *Fahrenheit 451* or Orwell's *1984* ignore the crucial postulate of Marcuse's 'democratic domination': that an effectively functioning ideological state apparatus replaces the need for overt exercises of power by the repressive apparatus. 'The perfection of power,' Michel Foucault wrote, referring to the panoptic structures of the disciplinary society, 'should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary.' Or, as William Burroughs observed, 'A functioning police state needs no police.'⁴⁴

In the world of postcyberpunk, the ideology of technopolic culture which suppresses the cognitive apprehension of society, through the authority it derives from technological determinism, hence, becomes an 'effectively functioning state apparatus.' The execution of power is perfected not only through the panoptic structures of new cyber technologies but also through the enhancement of panopticon to the space of body. The power mechanism in postcyberpunk society appears in a *capillary* form which Foucault explains as "a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise within the social body, rather than above it."⁴⁵ This mechanism in postcyberpunk fills the 'void' which Bukatman determines as an 'omission' in the referred dystopian texts. Postcyberpunk's consideration of this 'void' is the point where it departs from classical dystopia and depicts a topos which is not oppressed by overt exercises

of power but through the homogeneity of power; a *unitopia*, where all the places of Otherness are foreclosed by a rigid system of communication and control. This disparity also suggests a criticism of Wiener's vision and opens an *anti-Wienerian* track into the "anti-Wellsian" tract.

The society portrayed in postcyberpunk provides a critical apprehension of Wiener's 'utopia', which embodies the ideal society in the form of a *beehive*. He preserves the belief that effectual transmission of information which sustains the *unison* in the beehive can be formulated through Cybernetics and the perfect society would emerge through the application of this formula. Thus, Wiener's 'utopian' society becomes a servomechanism and the individual becomes a closed circuit within that topos which functions as a part of this common nervous system.

The postcyberpunk unitopia realizes Wiener's 'utopia' with a critical approach. In this fictional world, the unison in the hive becomes a power mechanism which is executed in its capillary form, not from above the social body but from within. This mechanism as Foucault remarks is a form of power, which "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives."⁴⁶ In postcyberpunk unitopia 'the capillary mechanism' that Foucault describes is literalized. Power touches the body through the genes, injects viruses to the veins, takes the forms of pills and constantly penetrates the body through its surveillance systems; collects samples of body substance, reads finger prints, even reads the 'prints' that are not visible, the

ones which are coded in the genes. The body responds back to power, communicates with it; supplies the information that power requires and also receives its future conduct as a part of its daily routine.

More importantly, power does not only control the body, but also designs, (re)produces, (re)creates it according to its own objectives. Thus, human body is re-formed as a result of the transformations of the relations between communication and power. Ian Burkitt observes this reformation throughout ‘bio-history’ and relates it to another conception of Foucault; the *bio-power*:

What he [Foucault] called ‘bio-power’, (...) is a form of power exerted over the population and over the bodies of individuals, disciplining and regulating them, and turning them into rational and calculable machines. Through bio-power, life is brought into the field of political calculation and manipulation and there develops a bio-politics of the population, fascism being one of the most extreme examples.⁴⁷

Gattaca becomes the most direct example for discussing the issue; a discussion that I have already done in the previous chapter over the film’s reference of Nazis through Eugenic fantasies. In the world of *Gattaca*, human becomes a machine that is designed in order to sustain perfection, productivity and effectiveness. ‘The human machines’ are valued within the society according to their genetic quotient and thus the social system creates a ground where ‘life is brought into the field of political calculation and manipulation.’

As an oppressed member of the system, Vincent carries the power that oppresses him, the bio-power, within his body, coded into his genes. This power is not only exercised by the Gattaca Company as an executive organization, or other administrative organizations like police power, but also exercised through almost every member of the society through a new form of discrimination; “genoism” as it is called in the film. Even Vincent’s own family does not believe in what Vincent can accomplish because of his ‘build-in imperfection’. Thus, Vincent is forced to accept the social norms and calibrate the scope of his dreams in scale with his genetic quotient. This also implicates that the social norms in the world of *Gattaca*, is based on the belief that human is a machine which can only perform the tasks that it is build for, and that can be valued according to its machinery.

The scenery of the film sustains a visual counterpart of the narrative world through the choice of filming location as “The Marin County Civic Center” (San Rafael, California, built in 1957) which is designed by famous American architecture Frank Lloyd Wright. The clean, open spaces that were designed by Wright employ the style of modern architecture which enforces order, unity and productivity to its inhabitants. This style perpetuates the deification of machinery in the world of the film to a narrational level and can also be discussed with the reference it makes to Wright’s own vision; which also becomes apparent in Wright’s own manifestation: “My god is machinery.”⁴⁸ Wright believed that “[the] world of false forms spawned by anarchic mechanization -sprawling cities, overgrown institutions, inhuman

housing-”⁴⁹ are the enemies of efficient production and human values. Thus, he strived “to bring the true form”⁵⁰ through his designs, which he describes as a “plastic form of a genuine democracy”⁵¹. Wright’s ‘genuine democracy’ is distorted to Marcuse’s ‘democratic domination’ in *Gattaca* where *topos* develops into a panoptic structure. Body becomes an extension of the domain of power and individual appears under constant surveillance within the daily routine conveyed in the film. Power penetrates body in the guise of identity controls, entrance checks, substance tests thus collects information to suppress the subject. This kind of power, as Foucault suggests “must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather, as something which only functions in the form of a chain.”⁵² The ‘democracy’ of this dominion comes from the availability of information to the public, since the power that the information supplied by the body can be reached by anyone. It is as simple as to take a single hair to the nearest local geneticist. Thus, within the system, individuals become “not only its [powers] inert or consenting targets” but also appear as “the elements of its articulation.”⁵³ This form of power assures the unity and order within the system and forecloses all the places of Otherness creating a unitopia.

The Island is a film that can be discussed in regard with *Gattaca*. Both films open a ground to discuss the connection between the ‘bio-power’ of the new genetic technologies and their implications on fascism. In both cases, this allusion is implied through the reference of Nazis as it is discussed in the previous chapter. Similar to the world of *Gattaca*, in the diegetic world of *The*

Island, the ideology that technopoly supplies rationalizes democracy and thus, the discrimination against clones is legitimized through the authority that technological determinism provides. The body again appears as an object of power that is designed, even recreated, and kept under constant surveillance through the penetration of the ‘capillary’ form of power. The architecture of the Merrick Institute resembles Wright’s constructions; modern and minimalist in style, instituting unity and order.⁵⁴ Within the topos of the arcology, dominion is established through an effectively functioning state apparatus; the myth of the Island. Ideological hegemony is assured with the mechanism of lotteries and by the restriction of clones’ cognitive worlds. In the Merrick Institute, both conditioning of the body through bio-power and education as an administrative institution are at work in order to restrict the cognitive and physical progress of clones. Thus, clones kept unaware of the notions they lack, the notions that could provide them a critical position. The world of Merrick Institute realizes the ‘utopia’ of a perfectly governed system, which renders the exercise of overt power obsolete, and hence, creates a unitopia.

The Girl from Monday and *Code 46* also provide similar visions of unitopia. The representations of future urban space in these films are very limited in scope, which I believe, is mostly as result of the fact that they are low-budget independent films. The filmic space is mostly limited to personal spaces; inner spaces such as home and mostly work place. But in my opinion, this deficiency does not create a discrepancy; on the contrary it incorporates with the narrational style of the films. The films try to exhaust a coherent

depiction of the narrative through the fragmentation of scenes by repetitions, discontinuities in editing and other various devices. But nevertheless, the general look of the architectural space in these films is consistent with the visual style of other postcyberpunk films. This consistency becomes most apparent in the representation of work spaces. The buildings of Sphinx and Triple M, are modern buildings in Purist style, which enforces unity of form and function to its inhabitants.

Similar to the examples that I have previously examined, both in *Code 46* and in *The Girl from Monday* bio-power becomes one of the most important tools of the system. In the world of *The Girl from Monday* each individual is considered as an investment and social relations acquires an exchange value in the capitalist free market, increasing or decreasing one's personal value. Since sexual intercourse is conveyed as one of the most profitable ways of increasing personal value, body becomes a product and constantly reformed through the new technologies in order to pertain its desirability. As much as physical appearance, one's social status, personal history and income becomes crucial in the 'market place', thus the standardization of behavior by social norms is assured through the objectives of the 'revolution'. As a result, revolution and its policies becomes effectively functioning state apparatus and execute its power through a surveillance system based on permanent registration. In order to receive income, each individual voluntarily reports its own actions, using the barcodes they are tattooed. Thus, 'revolution's right to know personal value' is assured, and the power is perfected. Within this unitopia, The Triple M

Company -which appears in the film as the administrative power- intensifies its dominion by manipulating the counter-revolutionary movement. The system forecloses all the 'places for Otherness' by including the dissent to its domain of control.

The social system in *Code 46* does not have an apparent ideological apparatus functioning as it is in *The Girl from Monday*. The administrative power belongs to the Sphinx Company, which also appears as the policy maker. The decisions of Sphinx are not questioned, as it implied through the aphorism "Sphinx knows best." Sphinx executes its power with two ways. First, through an oppressive system of surveillance that incorporates bio-power. William - who is enhanced by a virus which makes him psychic and enables him to penetrate people's minds- becomes a tool of bio-power. Similarly Maria also becomes a tool of bio-power and executes this power onto herself by committing involuntary actions as a result of the virus she is injected. In the society of 'machine humans', the taboo of incest is not set by social norms, or religion, but obedience is assured through the laws of administrative power. The manipulation of body renders the need for 'overt exercise of power' unnecessary, and if, it becomes necessary, the unpleasant experience of the intervention can also be eliminated through manipulation; by memory implementation.

The second mechanism works through a strict spatial portioning which is based on a binary division of dwellers and misfits. Foucault remarks that in the disciplinary society the intensification of power is often sustained by

“binary divisions between one set of people and another, it called for multiple separations, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control.”⁵⁵ As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, the spatial portioning and binary divisions are accustomed in the world of postcyberpunk; valid/invalid in *Gattaca*, revolutionaries/ counter-revolutionaries in *The Girl from Monday*, city (dwellers) /desert (misfits) in *Code 46*, outside (the island) /inside (archeology) in *The Island*. Foucault declares that “all the authorities exercise individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding, (...) and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.) (sic)”⁵⁶

Maria and William escape in order to find a place that they can position their Otherness. They go to JebelAli, which is a place in the desert; somewhere that “you can be who ever you want as long as you want it enough” as Maria declares. The representation of the desert in the film as an Oriental topos, where chaos and disorder prevails, creates a heterotopia that is constituted as ‘outside’. But in the postcyberpunk unitopia all the places for Otherness are foreclosed by the execution of a perfected power. Although the desert is represented as a heterotopia, it is not represented as ‘outside the system,’ it is constituted as ‘outside’. System makes the heterotopia immanent through establishing its domain of power over the division desert/city. Thus, as it is in the *The Girl from Monday*, the place of Otherness is embodied within the

system and cannot function as a place that can be escaped from the domain of power.

While they try to escape this domain of power, William and Maria cannot avoid carrying that 'domain' within them, since their body is an extension of it. When they have sexual intercourse, the virus that Maria is injected gets activated. Maria calls Sphinx, reports her violence of Code 46 and locates herself so the Sphinx can catch them. As a result of their 'crime' Maria is left out in the desert since she is a woman who grew up in the desert, in exile, as a daughter of a 'misfit' family. Thus, she is delivered back to where she belongs, to the desert, among the misfits. Whereas, William is taken back 'in' by the power, his disobedience is considered as a virus malfunction. He gets 'repaired', his memories of the event are erased and he is 'relocated' within the system, where he belongs. As a result, the system decides who they are, how they are to be recognized, how their actions should be considered and how power should be exercised on them according to the binary divisions which characterize them.

Foucault states that: "All mechanisms of power, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him. (sic)"⁵⁷ In postcyberpunk, story develops around this 'abnormal' individual who struggles with the mechanism of power in order to open up a space for her/his Otherness. But as I have already declared, postcyberpunk depicts a unitopia where all the places of Otherness are foreclosed by a perfected system of

power. Even the hero cannot create a place for her/ his Otherness hence, like Maria and William, they strive to escape.

The escape theme repeats in all of the films as the hero strives to getaway to a utopic place which is often characterized with being 'unknown'. JebelAli in *Code46*, Titan in *Gattaca*, Monday in *The Girl From Monday* and 'somewhere' in *The Island*; they all appear as an unknown land where their identities and lives are not pre-determined by rigid social orders dominated by technology, but where everything can be possible since it is unknown. Somewhere that they can take their chance to be anyone they like, to love anybody they want. And not all of the films end as pessimistic as *Code 46*. In the other examples, the hero accomplishes to escape - except Jack who decides to stay for the reason that he became too much 'human' to go back to Monday, but nevertheless 'The Girl from Monday' takes her chance.-

All the three films; *Gattaca*, *The Girl from Monday* and *The Island* somehow end with a scene where the hero is in a ship, trying to escape to her/his utopia. In *Gattaca* we see Vincent in the spaceship, on his way to Titan; in *The Girl from Monday* we see 'The Girl from Monday' in the ocean, which also functions as a spaceship that maintains transportation to planet Monday; and in *The Island* we see Jordan and Lincoln sailing away in order to find a place where they can be equal with humans; with a boat named "Renavato", the Latin word for rebirth.

Foucault defines boat as the heterotopia *par excellence* and asserts that:

... if we think, after all, that boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over the infinity of the sea (...) the ship has not only been (...) the great instrument of the economic development, but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and police take the place of pirates.⁵⁸

Postcyberpunk preserves the same disquiet with Foucault and depicts a world where the adventures of cyberpunk pirates are taken place by a rigid system where power is perfected through the panopticon structures of new technologies. Postcyberpunk unitopias demonstrate distrust against cyberpunk heterotopias' conviction that recent technologies may initiate a democratic emancipation. In my opinion, this dismay carries an urgent warning for our day. I believe we should take this warning into consideration and try to understand how the imaginary world of cyberpunk turned into a place, where remains no space for neither resistance nor Otherness, only a receding hope to escape.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹ Carroll, Lewis. *Through the Looking Glass* [e-book]The MILENNIUM FULCRUM Edition (C)1991, Chapter I, Looking-Glass House, <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/metastuff/looking/ch1.html.gz>

² I will employ Foucault's term heterotopia both in order to analyze the representation of fictional spaces; topos in cyberpunk films and also, through its implications, as a generic term which does not only conventionalize a topos but also conventionalize a social community that inhabits that topos as well.

³ Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias*, 1967. <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>

⁴ *ibid.* p.2

⁵ *ibid.* p.3

⁶ Hetherington, Kevin. *The Badlands of Modernity :Heterotopia and Social Ordering*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) p. ix

⁷ The term Heterotopia has been used to define cyberpunk in different sources. I would like to attribute my source which inspired my understanding of heterotopia and its relation to cyberpunk as Russell, Conrad. "Dream and Nightmare in William Gibson's Architectures of Cyberspace" *Altitude* vol 2, 2002. <http://www.api-network.com/altitude/pdf/2/3.pdf>

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*p.8

¹⁰ Sterling, Bruce. "Preface From Mirrorshades" in *Storming The Reality Studio: A casebook of cyberpunk and postmodern science fiction*, ed. McCaffery, Larry. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991) p.345

¹¹ *ibid.* p.346

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.* p.347

¹⁴ Hetherington, Kevin. *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) p. 142

¹⁵ *ibid.* p.141

¹⁶ Bruno, Giuliana, "Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner" in *Alien Zone: cultural theory and contemporary science fiction cinema*, ed. Kuhn (London ; New York : Verso, 1996) p.185

¹⁷ Sterling, Bruce. "Preface From Mirrorshades" p.348

¹⁸ Cavallaro, Dani. *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture* (London: Athlone Press, 2000) p.180 *Original emphasis*

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.177

²⁰ Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias*, p.5

²¹ Cavallaro, Dani. *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture*, p. 179

²² From the documentary *No Maps For These Territories*, Dir. Mark Neale, 2000.

²³ Cavallaro, Dani. *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture*, p. 204.

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- ²⁴ *ibid.* p.181
- ²⁵ See Chapter 3, title *I remember therefore am 'I'?*
- ²⁶ Bruno, Giuliana, “Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner” p.184
- ²⁷ Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias*, p.4
- ²⁸ *ibid.* p. 4
- ²⁹ *ibid.* p.4
- ³⁰ *ibid.* p.4
- ³¹ Pyle, Forest. “Making Cyborgs, Making Humans” in *Cybercultures Reader*, ed. Bell, David, Kennedy, Barbara M. (London & New York: Routledge, 2002) p.132.
- ³² *ibid.*
- ³³ Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias*, p.6
- ³⁴ *ibid.* p.2
- ³⁵ Robins, Kevin. “Cyberspace and the World We Live In” in *Cyberspace Cyberbodies Cyberpunk*, ed. Featherstone, Mike, Burrows, Roger. (London: SAGE Publications, 1995) p.135
- ³⁶ *ibid.* p.136
- ³⁷ *ibid.* p.138
- ³⁸ Russell, Conrad. “Dream and Nightmare in William Gibson’s Architectures of Cyberspace” *Altitude* vol 2, 2002. p.7
<http://www.api-network.com/altitude/pdf/2/3.pdf>
- ³⁹ *ibid.* p.3
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.* p.11
- ⁴¹ Gibson, William. *Neuromancer* (London: Harper-Collins, 1995) p.51
- ⁴² I would like to attribute my source, and as doing so, express my gratitude to Tuna Erdem, my Thesis Supervisor, who coined the term ‘unitopia’.
- ⁴³ Staiger, Janet. “Future Noir: Contemporary Representations of Visionary Cities” in *Alien Zone II*, The original single quote emphasises refers to Mark R. Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare: H.G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 105
- ⁴⁴ Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p.38
- ⁴⁵ Foucault, Michel. *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) p.195
- ⁴⁶ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* tr. Alan Steiridan (London: Penguin Books, 1991) p. 195
- ⁴⁷ Burkitt, Ian. “The Body as Object: From the Grotesque to the Closed Body” in *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity* (London ; Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE, c1999) p. 45
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from, Fishman, Robert. *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1994) p. 108
- ⁴⁹ *ibid.* p.95
- ⁵⁰ *ibid.* p.94
- ⁵¹ *ibid.* p.94

⁵² Foucault, Michel. *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings* p.39

⁵³ *ibid.* p.98

⁵⁴ In the previous chapter, I had declared that *The Island* distinguishes from the other postcyberpunk examples through its depiction of two different worlds: the one that is inside the Merrick Institute; the technopolic one, and the one that is outside the institute; a technocratic one -a world which our knowledge about its existence remains restricted until the middle of the film.- Within the frame of this chapter, I will analyze only one of these worlds; the technopolic one, the one inside the Merrick Institute which follows the convention of postcyberpunk topos and resonates unitopia.

⁵⁵ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* p. 195

⁵⁶ *ibid.* p. 199

⁵⁷ *ibid.* p. 199

⁵⁸ Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces: Heterotopias*, p.8

CONCLUSION

“...Heterotopia spaces, that through their relationship to other spaces, represents modes of alternate social ordering that have come to be taken as some of the conditions of modernity. (...) We come to think of the space of modernity as being exemplified by Bentham’s utopian ideal of the panopticon and of so-called great confinement of the mad and criminal during the eighteenth century, associated with the Enlightenment thinking of that era. However, through difference, utopias are expressed as modes of ordering rather than orders. The gap remains a gap that has no ontological ground no matter how hard people may strive to close that gap.”

Kevin Hetherington from
*The Badlands of Modernity*¹

The fictional world of cyberpunk has been acclaimed for mirroring the variances of its era with an intricate detail. Although it was a short lived genre, as Bukatman states, “its impact has been felt, and its techniques absorbed, across a range of media and cultural formations.”² Considered to be the epitome of 1980’s milieu, cyberpunk has also been subjected to a considerable amount of academic study. Roger Burrows argues that cyberpunk fiction transgresses the sharp boundary between fiction and social theory³, a boundary that was appointed by Haraway as “an optical illusion.”⁴ My attempt to analyze the transformation in the imaginary world of films from cyberpunk to postcyberpunk follows this argument and hopes to provide and insight about the evolution and reception of cyberculture through the 1980s to the 1990s.

It can be argued that cyberpunk was all about transgressed boundaries - the boundaries between SF and social theory or human and machine, virtual and real... Juxtaposition of inconsistent fragments gives cyberpunk its bleak energy, and provides the dynamics of its fictional world which escalates between the center and the EDGE. I have argued that the speed of this escalation began to be slowed down by the 1990s as a result of the establishment of new technologies. Consequently a new genre emerged within cyberpunk (circa 1991) which developed quietly until it was detected by Lawrence Person as *postcyberpunk*.

In my opinion, what brought world wide attention to cyberpunk was depended on its success of establishing an organic bound with the milieu that it was emerged. Cyberpunk was responding back to 1980s, keeping its dialog constantly alive. I believe, postcyberpunk is an outcome of this conversation and it also responds back to 1990s, as much as cyberpunk did to 1980s.

I have also argued that the introduction of Personal Computer's (PC) to the market in 1981 was one of the primary factors that started cyberpunks 'conversation'. Arguably, the opening up of World Wide Web (www) to public use in 1993 can be regarded as equally important factor in the transformation of culture and emergence of postcyberpunk. With the introduction of PCs techno culture became the popular culture, with the introduction of www, virtual culture. The implications of this change can also be discussed over Arthur Kroker's determination on virtual culture. Arthur Kroker suggests that

“twentieth century ends with the growth of cyberauthoritarianism”⁵ giving rise to a new system, what he calls *virtual capitalism*.

According to Kroker, virtual capitalism is the system of a “fully realized technological society;”⁶ a *technotopia* where “technology mutates into virtuality.”⁷ This technological society “which has no social origins”⁸ can be described “under the sign of possessed individualism: an invasive power where life is enfolded within the dynamic technological language of virtual reality.”⁹ Kroker’s assertion is based on the proliferation of internet as a commerce work, creating “not a wired culture, but a virtual culture that is wired shut.”¹⁰ Kroker’s *technotopia* resembles Postman’s technopoly in many aspects and may provide another possible look at postcyberpunk; a way that I didn’t have much chance to discuss within the framework of this thesis.

Both Kroker’s and Postman’s visions are based on an observation on our contemporary culture and appoint that technologies relations with power have increasingly become dominant in our society. What Kroker suggested through ‘cyberauthoritarianism’ or Postman suggested through ‘technopoly’-totalitarian technocracy as he puts it-, lays emphasis on a repressive system of governess where individual is possessed and becomes the both the ‘subject’ and the object of ‘power’ that is derived from technology.

Postcyberpunk unitopia reflects these concerns to a fictional world which is emplaced in ‘not too distant future’. In the social system of postcyberpunk societies, *technopoly* becomes effectively functioning ideological apparatus and eliminates any possibility of progressive politics.

Social progress is equated with technological progress and human progress is limited with productivity and efficiency. The cognitive world of the society is disposed to sustain a profound belief in machine as a controlling metaphor, and human machines of postcyberpunk becomes the tool of control and power. Postcyberpunk emplaces its stories in this ‘perfectly’ governed society in order to respond back to cyber utopianism. I believe, postcyberpunk unitopia points the gap which Hetherington states, between the utopics -that are expressed as modes of ordering- and the order; a gap which will remain as a gap no matter how hard people may strive to close it.

I had declared that we should take the warning which postcyberpunk unitopia states into consideration. But by saying this I do not intend to take a technophobic stance. I do not propose that eliminating technology from our lives would be the alternative, and neither the films do. The places that the heroes of the stories escapes –desert, ocean or some extraterrestrial unknown land- are not the substitutes of ‘nature’; and postcyberpunk do not follow its ancestor’s common tendency of suggesting a natural, uncivilized life to prevent the oncoming dystopia. The places of escape appear as heterotopia spaces in postcyberpunk and thus, suggests that we should leave the ‘gaps’ open.

Thus, instead of Postman who suggests that in order to prevent *technopoly* we should “keep our hearts close to the narratives and symbols of an honorable humanistic tradition”¹¹; I will rather take my second guide’s, Foucault’s advice. Foucault writes:

I am not looking for an alternative... You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions, and that's the reason why I don't accept the word "alternative." I would like to do genealogy of problems, of *problematiques*. My point is not that everything is bad. But that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger.¹²

Postcyberpunk unitopia's asserts that the unprecedented innovation of technology is *dangerous*, 'which is not exactly the same as bad', thus we have to do something in order to shelter the gaps, the interzones -which cyberpunks were found of- where modes of alternate social orderings can be imagined and reflected to a no-place, to a good place, to a utopia.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

¹ Hetherington, Kevin. *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) p.142

² Bukatman, Scott. *Terminal Identity*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002). p.137

³ Burrows, Roger. "Cyberpunk as Social Theory: William Gibson and the Sociological Imagination" *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) p.238

⁴ Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century" in *Cybercultures Reader*, ed. Bell, David, Kennedy, Barbara M. (London & New York: Routledge, 2002) p.18

⁵ Kroker, Arthur. "Virtual Capitalism" in *Technoscience and cyberculture*, ed. Aronowitz, Martinsons, Menser, Rich. (New York: Routledge, 1996) p.167

⁶ *ibid.* p.168

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.* p.171

⁹ Kroker, Arthur. *The Possessed Individual* (New York: St. Martin's Press: 1992) p.2

¹⁰ *ibid.* p.6

¹¹ Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, (New York : Vintage Books) 1993 p.123

¹² Foucault, Michel. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Joseph Rouse, (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.112

Filmography

Code 46, 2003

Production Companies: British Broadcasting Corporation
Revolution Films

Producer: Andrew Eaton

Line Producer: Rosa Romero

Executive Producers: Robert Jones
David M. Thompson

Director: Michael Winterbottom

Script: Frank Cottrell Boyce

Directors of Photography: Alwin H. Kuchler
Marcel Zyskind

Editor: Peter Christelis

Production Designer: Inbal Weinberg

Music: Steve Hilton
David Holmes
Chris Martin

Cast:

William Geld: Tim Robbins

Maria Gonzales: Samantha Morton

Running Time: 92 minutes

Gattaca, 1997

Production Companies: Columbia Pictures Corporation

Jersey Films

Producers:

Danny DeVito

Michael Shamberg

Stacey Sher

Associate Producer:

Joshua Levinson

Georgia Kacandes

Co-producers:

Gail Lyon

Director:

Andrew Niccol

Script:

Andrew Niccol

Director of Photography:

Slawomir Idziak

Editor:

Lisa Zeno Churgin

Production Designer:

Jan Roelfs

Music:

Michael Nyman

Cast:

Vincent Freeman:

Ethan Hawke

Irene Cassini:

Uma Thurman

Jerome Eugene Morrow:

Jude Law

Anton Freeman:

Loren Dean

Running Time: 101 minutes

Girl from Monday, 2005

Production Companies:	Possible Films The Monday Company
Producers:	Steve Hamilton Hal Hartley
Associate producer:	Lisa Porter
Director:	Hal Hartley
Script:	Hal Hartley
Director of Photography:	Sarah Cawley
Editor:	Steve Hamilton
Production Designer:	Inbal Weinberg
Music:	Hal Hartley
Cast:	
Jack:	Bill Sage
Cecile:	Sabrina Lloyd
The Girl From Monday:	Tatiana Abracos
William:	Leo Fitzpatrick

Running Time: 84 minutes

The Island, 2005

Production Companies:	DreamWorks SKG Warner Bros. Parkes/MacDonald Productions
Producers:	Michael Bay Ian Bryce Walter F. Parkes
Associate Producers:	Kenny Bates, Matthew Cohan Heidi Fugeman, Josh McLaglen, Steven P. Saeta
Executive Producer:	Laurie MacDonald
Director:	Michael Bay
Script:	Caspian Tredwell-Owen Alex Kurtzman Roberto Orci Caspian Tredwell-Owen (story)
Director of Photography:	Mauro Fiore
Editors:	Paul Rubell Christian Wagner
Production Designer:	Nigel Phelps
Music:	Steve Jablonsky
Cast:	
Lincoln Six Echo/Tom Lincoln:	Ewan McGregor
Jordan Two Delta/Sarah Jordan:	Scarlett Johansson
Albert Laurent:	Djimon Hounsou
Merrick:	Sean Bean
McCord:	Steve Buscemi
Running Time:	136 minutes

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. USA, 1982.
Brainstorm. Dir. Douglas Trumbull. USA, 1983.
Brazil. Dir. Terry Gilliam. UK, 1985.
Bubble Gum Crisis. Dir. Katsuhito Akiyama. Japan, 1987.
Circuitry Man. Dir. Steven Lovy. USA, 1990.
Clockwork Orange. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. UK, 1971.
Dark City. Dir. Alex Proyas. USA, 1998.
Ghost in the Shell. Dir. Shirow Masamune. Japan & UK, 1997.
Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence. Dir. Mamoru Oshii. Japan 2004.
Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex. Dir. Kenji Kamiyama. Japan, 2002.
Hackers. Dir. Iain Softley. USA, 1995.
Hardware. Dir. Richard Stanley. UK, 1990.
Johnny Mnemonic. Dir. Robert Longo. USA & Canada, 1995.
Liquid Sky. Dir. Slava Tsukerman. USA, 1982.
Max Headroom. Dir. Annabel Jankel & Rocky Morton. UK, 1985.
New Rose Hotel. Dir. Abel Ferrara. USA, 1998.
No Maps For These Territories, Mark Neale, UK, 2000
Strange Days. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. USA, 1995.
The City of Lost Children. Dir. Marc Caro. France & Germany & Spain, 1995.
The Lawnmower Man. Dir. Brett Leonard. UK & USA & Japan, 1992.
The Matrix Trilogy. Dir. Wachowski Brothers. USA, 1999/ 2003.
Total Recall. Dir. Paul Verhoeven. USA, 1990.
Tron. Dir. Steven Lisberger. USA & Taiwan, 1982.
Until the End of the World. Dir. Wim Wenders. Germany & France & Australia, 1991.
Videodrome. Dir. David Cronenberg. Canada & USA, 1983.
WarGames. Dir. John Badham. USA, 1983.

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APPENDIX I

Gattaca

In the world of *Gattaca* -which is in “not too distant future”- almost every member of the society is genetically designed. Human condition is enhanced by genetic technology; life expectancy and disease probability are ascertained at birth. Members of the society are subjected to a new kind of discrimination which is not determined by their race, ethnicity or gender but according to their genes. It is called genoism: “A new type of discrimination down to a science” as Vincent, the hero of the film, defines.

Vincent (Ethan Hawke) is a young man who is one of the last babies conceived in natural ways. A “God’s child” as it is called in the film. Because of his heart condition he has a life expectancy of thirty years and therefore marked as an “invalid” member of the society. He has no chance to compete with the genetically superior “valid” members therefore has no chance to have a career. Vincent’s voice over tells us: “Maybe it was the love of the planets, or maybe it was my growing dislike for this one. But as long as I can remember, I have dreamed of going to space.”

In order to escape his destiny written by the laws of genoism, Vincent hides his own identity and barrows Jerome Morrow’s (Jude Law) who used to be a professional swimmer with a perfect genetic profile. After a car accident,

he became handicapped and decides to loan his identity to Vincent in order to make a living.

Vincent pretends to be Jerome, by using Jerome's blood and urine samples, his hair, his skin particles as if they are his own, and passes the routine gene tests. They two collaborate and Vincent accomplishes to become an employee of Gattaca, a space navigation company where only the elite members of the society are accepted. The elitism in question is determined by the genes of the candidates. Higher genetic profile guaranties success.

Vincent falls in love with one of his colleagues, Irene (Uma Thurman) who is also genetically designed but unexpectedly has a heart condition like Vincent at birth. They start to have an affair. But their relation does not last long, because Vincent achieves his life long desire to leave World. Although the death of one of his superiors and the consequent investigation of this murder case gives Vincent very hard times, he manages to be acquitted and at the end of the film and got chosen for a highly prestigious assignment to *Titan*; a moon of Saturn which is covered with thick clouds, showing no hint of what lies beneath.

APPENDIX 2

Code 46

In the world of *Code 46*, which is set in a near future, over populated cities are surrounded with deserts and can be accessed only through strictly controlled checkpoints. Non citizens need ‘papellas’ to enter cities; a united form of insurance coverage, passport and visa which is supplied by the insurance company *Sphinx*. Without the permission of Sphinx people are not allowed to travel. The ones who do not have papellas, the criminals, rebels and all kind of people who do not fit in society, are left out to live in the deserts under most primitive conditions. The main character of the film, William (Tim Robbins) is a family man with a little son. He works for *Sphinx*, as an investigator.

While he was investigating a ‘papella fraud’ case in Shanghais, he has an affair with Maria (Samantha Morton), who is a suspect of the case William is investigating. Soon they find out that their relation is a violation of Code 46, a law which aims to prevent genetically incestuous reproduction. He realizes that they are genetically fifty percentages identical with Maria, meaning his lover is a clone of his mother. William escapes Maria, and together, they go to JebelAli, an Eastern city in the desert. At the end of the film, they get caught by Sphinx, William is brought back to his family and his memories of Maria get erased, whereas Maria left out in the desert without a papella and with her memories.

APPENDIX 3

The Girl from Monday

The world of *The Girl from Monday* is set in a not-too distant future in the city of New York. America has just been liberated by *Triple M (Major Multimedia Monopoly)*. Triple M promotes, even enforces conformism, consumerism and personal autonomy to society. Every citizen has a barcode tattoo on their wrist which substitutes both an identity and a credit card. Every personal act should be registered in order to get concurrence from government using these barcodes. Spontaneous acts, even sexual intercourse, without registration are strictly prohibited. People provide monetary point values through appropriate registered acts (including sexual intercourse) and they increase their personal credits.

The hero of the film Jack Bell (Bill Sage) is an employee of Triple M, who actually propounded the monetary personal credit system (the revolution as it is called in the film.) He suffers because of the social degeneration he caused and he secretly leads the Counter Revolution movement which consists of a bunch of misfit teenagers. The chief operator of the movement, a 17 year old high school student William (Leo Fitzpatrick) meets with Cecile (Sabrina Lloyd), who is a colleague of Jack, and they have unregistered sexual intercourse. Cecile gets arrested and sent to teach in William's high school in order to complete her 'two years of hard labor' sentence as an educator.

Meanwhile Jack finds a woman who came through the ocean and claims that she is coming from planet Monday. She states, that she came to find one of her people who came to Earth long ago. After a series of events which also involves Cecile and William, it is revealed that it is Jack who the girl from Monday is looking for. But Jack does not believe that it is possible to go back. 'The Girl from Monday' decides to try anyway. She goes to the ocean and at the end of the film, it is left uncertain if she succeeds or not.

APPENDIX 4

The Island

In the mid 21st century, the whole planet is contaminated and every living form on Earth became extinct. The survivals reside in an *arcology*, a self-contained complex with a built environment. The life in arcology is strictly controlled by high-tech surveillance systems. Any type of personal autonomy or any kind of personal intimacy among residents is prohibited. They all wear the same kind of uniforms, eat the same kind of meals, sleep in the same kind of cells and work as laborers. The health condition of every resident is cautiously monitored with routine tests. Every member of this society looks healthy and happy. They seem to be unaware of the notions they are missing, such as love, freedom or individualism; the society is portrayed almost utopian. The biggest event in their life is a routine lottery which is to determine the lucky resident who will move to the *Island*; the last uncontaminated spot on earth.

The hero of the film *Lincoln Six-Echo* (Ewan McGregor) is an ordinary resident. He has unexplained and mutual feelings for Jordan Two-Delta (Scarlett Johansson). Jordan gets elected in the lottery but Lincoln begins to suspect that something about this lottery is fatally wrong.

After a series of events, they together discover that they are human clones and the arcology is an institute built under the desert, which gives cloning service for high class customers. Clones are used when the customer

requires a substitute organ, which means there have never been an Island and the clones who are elected in the lottery goes to death instead of the Island. At the end of the film, with the help of Jordan Two-Delta, Lincoln Six-Echo manages to replace himself with Tom Lincoln (the human that he is cloned) and reveals the truth to the other clones and helps them to escape.