

EP<sub>SA</sub>

452

**Setting:**  
an architecture for a narrative



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# Setting:

an architecture for a narrative

*This is the act of a mental decomposition for a reconstruction of some sort of knowledge and a regurgitation of what is yet passes unnoticed, deeply hidden within the expanse of the folds of all thought.*

## KEY PHRASES:

*Many languages humans use, are defective. | English is a defective language. | All humans in this thesis will be referred to as male.*

*Male is a notion constructed by humans. | Designating male and female does not serve the discussion in this thesis, therefore it will be disregarded.*

*Things are more subjective or less subjective from the human perspective. | The human perspective is the only perspective we have. | This thesis is therefore subjective.*

*This thesis is a rational piece of writing based on a particular human's perspective. | This is only a contribution to the nation of thoughts. | This is only a set of interactive exchange of thoughts between the author and his thesis: a play of sentences linked only by the flimsy thread of logic.*

# Table of Contents:

**Preface**

**Illustration list**

**Acknowledgments**

**an Abstract**

**Introduction: Architecture and the narrative**

A - Definition of a narrative

B - Construction of the narrative space in the Mind

C - Architecture in the Narrative

**Chapter I: a Study**

B – Examples of Spatial Media

1 – Architectural drawings

2 – Comics

3 – Film

4 – Video Game: cyberspace

C – Architects and Visionary Architecture

1 – Defining the architect

2 – Visionary architecture

3 – Piranesi and Esline

4 - Thesis question

D – Science-Fiction

1 – Definition Science-Fiction

2 – Recognizing a Science-Fiction

3 – Definition Cyberpunk

4 - Anatomy of Dystopia

5 – Definition Steampunk

6 – Machine Architecture

E - User Group

F- Rules

## Chapter II: a Construction

- A - The Becarre
- B - The cycle of life
- C - The blocking of the awareness
- D - Vazrig Lutski's background and information
- E - Sayatnova
  - 1- An approach to constructing Sayatnova:
    - Imagery
    - Cognitive maps
    - Mental representation of city environments
  - 2 - the construction of Sayatnova architecturally
  - 3 - example: the naked city
- F - The Rebels
- G - The aboveground and its underground
  - 1 - Description
  - 2 - Architectural Inspirations

## an Epilogue

## Bibliography / Filmography

## Appendix

- Information
- History of a construction
- Story Map
- The life history of Vazrig Lutski







## Preface

Usually, I am tempted to read a preface after finishing the book. Then, it becomes a sort of a test to see if I understood the author's claims before being prepared for it from the start. So, I suppose my reader would also take the liberty of reading this book in whichever direction he prefers.

The way I visualize this process of reading, is that, when one reads, the text becomes a field on which one can grow more things: just a start point - it becomes a setting for the reader to build on and interact with.

The text will no longer be just the creation of the author. It then becomes the product of both the reader and the author: the reader processes the written text of the author and imagines through and from it.

When it is written, it becomes a shared unit, and when shared, the process should not be misunderstood as the literal translation of thought from reader to receiver, but more of a reconstruction of a desired intention set forth by the writer, perceived by the reader. So, to communicate thoughts more clearly, the writer should employ tools of communication that effectively correspond to the material conversed.

This is no longer the death of the author. We have passed that age where we remove something in order to explain the existence of something else. A product is the result of the maker and the user together. We are all thinking minds, we compliment each other's thoughts and by doing so, we contribute to what I'd like to call the *nation of thoughts*. It's really not that far from the *kingdom of ends* in Kant's philosophy:

This concept of a *nation of thoughts*, only puts a label to an existent communal thinking tank that is of interest in this thesis. It is the concept of intellectual exchange between the producers and consumers of knowledge and ideas delineating a cycle of thinking in context. This means that the nation of thoughts is the whole spectrum of human knowledge, it is the set of precursors including all produced sensory media. It is a reference to the treasury of human knowledge into which every thinking person picks from and pitches into, thus becoming a member of this nation.

This thesis puts this concept of information exchange at its most crucial pillar. It is a discussion of work, defining it as a constantly evolving entity. The following text takes a chunk of communication, the narrative genre, and delves into its accuracy of communication. It creates a cohesive bond between the actual writing of the narrative, with its spatial and architectural construction and implication. It chooses space as a highlighted tool of communication and acts as a constant argument of spatial relevance in storytelling.

In fact, when I was discussing this thesis with my younger brother, he told me: "Remember that piece of writing that I handed to you to read? You cannot believe how much time I spent figuring out how I wanted the ambience and space to be so I can work my story in it." He seemed extremely

happy. The thesis made sense to him. He said: "Sometimes when I read, I feel like I'm not following the author. It feels like the author is skipping details of the environment or missing the point." My brother then asked: "So? you want to make a real setting? with doors and all?" He wasn't the first to ask this – a point that I found quite interesting.

No. If a design is ment for the imagined world, the only place it can exist is the imagined world itself. It is not as if we don't have means to express the imagined world in the real world we live in. We have been doing this, as humans, since our early days on earth. We are experts in the domain of expression. We have been creating diverse media to express: image (painting, drawing, comics, photograph, sculpture), sounds (words, language, novels, scripts, telling stories), moving images (movies, video games, animations), performance (stage, theater, acting), etc...

When I look at all these media, it is impossible for me to ignore that all of them have spatial qualities. There could be no surprise in finding architects, these specialists of spatial expression, who look for further expression, through the use of these diverse media. The architect and the narrative stand on the same ground.

The following will be an exploration of the array of spatial qualities that an architect can offer to the narrative via the process of narration, as opposed to a later adaptation of an existing storyline.

## Illustration list and references

Ennis House ground floor plan, by Frank Lloyd Wright, at Los Angeles, California, 1923.  
Source: [www.greatbuildings.com](http://www.greatbuildings.com), visited Jan. 25, 2010.

bath house interior depicting the spatial relationship between the bathing quarters and the entrance.  
Source: *The Art of Miyazaki's Spirited Away*, P31

cross-section of the bath house  
Source: *The Art of Miyazaki's Spirited Away*, P31

Shared Hot Spring Bath at Chojukan  
Source: [www.japaneseguesthouses.com](http://www.japaneseguesthouses.com), visited Jan. 25, 2010

Arima Onsen, Kobe, Taiko no Yudonokan Museum, showing Hideyoshi's bath house. Photo Ad Blankestijn  
Source: [www.japannavigator.com](http://www.japannavigator.com), visited Jan. 25, 2010

Entrance of the ryokan - the segregated baths are located in the ground floor of the building on the right.  
Source: [www.secret-japan.com](http://www.secret-japan.com), visited Jan. 25, 2010

the nightless bath house  
Source: *The Art of Miyazaki's Spirited Away*, P92

ryokan bath house interior  
Source: [www.secret-japan.com](http://www.secret-japan.com), visited Dec. 13, 2009

Hobbiton, hobbit holes by Alan Lee  
Source: *The Art of the Lord of the Rings*, p.64

Bag End by John Howe  
Source: *Fantasy art workshop*, p.113

Bag End by John Howe  
Source: *Fantasy art workshop*, p.113

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Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Untitled etching (called "The Pier with Chains"), plate XVI

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Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Untitled etching (called "The Smoking Fire"), plate VI

Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), visited Jan 25, 2010

Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Untitled etching (called "The Drawbridge"), plate VII

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Steamboy

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Machinarium

Source: [www.gamespot.com](http://www.gamespot.com), visited Dec. 23, 2010

12 Monkeys and Neomechanical Tower (upper) chamber

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David Trautrimas

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The Naked City

Source: *The Situationist City*, 1998

Coldsnap, Stephan Martiniere

Source: *Quantumscapes*, p.70

Ravnica: island forest, Stephan Martiniere

Source: *Quantumscapes*, p.69

Gothic City, Donato Giancola

Source: *Spectrum13*, p.57

Ravnica: box art plains, Stephan Martiniere

Source: *Quantumscapes*, p. 68

Travel, Khang Le

Source: *The Skillful Huntsman*, p.47

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This thesis wouldn't have come to light without the hopeful and optimistic few people who have been patient enough to try and follow a line of thoughts that was being very clumsily put forth to them either by written or spoken words.

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## an Abstract

In the following text, the narrative is brought forth as one of the important entities of the human world containing spatial experiences and therefore architecture.

In order for us, architects, to be able to tackle this space – as the creation of space and, above all, spatial experiences, are the architect's first and foremost job – one needs to first study and understand the nature and requirements of the narrative space.

After conducting this study, I have reached to a set of important notions around which a narrative, and especially a science fiction narrative, evolves.

Using these notions as a methodology of approaching the narrative space, I have started the construction of a narrative with the aid of two other co-creators: Varak Karakashian, a second year architect who has been following science fiction narratives for some time and his friend, Irayr Kalemkerian who is a student of theater and who also has a great interest in science fiction narratives.

We started constructing this science fiction narrative, by using the notions that came from the research, where each of us took a specific role in the construction of the narrative:  
character design (Irayr),  
action design (Varak) and;  
environment design (myself).

In this text, I describe the constructed narrative and put forth an exploration of the architecture that is required for it.





Introduction:

Architecture and the narrative

A - Definition of a narrative

B - Construction of the narrative space  
in the Mind

C - Architecture in the Narrative



# Introduction: Architecture and the narrative

*"We're part of a story, part of a tale, we're all on this journey,  
no one's to stay  
wherever it's going, what is the way."  
- Within Temptation*

*The imaginary world is as important: spatially, socially and humanly, just as the real world - the one we happen to live in. The narrative is one such generator of imaginary worlds, imaginary spaces. The narrative is constructed in the human mind and then, it is translated into the world we live in, through what we call "media", intermediary elements that we use as link between ourselves and others, in world we live in.*

## Narrative

Many architects use the narrative as a tool for their design. Most architects would say that architecture in itself holds narratives. Adding to this, a number of authors have addressed buildings as constructive characters in their novels, instead of static sets in which actions happen.

'Howard's End' (1910) is a novel written by E.M. Forster. It deals with an English country house called Howards End and its influence on the lives of the idealistic and intellectual Schlegel sisters, the wealthy and materialistic Wilcox family, and the poor bank clerk Leonard Bast. Going through this work, the reader feels the importance of the mansion through the way the characters of the narrative mention it in their dialogue. The house is addressed as one would address a third person party in a dialogue, raising it from the status of an object to the status of an equal to human.

Narratives are a construction of three main elements bound by their interaction within a plot. There are the characters, which are the main actors in a narrative, that undergo specific actions within a designated spatial reference, the setting. More or less, all narratives use these components to produce their respective messages. The emphasis of one elements over the others differs from a narrative to another, depending on the genre of message being translated, and the user-groups in question.

## Construction of the narrative space in the mind

A person exposed to a narrative experiences "space" through this narrative: one is exposed to a narrative, through a given representational media (film, video game, comic, novel, theater, etc.), and through this exposure, one constructs their own mental representational image of that environment (Barkowsky:2002,11), in order to make sense out of the narrative.

In the example of Blade Runner (1986), Ridley Scott uses Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis Brown House to shoot the scenes of both the detective Deckard's apartment and the indoors of the large and

prosperous Tyrell Corporation. Although the scenes are shot in a house that is a specifically planned house, what the viewer gathers through watching this film is a completely different spatial arrangement and geographical disposition. Not only so, but by using the language of the Mayan motives of the Ennis Brown House's walls, the director creates a visual language that communicates to the viewer a distinction between New and Old architecture in the city (Neumann:c1996,148). The New and Old architecture gives a layer of credibility to the film which directly qualifies it as a successful film, because the viewer can distinguish the naturally present historical layers of the city and can grasp it, or more accurately construct the space in his mind and relate to it. "When we tell a story, we typically want the audience to become lost in the imaginary world of the narrative and enter a state of flow." (Glassner:2004,348)

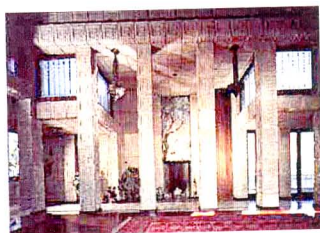


fig.1 Ennis Brown House by Frank Lloyd Wright

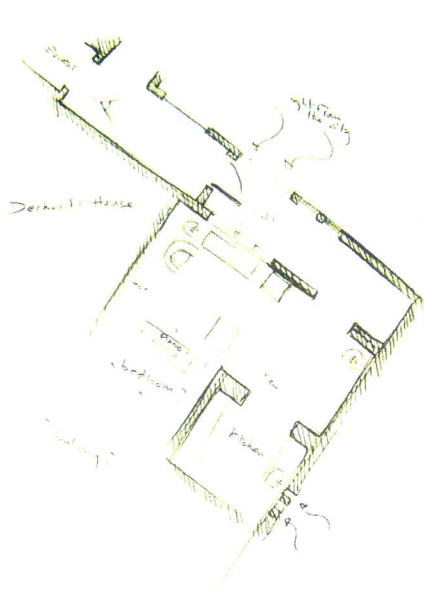


fig.4 Blade Runner - sketch depicting spatial reconstruction

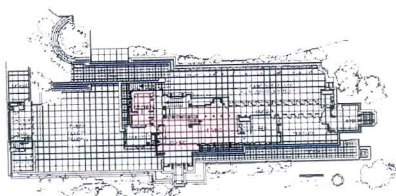


fig.2 Ennis Brown House - ground floor plan



fig.3 Blade Runner - stills

It is actually through this ability of constructing mental spaces and images that storytelling and make-belief games are one of the most important things for children (Wang:2009). It is an early learning tool that helps them understand the world we live in (G. Singer, L. Singer:1990,19-20). It is like a mental exercise for constructing references of spaces and objects and memorizing spaces and objects. From this perspective, constructing the space of the narrative becomes very similar to the mental activity where we construct the image of the space we live in when we need to reason/think of this space. In fact, perceiving and conjuring mental images/objects both activate the same area of the brain (Richardson:1999,50). “Both the use and the phenomenal experience of visual imagery depend upon a system of visuo-spatial working memory that contains a visual buffer in which images can be constructed on the basis of information about the appearance of physical objects held in long-term memory” (Richardson:1999,75)

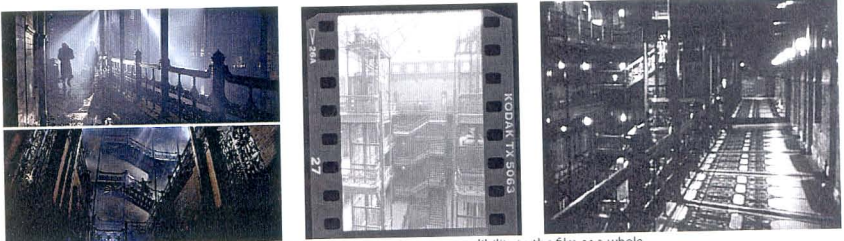


fig.5 the Bradbury Building in L.A. used in Blade Runner as a layer that gives credibility to the film as a whole.

On a further level of thought about the image, Sartre describes that “the image is considered as an isolated phenomenon. [...] I can, at will, imagine a horse, a tree, a house. And yet if we accept the illusion of immanence, we are necessarily led to constitute the world of the mind from objects very similar to those of the external world and which, simply, obey different immanence. [W]hether I perceive or imagine that chair, the object of my perception and that of my image are identical: it’s that straw-bottomed chair on which I sit. It is simply that consciousness is related to this same chair in two different ways. [...] In both cases, it aims at the chair in its concrete individuality, in its corporeality. Only in one case, the chair is ‘encountered’ by the consciousness; in the other, it is not. But the chair is not in consciousness. Not even as an image. [It is] relating directly to the existing chair and whose inner essence is precisely to relate in such-and-such a manner to the existing chair.” He states that by observing an object I can see one part of it at a time. But when I think of it, I think of it as a whole. Thus, the object I imagine cannot teach me new things. I cannot explore it while the observed object has always a hidden part that I can observe and learn from. “In perception knowledge is formed slowly, in image, knowledge is immediate.” (Sartre:2004,5-12)

Following from these, it becomes obvious that the architecture of the imagined environments of a narrative is as important as the architecture of the world we live in: both are, equally, generators of experiences, memories, impressions in/of space, shifting from the limelight the relevance of the “reality” of the space where an impression is generated. The role of architecture here can legitimately shift from one that caters to a sheltering spatial need, to another that has at its core, a gregarious position to generate mood. The architecture becomes a signifier as opposed to a sanctuary. Its

context becomes the narrative, where its liability to that context implements its capacity in the action of telling the story.

At this stage, it is reasonable to elaborate more on the question: what is a narrative? A narrative is generally defined as a story, or a part of a story. "Narration refers to the way that a story is told, and so belongs to the level of discourse" (Dino:2006).

I would define the narrative as a specific type of sequences of thoughts that are constructed in the mind of an individual, and, are later expressed – just as is the case of any other type of thought – through some media of expression. And it is through these media that the narrative becomes a shared entity between humans.

Stories are an important part of our lives. [...] Some of our stories are very personal: "The story of our life" isn't just a metaphor, but something we actually tell to ourselves and other people to give shape and meaning to who we are.

Everyone of us tells stories everyday. These aren't of the formally scripted and produced variety, but the kind that we make up as we go: we tell what we've done, and how other people responded. We're all natural storytellers and story audiences. [And a]uthors who study the craft are able to raise storytelling from this informality to a more universal level, where their stories have meaning to large numbers of people. Stories as old as Hamlet and as recent as Star Wars, have captured the imaginations of millions of people all over the world. (Glassner:c2004,3-4)

## Architecture in the narrative

Narratives are told/expressed through media such as theater, novels, movies, animations, comics, video games, paintings, architecture, etc. Some narratives rely heavily on the architecture of their environment and need to enrich their built environment. The following are a few examples where the environment of a narrative had to be studied carefully in order to support the narrative's two other components: the characters and the set of actions.

### a – Lord of the Rings – a novel

First example we'll pick is the well known fantasy book of J.R.R. Tolkien: The Lord of the Rings. In this story happening in Middle Earth – a constructed universe – we chance upon diverse races (elves, humans, hobbits, orcs, etc.) and groups. Accordingly, the author not only devises languages for each of these diverse races but also constructs certain cultures that distinguishes them even more according to their habits and their nature. Architecture of each of these different groups becomes primordial in this narrative, as a means of expression of these particular cultures.

Let's take the example of the Hobbits, a certain race in the narrative. Hobbits enjoy their food and have light hearts. They are very attached to their land that produces crops and feeds them, so much so that they live in houses that are built under the hills. The inside is devised according to their habits that mainly evolve around food, serving of food and storage of food and creating a warm and happy environment.

*It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, like paneled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hills as all the people for many miles round called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries, wardrobes, kitchens, dining rooms, all were on the same floor and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were on the left-hand, for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down the river. (The Hobbit: there and back again by J.R.R. Tolkien)*



fig.6 Hobbit Holes by Alan Lee

fig.7 Bag End by John Howe

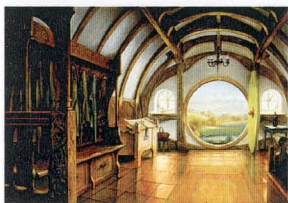


fig.8 Bag End Interior by John Howe

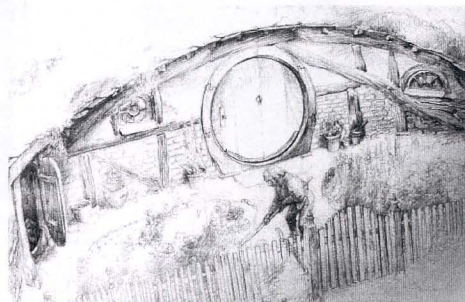


fig.9 Hobbiton by Alan Lee

In contrast to the hobbits, the Elves, who are a high race of crafts and lore, live in lavishly decorated and magical places that are hidden from sight. They cherish beauty above all. While, the Orcs, who are the deformed elves – somewhat their opposite in nature – who have degraded into a horrible form and who cannot withstand the light of day, live in dark pits and their architecture is described as horrifying and emanating a sense of fear which makes it unpleasant to set eye on.

Even different human races have their own architectural language. The Rohirim, who value their horses above all, have houses that are mainly wooden and have many horse stables, and the Golden halls of the king of Rohan is rather reminiscent of the old Viking halls. As for the humans of the Minas Arnor, the white city's fortress tower city, the architecture is of white stone and fortified against the Orc attacks, thus the architecture is extremely different than that of the city of Rohirim.

**b – Spirited Away – an animated movie**

Our second example would be the anime movie called “Spirited Away”. One of the main features in this movie is the architecture of the Bath-house in which the creatures of the spiritual world come to take baths. Although the structure of the bath-house is based on a real bath-house in Japan, the architecture has been modified and re-planned accordingly to fit in the actions and the type of characters in the story, mainly spirits.



fig.9 Spirited Away - bathhouse front view



fig.10 Arima Onsen, Kobe



fig.11 Spirited Away - The nightless bathhouse



fig.12 Entrance to the Ryokan bathhouse



In this case, what becomes interesting is the utilization of the rules of architecture as a practice, namely context and user group become very striking. The design of the bath house in reality is one that needs to cater for the inputs of reality, for the dimensions of humans, their dimensions, temperature requirements and circulation. As for the bath house in the world of the spirits morphs, to adapt the inputs of that world, for the characteristics of the new user groups put to question. The architecture shifts its liability, to serve the function of the narrative, hence becoming part of the weave of storytelling.



fig.13 Interiors of Japanese bathhouses

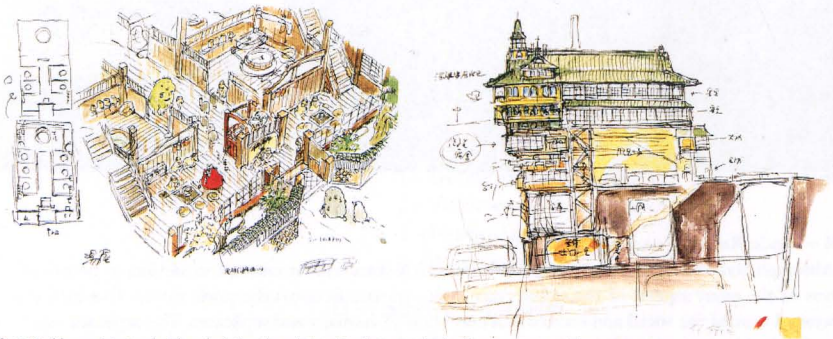


fig.14 Bathhouse Interior sketches depicting the relationships between the bathing quarters and the entrance

### c – Batman - Comic

The next example of narrative we'll pick is the comic book Batman. This is yet another story in a constructed setting: Gotham City. This is a story about villains and heroes, thus, Gotham City should react to these characters. So, the city not only provides shiny high-rises for the wealthy, or a special abode with an underground cave for the heroes, it also provides dark and forgotten alleyways and a maze of sewers, places where villains can spring from or hide and live in.



fig.15 Map of Gotham city



fig.16 Gotham city - underground spaces



fig.17

fig.17, 18, 19 Gotham City views



fig.18

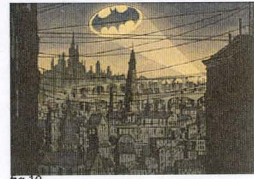


fig.19

#### d – Blade Runner - movie

Although blade runner's architecture has been widely discussed by critics, I would like to point out one of the many aspects of the architecture in this science-fiction/cyberpunk movie. This movie is weaved around the social and hierarchical condition of humans and replicants. The replicant - an android with a constructed genetic make up - "works through the opposition of same and other by turning that opposition into an identity by incorporating it. As such, the architectural aesthetic within Blade Runner that posits an otherness that is only explicable in terms of decay and size has done no more than heighten possibilities already present in contemporary urban life. [...] The architecture of the film cannot provide an architecture for replicants. A refusal-articulated within a banalised conception of architectural otherness - leaves open the question of what it would mean to be at home with replicants. Answering it must work through the analogy between architecture and body; this time, however, taking the replicant's body as the point of departure. Only by starting with replicants will it be possible to house cyborgs" (Benjamin:1994,25) points out Andrew Benjamin in his essay titled "At Home with Replicants", framing the whole structure of the architectural features of Blade Runner that deny taking into consideration the Replicant's needs and life style that are different than that of a human in various ways.

## **Chapter I: a Study**

### **A - Media as a tool of expression**

### **B - Examples of Spatial Media**

- 1 - Architectural drawings
- 2 - Comics
- 3 - Film
- 4 - Video Game: cyberspace

### **C - Architects and Visionary Architecture**

- 1 - Defining the architect
- 2 - Visionary architecture
- 3 - Piranesi and Exline
- 4 - Thesis question

### **D - Science-Fiction**

- 1 - Definition Science-Fiction
- 2 - Recognizing a Science-Fiction
- 3 - Definition Cyberpunk
- 4 - Anatomy of Dystopia
- 5 - Definition Steampunk
- 6 - Machine Architecture

### **E - User Group**

### **F- Rules**



# Chapter I: a Study

*"I want to live and breathe.  
I want to be part of the human race."  
– Radiohead*

*Media are tools that enable us the communication of our thoughts – from one human's mind to the other, through the intermediary common world. Humans have been developing these media over the length of history. This development is only a natural reaction to the human nature, as the most important thing for a human is to be with the other, as put forth the existentialists like Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, De Beauvoir and others: Sharing is primordial for all humans.*

*When we translate a thought through a media to the world we live in – this common world – we do it out of our need to share our thoughts with the other. This other may be the whole world or a specific group of people and it also maybe a group of people that one wishes for, imagines, or hopes that exists or would someday exist in the common world.*

## A – Media

Media or medium's literally meaning is something that is in a middle position - a mean or a middle condition (Merriam-Webster:2010). Mainly, the word **media**, as used in this thesis text, **refers to the human tools of communication** such as language, graphic expression and/or performance.

Some of these media are spatial, thus we can see that some of them are common tools for expressing both/either architecture and/or narrative. Such spatial media include: two dimensional drawings (perspective drawings, comics, paintings, etc.), three dimensional (virtual 3D models, stage sets, models, etc.), language (written or spoken descriptions, novels, etc.) and sequential animated footage of the spaces in movies or animations. "Stories are present in all other forms of crafted entertainment." (Sheldon:c2004,6)

## B - Spatial Media and the architect

### 1 – Architectural representation

Usually the design of a building begins with a vision or a concept: an idea in the mind of the architect. At a later stage, this idea/image that becomes elaborate through sketches and models and diverse design explorations, must be conveyed to the other, who might or might not understand about architectural planning. Thus, **the architect must use spatial media, to pass the thought to the other.**

"Presentation techniques, for different stages of the design process, have ranged from the brief conceptual sketch, geometrical plan, section and elevation, picturesque perspective, physical scale model through to today's computer simulation. Thoughts are represented wither subjectively, providing an

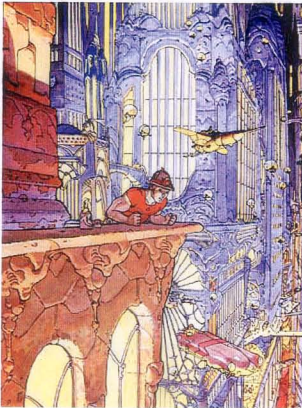
impression of the building, or objectively, via precise geometry attempting to define the building in advance [...]. Some worthy presentation drawings and models, whether for realized projects or not, have found their way into galleries, archives, collections and books, and as such have become publications, moving outside the building process and into the cultural institutions of architecture. (Lipstadt1989)” (Giddings,Horne:2002,2)

## 2 – Comics

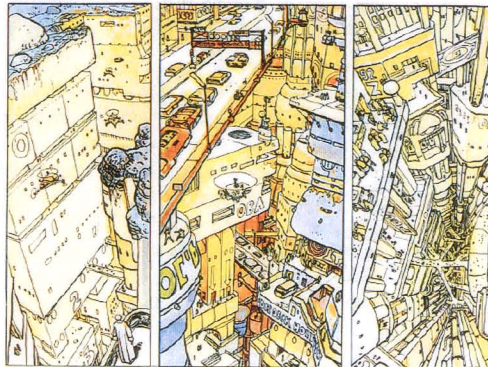
Although the comic has only recently been considered as an art form of its own, it remains – in contrast to film – a purely spatial medium (Ahrens, Meteling: 2010). The comic is known for “crossing boundaries between artistic disciplines: from book and magazine editorial, design and fashion, to advertising and film.” (Sinclair, Bell:2005,8)

The comic is usually described as a set of sequences of images that tell a narrative. As a mixed media, it uses both graphics and/or words. Still, some comics are made of one singular panel telling a story out of a graphical representation alone. Today, we encounter more and more free comics, which are not bound to the traditional European style of strips inside well defined grids of frames and a specific number of pages. “Artists can reduce the actual narrative space of a story to a single frame. Many graphic novelists also employ pictorial or wordless passages within a larger body of work of text and image-based strips, and vice versa.” (Sinclair, Bell:2005,8)

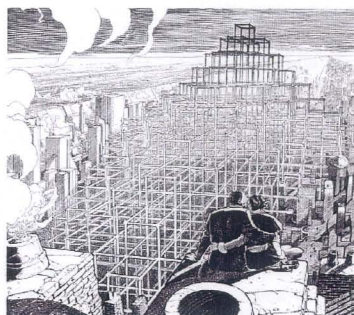
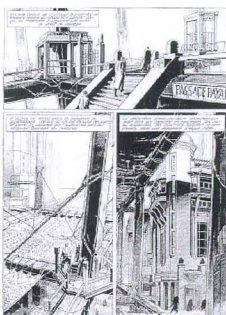
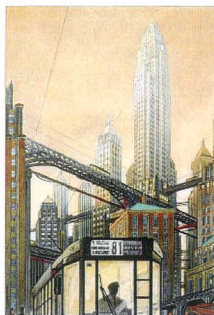
Yet comics are still situated in the design culture’s pecking order as the bastard of a sordid ménage a trois among art, literature and design. In reality comics are the first red example of multimedia, a co-mix of these three disciplines. **It is “a means of presenting narrative in a time-and-space continuum”**. Although “simplification and condensation is integral to comics, they can be no less complex or layered than any other literary form. In fact the comic was a radically new storytelling medium in the West that gradually, over more than a century, developed skilled proponents and loyal followers.” (Heller, Chwastm: 2008,239)



Views from the comic 'The Long Tomorrow' by Moebius



In this medium, we find strong architectural expressions, such as the drawings of Meobius, pen-name of Jean Giraud(1938- ), “The Long Tomorrow”(1976), whose architectural expressions have influenced the science-fiction film of Ridley Scott: Blade Runner(1982). [figure]. (Webb:c1996,44). He has also collaborated in the visual and spatial production of films such as Alien(1979), The Fifth Element(1997) and others.



Views from the comic ‘Les Cités Obscures’ by Peeters and Schulten.

We also encounter writers such as Benoît Peeters who collaborated with François Schuiten, an illustrator who is strongly affected by his family who were mainly architects, and they co-wrote the graphic novel “Les Cités Obscures”. In this comic series, we can clearly notice strong architectural language and intention (Urbicande:1997) [figures]

### 3 – Film

Film is yet another spatial media, “just another form of mass communications” (Shiel, Fitzmaurice: 2001,3). The film is “a kind of stage” where the narrative is a story taken from real life and somehow intensified. Some such stories “are capable of **transcending the limits of reality** (even potential reality) with the help of an imagination freed from earthbound matters” (Neumann, Albrecht: c1996,183-4).

Film is closely related to architecture. In his essay called “The explosion of space: architecture and the filmic imaginary” Anthony Vidler states the following:

“Originally trained as architects, the filmic art offered the potential to develop a new architecture of time and space unfettered by material constraints of gravity and daily life. Hitherto unknown ‘plastic pleasures’ thereby discovered would, finally, have the effect of creating a new kind of architectural space, akin to that imaginary space ‘within the walls of the brain’.

The obvious role of architecture in the construction of sets (and the eager participation of architects themselves in this enterprise), and the equally obvious ability of film to “construct” its own architecture in light and shade, scale and movement, allowed from the outset for a mutual intersection of these two “spatial arts”. (Neumann, Albrecht:c1996,13)

Under this same title fall architects such as Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) who was a Russian film theorist, who talked about montage and the juxtaposition of scenes to create meaning. (Seton:1952,28)

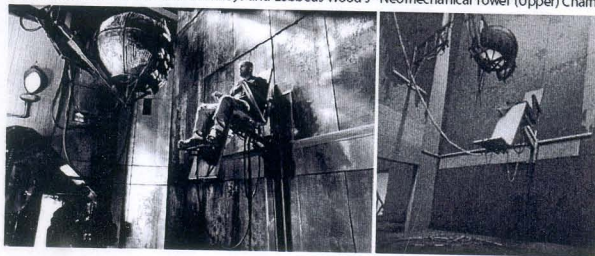
To talk about the spatial aspect of the film, one must first address the spaces that are shot to make the film. Some films are mostly shot in the studio and special effects would be added to them. This type of shooting is used mainly in the case of “a general dystopian vision of an undifferentiated ‘city’ which is either unidentifiable with any actual place or only loosely so”. To this type belong a number of science-fiction films or film noirs such as Frits Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) and Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982). In these kinds of movies, high contrast lighting and lots of night scenes are recurrent. When the film is shot outside the studio, the city becomes the set for the film. This type of filming is called ‘shooting on location’. This “is sometimes an aesthetic choice sometimes an economic one, often a mixture.” (Nowell-Smith:2001,101)

In the case of *Blade Runner*, and the success of the space was not only because of Ridley Scott’s abilities as a director. In this film, “the development of the design for Los Angeles’s future manifestation is well documented. [...] It was the product of a board collaboration [including futurist Syd Mead]. In addition to evolving both past and future, the film’s architectural concept is very much part of its time. Like many architects of his generation, Mead, for instance, had been developing ideas for huge megastructures since the 1960s. Inspired by an as yet unbroken faith in technological progress and unlimited resources, visions of monolithic cities for hundreds of thousands of people were believed to contain the essential ideas for future town planning. [...] *Blade runner* is usually categorized as a dystopian vision of a future L.A.” (Neumann:c1996,148)

Neumann (1996,148) adds that **“a key concept for the design of the city’s architecture was that of ‘retrofitting’ and ‘layering’** – the continuous repair and adaptation to changing needs which lead to the compelling imagery of buildings covered by webs of pipes, ducts and technological debris.”

Many sets have been designed partially or totally by architects, although many set designers have expressed their upset about this fact: “in no way are film sets architecture!” expresses Walter Reimann, a set designer who worked on the set of *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Neumann, Albrecht:c1996,193). Yet, set designers themselves are sometimes inspired by the work of architects. One such vivid example would be one of the sets in *12 Monkeys* that is made as a replica of Lebb

A comparison of the scene in *12 Monkeys* and Lebbeus Wood’s “Neomechanical Tower (Upper) Chamber”





beus Woods' "Neomechanical Tower (Upper) Chamber" [figure].

Neumann adds in his book, *Architecture and Film*, that "now and forever the architect will replace the set designer. Film will be the faithful translator of the architect's boldest dreams." (Neumann, Albrecht:1996,98)

#### 4 – Video Game and cyberspace

"Game worlds are totally constructed environments" (Jenkins, Squire:2002,65). In his book "Interactive Storytelling" that addresses the topic of the narrative in a video game, Andrew Glassner repeatedly refers to movies when he talks about environment and spatial experience in video games.

The infinite space of the video game, just as the film's infinite space, lies behind the screen. Therefore, it is not surprising that with time and development in technology, video games started being compared with films. This became more obvious when video games started using the narrative as part of the game play. Many movies have been turned into video games over time (blade runner, Indiana Johns, Lord of the rings, etc). Later on, some video games were turned into films (Tomb raider, Final fantasy, etc.).

This screen is not only compared with the filmic screen, it is also put in comparison with theater. Brenda Laurel, who is a designer, researcher and writer with a PhD in theater, and currently the chair of the new Graduate Program in Design at California College of the Arts, thinks of it as a virtual theatre, "in which we can satisfy 'the age-old desire to make our fantasies palpable'. It provides **'an experience where I can play make-believe, and where the world auto-magically pushes back'**" (Robins:1995.143). "Interactive technology, like drama, provides a platform for representing coherent realities in which agents perform actions with cognitive, emotional, and productive qualities. (Rheingold:1991,286).

Jenkins and Squire, from the media studies program at MIT, write that the "effective game design can yield spaces that encourage our exploration, provide resources for our struggles for dominance, evoke powerful emotions and encourage playfulness and sociability" (Jenkins, Squire:2002,65). They prefer to set a different approach to video game: "game designers use spatial elements to set the initial terms for the player's experiences. Information essential to the story is embedded in objects. [...] The game space is organized so that paths through the world guide or constrain action, making sure we encounter characters or situations critical to the narrative." (Jenkins, Squire:2002,69)

Later on, with the new technology of the world wide web, the infinite spaces behind the isolated screens of the world were given the ability to connect together and create a new type of space. This new media was already taking wings in science fiction and it had been given a name: cyberspace.

Cyberspace: this word was created by the famous cyberpunk science-fiction writer William Gibson in his novel 'Neuromancer'. "Cyberspace is best considered as a generic term which refers to a cluster of different technologies, some familiar, some only recently available, some being developed and some still fictional, all of which have in common the ability to simulate environments within which humans can interact (Sterling:1990). Other writers prefer the term computer-mediated communication (Jones,1994) to refer to much the same set of phenomena." (Featherstone, Burrows:1995,5)

To continue on this thought, Celia Pearce (2002,116), a game designer and author of “the interactive book: a guide to the interactive revolution”, portrays in her essay how narrative and game can be intertwined through the common ground between game and narrative: discovery.

Whereas film is used to show a reality to an audience, cyberspace is used to give a virtual body, and a role, to everyone in the audience. Print and radio tell; stage and film show; cyberspace embodies. [...] Whereas the playwright and the filmmaker both try to communicate the idea of an experience, the spacemaker tries to communicate the experience itself. A spacemaker sets up a world for an audience to act directly within, and not just so the audience can imagine they are experiencing an interesting reality, but so they can experience it directly. [...] **Thus the spacemaker can never hope to communicate a particular reality, but only to set up opportunities for certain kinds of realities to emerge.** The filmmaker says, “Look, I’ll show you.” The spacemaker says, “Here, I’ll help you discover.” (Rheingold:1991,286)

Cyberspace is not only reachable from behind screen, but can be also experienced through virtual reality. “An attendant array of advanced computer and communications technologies evolves into cyberspace through the merger of the internet, virtual reality, and a three-dimensional database containing all a culture’s deposited wealth, where every document is available, every recording playable, and every picture viewable” (Featherstone and Burrows:1995,7).

This new means of communication might as well be counted as yet another important step of the evolution of humanity.

Fujitsu Laboratories [Tokyo] that develops technology for new products and researches on future technology goes with the slogan: “What Mankind Can Dream, Technology Can Achieve” (Rheingold:1991,291). And video games are one such technology that can embody dream in the form of a narrative. In his book, Lee Sheldon tries to push forth the idea of writing for computer games in comparison to television and film and all graphic/sound/programming, pointing out that video game should be considered as equal to film and television (Sheldon:2004,6).

Brenda Laurel, in a 1986 paper, “interface as Mimesis,” put forward a strong reason why people are bound to pursue fantasy amplifiers as soon as technology makes them possible:

**It is not enough to imitate life.** Drama presents a methodology for designing worlds that are predisposed to enable significant and arresting kinds of actions – where characters make choices with clear causal connections to outcomes, where larger forces like ethics, fate, or serendipity form constellations of meaning that are only rarely afforded by the real world. Dramatically constructed worlds are controlled experiments, where the irrelevant is pruned away and the bare bones of human choice and situation are revealed through significant action. The predispositions of such worlds are embodied in the traits of their characters and the array of situations and forces embedded in the contexts. If we can make such worlds interactive, where a user’s choices and actions can flow through the dramatic lens, then we will enable an exercise of the imagination, intellect, and spirit that is of an entirely new order. (Rheingold:1991,308)

Architects have not been away from this media either. They have been populating video game companies for a while now. One such example is Chris Chin who is a level designer at Valve Corporation. This company has designed games such as Half-life, a shooter game, and Orange Box, an action-adventure game. Chin had practiced architecture for nineteen years before working as a level designer. Totten mentions in his thesis, 'Game Design and Architecture', that "in the professional world, architects such as Valve Corporation's Chris Chin and Yasser Malaika, are leaving firms to explore the gaming industry and the tools it uses to guide users through spatial experiences." (Totten:2008,3)

"Cyberspace" should thus be considered as yet another realm of representation, yet another medium for our wish of sharing our thoughts with the other. **It is a media through which narrative can take another, newer level of expression.** "Two thousand years of dramatic theory and practice have been devoted to an end which is remarkably similar to that of the fledgling discipline of human-computer interaction design; namely, creating artificial realities in which the potential for action is cognitively, emotionally, and aesthetically enhanced" (Rheingold:1991. 286). Cyberspace is our contemporary media that is still on the way to flourish, until a more elaborate system of representation is produced by humanity. And for such an excessively spatial media, architects should be deeply involved in the reaction and the evolution of this media. In fact, Jenkins and Squire start their essay titled 'The art of contested spaces' pointing out that "most often, critics discuss games as interactive cinema or participatory storytelling. But perhaps we should consider another starting point: viewing games as a spatial art with its roots in architecture, landscape, painting, sculpture, gardening or amusement park design." (Jenkins, Squire:2002,65)

## C - Visionary Architecture

### 1 - the architect

The Architect would be generally known as a person who designs buildings and advises in their construction. The word comes from the Greek roots archi and tektōn meaning master builder. (Dictionary:2010)

Yet, I believe this definition of the architect is rather insufficient. It results in a false and flawed idea of what an architect is, such that architects are constantly confronted with defining their profession.

As architects, what we get trained in at university is not only to learn what the laws of construction are and to push the boundaries of what we can make using these laws according to the needs of the users. We also learn to design space according to an intention, a space that triggers an experience in the user.

Looking at this background, instead of simply using the definition 'master builder', I would rather define the architect as a master builder of spatial experiences, or as the specialist of space design. And the best way to know how to design space is to understand what space is. Lefebvre (1991), for instance, would divide space into three definite aspects: the physical space, the mental space and the social space. This reflects that space is not restricted to only physical space.

So architecture needs to be confronted at its root, its purpose as product. **Architecture**

**starts out as a conjured condensation of input; what should be rethought should be what to do from there.** The general preconception of the process of architecture would be to build, shadowing its need as a tool for trial and error, in the stream of thinking. Architecture's realm could be questioned through relocating its product to a mere experiential one, stripping it to this response factor, experience.

From here one can start thinking of the emotional side of space. The Situationists tackled this side of space by looking at the city space as a set of images and events, instead of only a physical space. They try to construct a new kind of map to the city based on psycho-geographical space of the city through this emotional approach (Sadler:1998).

This leads us to the image and imagery as a way of understanding space and dimension. If we relay on psychoanalysis as a tool for understanding psycho-geography, **we understand that humans actually construct space in their mind through the sequences of images and events that are registered in their long-term memory.** To conjure these images from the long-term memory and imagining them prompts activity in the same zones as the perception: psychoanalysis points that we see with our mind and not with our eyes (Barkowsky:2002). These notions of space are further explored under the second chapter of this thesis.

## 2 - Visionary architecture

When we think of imagined architecture, before thinking of narratives, we think of visionary architecture. The first visionary architect that history brought down to us was Daedalus. He was the architect who built the Cretan labyrinth to imprison the Minotaur and being the only one to know how to get out of the labyrinth, he was imprisoned and then he started to think of flying machines to escape the embroilments of his life. "When architects cannot build, or are prevented from doing so for whatever reason, they concoct architectural fantasies or write manifestos" (Thomsen:1994,7) But we should make a clear distinction between what should be called visionary architecture and what not. In fact, when a political or economic or personal difficulty prevents one from executing his project, then this would be rather called 'architectural vision' instead of "visionary architecture". (Thomsen:1994,8)

Although visionary architecture is not meant to be built, it fulfils an eminently important function in the training and practice of architects. When I think back on what I've been doing the past 5 years, I cannot but notice that my training as an architect is solely based on visionary architecture.

Moreover, architects are known for their urges to reshape the world in accordance with their ideas. The architect's activity "combines a free play of imagination with a desire for order and meaning, spontaneity with a love of experiment and a scientific testing of new materials, forms, and functions" (Thomsen:1994,7).

"Architecture is generally distinguished from its visionary, utopian, or fantastic cousin, the ideal city, science-fiction projection, or urban utopia, by drawing a sharp line between reality and fiction. According to this definition, what is actually built cannot be visionary. The distinction, I believe, is obsolete." (Thomsen:1994,7)

Thomsen adds to his thought that human imagination contributes materially to the construction of the reality's image that we hold in our minds. In other terms, **what is imagined is what will influence the shape of things in the real**, just as the real acts as the main ingredient of imagination. He points out that this would lead to a difficulty to put a line between imagination and reality to make a clear distinction. But Thomsen doesn't stop here. He proposes the following:

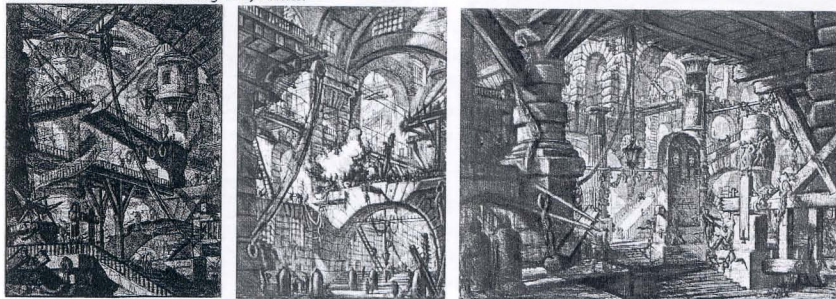
“Living in a period in which borderlines are being transgressed in every field, we should be prepared to question accepted aesthetic categories as well, to rethink them in terms of process, and to define them flexibly. [...] In addition, writers have long shown a penchant for projecting visionary architecture in their works, and painters and filmmakers are increasingly doing the same. As borderline between yesterday and tomorrow incessantly advances, erasing the present moment and relegating it to the past, architectural trends, fashions, and styles seem to be changing more rapidly than ever before. [...] In architecture, too, we now justifiably talk about ‘virtual architectures’, something that only a short time ago sounded like castles in the air, a contradiction in terms. Cyber-space, for instance, is architecture, contains architecture. Immaterial, virtual, telematic spaces are increasingly suffusing, overlaying actual built spaces. Media interfaces, ‘intelligent’ or ‘thinking’ architecture are changing the vocabulary, grammar, and rhetoric of traditional architecture, and compelling its practitioners to reconsider their activity and partially redefine it.” (Thomsen:1994,8-9)

### 3 – Visionary Architects:

There are many visionary architects, contemporary visionary architects like Massimo Solari, Leon Kriek, Hans Hollein, Haus-Rucker-Co, COOP Himmelblau, Raimund Abraham, Lebbeus Woods, Peter Cook and Archigram.

When talking about visionary architecture, one must mention the work of a most important artist in the realm of visionary architecture: Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1729-1778). Through the eyes of an architect, I can directly pin point an interest in his work on the set of plates of ‘Le Carceri’ (1760) or The Prison. Thomsen points out that Piranesi’s work is timeless and has a perennially modern character and talks about the etchings of ‘Le Carceri’:

Selections of the ‘Le Carceri’ etching set by Piranesi

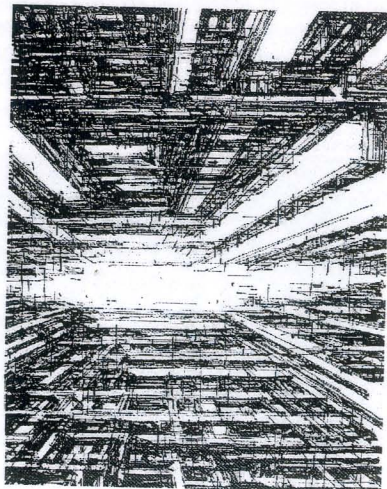
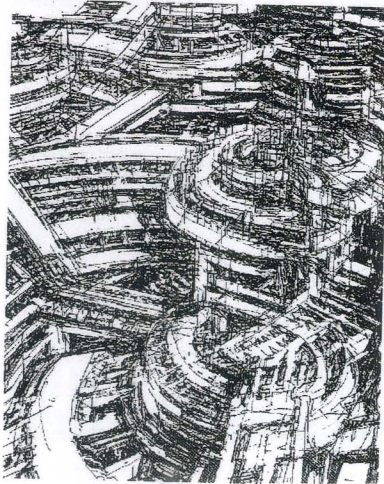


'Le Carceri' can deny their relationship with the architecture of the Roman baths as little as their reliance on contemporaneous stage sets. They derive their aesthetic effect from the device known as paradox: a simultaneity of opposites, such as hall and dungeon, light and darkness, inside and out, palace and ruin, yawning spaces populated by tiny, deindividualized figures, flight after flight of stairs offering escape only to collide with a wall from which instruments of torture appear to dangle. Piranesi's visionary architecture is like the setting of a dream blown up to gigantic scale, and it recalls the latterday dreams in semi-sleep. (Thomsen:1994,48)

After Piranesi, another name comes to mind: that of Gerald Exline. Although less known than Piranesi, I found his work on depicting a future of the city more inspiring. Gerald Exline, lived in Los Angeles, where he was exposed to a city's agglomeration, from its traditional downtown to post-urban sprawl and every form of urban architectural culture known today that occurs within the city limits. He has made several drawings under the title 'Future City' (1983) about which quality Thomsen explains as follows:

"Exline was fascinated by the design of high density urban structures. "With thousands of short, rapid strokes of the pen he records his visions of such evocative structures, in designs that have grown freer and more abstract over the course of years. A plethora of vertical and horizontal lines tempt the viewer to complete the vision in his own mind, engendering columns and supports, diagonal reinforcements, bridges and window openings, cubic dwelling units, towers and pathways, squares and openings and gardens. The strokes begin to gel, expand, contract and condense, recalling the notations of modern music. They grow lighter, forming graduations and virtual waves that seem to metamorphose into material particles and clusters, condense into architectural volumes that evoke tightly packed computer chips. It is obvious from such drawings that Exline's

Exline's 'Future City' depictions



principle concern lies with the organization of surfaces and open public spaces. [...] Exline takes into account the complexities that are certain to occur, and the multilayered analyses that must be performed, if designs of this kind are to be given concrete form.” (Thomsen:1994,165-6)

Thomsen concludes in his book, that science fiction can be also, next to other elements of the future, a realm of exploration of future architecture.

Through this we may conclude that a narrative, especially a science fiction narrative, would be a perfect place where an architect can explore the possibilities a narrative can offer to create a space.

#### 4 - Thesis question

I believe that architects, as specialists of the design of spatial experiences, have been involved in the construction of narrative spaces, as we have seen throughout this chapter.

**But what if the architect was directly involved in the design of the narrative space, while the narrative is being constructed?** The architect would then be contributing to the narrative, which containing arrays of spatial experience, through taking up the responsibility for the architectural design of the narrative space.

This thesis will, therefore, bring forth the design exploration for a narrative space of the specific narrative that is being constructed between three people, as explained in chapter 2, who are each responsible for one of the three main elements of the narrative: character, set of actions and environment.

## D – Science-Fiction

Although we must bear in mind that an object is itself before we, humans, categorize it, but we also know that categorizing helps us think. Under this title, I will discuss a genre of narrative: science fiction and categories that spring from this genre. I choose to address this genre of narrative because, as mentioned under section C, Science fiction is a field in which architecture is allowed to reach and expand beyond its current boundaries. Also, a science fiction narrative usually includes rich city environments and architecture regardless of the mood set by this narrative.

### 1 – Narrative Genre: science fiction

**Science fiction would be the opportune place where an architect can explore new spatial constructions and come up with new ways of approaching space and designing it.** “Architectural fantasy tends to be oriented towards the future. This links it with science fiction and futurology, indeed with every farsighted and long-term trend in transportation, or in the employment of new technologies and their aesthetic.”(Thomsen:1994,116)

Science fiction is a basically literary genre that grew out of the utopias and projected ideal states of antiquity and of renaissance. After taking on a scientifically grounded and future-oriented character in the 19th century with Jules Verne and other authors, in our own century science fiction has spread to other fields, like film, music, painting, toys, record covers, and

computer games. In literature and film, the genre has developed its own unique range of imagery, in which architecture invariably plays a key role, simply because human life runs its course largely in an architectural setting. (Thomsen:1994,156)

Science fiction is a rather difficult term to define. Although, the first thing one would try to define it with is the word "science", Bleiler (1990,3), author of "Science Fiction, the early years", says that science in science fiction is not dealt with "the same way that a crime story is concerned with crime, a sports story with sports or a spy story with spies."

In fact, "science-fiction is an assemblage of genre and subgenres that are not intrinsically closely related, but are generally accepted as an area of publication by a marketplace" says Bleiler and classifies science-fiction stories under three main types that might overlap in some narratives:

- 1- The quasi-scientific story: containing pretended science or technology.
- 2- The lost-race story: a highly schematized story based on survival of otherwise extinct people with sometimes a certain amount of trivial supernaturalism, like prophecies that are fulfilled or reincarnation.
- 3- The future story: elements of pretended science or technology may or may not be present.

Science-fiction fits in the general area of modern fiction. It has attitudes towards our real world. [...] No fiction, strictly speaking, can exactly represent reality, either in quantity or specific points, or it would be no longer fiction. Overlaps exist between genres. (Bleiler, Bleiler:1990,5)

In a sum, science fiction picks an aspect of a given period of time in human history – usually this is a scientific and/or cultural and/or religious aspect – and exaggerates and amplifies it and then projects it in a possible future vis-à-vis this time period, and explores the possible scenarios or result of such a possibility, often bringing up a criticism of the originally picked time period.

## 2 – Recognizing a Science-Fiction

Science fiction narratives are narratives filled with new information. Shippey, in his essay 'learning to read science fiction' talks about the Datum – data, which are "a discrete fact stated or implied in a passage such as 'the narrator's house has a bathroom' (Shippey:1991,4). These usually populate any narrative text, but in the case of science fiction these become Nova Data – new data. These are then called Novum. According to Shippey, a novum is "a discrete piece of information recognizable as not-true, but also as not-unlike-true, not-flatly-impossible. The reader must put the novums together" (Shippey:1991,9).

Shippey then quotes Darko Suvin (1979) who defines science fiction as follows:

"A literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement (novums) and cognition (evaluation of novums), and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment." (Shippey:1991,13)



**Another dimension of science fiction would be credibility. Credibility helps the reader to stay in the flow of the text.** This is again the idea of having a not-true narrative that is not-unlike-true. For instance in the case of *Blade Runner*, the movie uses parts of real city, in a different mood than it's actual mood, to convey an image of a probability of a future. This grounds the story and sets a more credible mood to the narrative. (Neumann:c1996,148)

### 3 – Definition Cyberpunk

Cyberpunk appeared in the mid-1980s, “the word rapidly became ubiquitous when an article in the *Washington Post* dated 30 Dec. 1984, used the word to describe the work of several writers” (McCarron:1995,236). William Gibson is most commonly identified as defining the genre with ‘Neuromancer’ (1984) and the rest of his “Sprawl” trilogy, *Count Zero* (1986a) and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). It is distinguished from the main body of science fiction by a stylistic shift in the way that it moves traditional settings and themes forward in time as “metaphorical evocations of life in the present” (Fitting:1991,299). Also cyberpunk “is heavily preoccupied with philosophical issues, although many critics prefer to stress the cultural deficiencies of the genre” (McCarron:1995,261).

Cyber broadly relates to cybernetics – the science of communications, control, and feedback and to the merger of humans and machine components creating cyborgs. Punk situates the voice as coming from a rough, alternative edge, a “hip self-marginalization in opposition to dominant life-styles” (Fitting:1991,296).

The scientist and explorer heroes of traditional science fiction are replaced by anti-heroes: “out-of-work pizza deliverers, machine-augmented adventurers, bicycle couriers, and data hustlers who are swept into seemingly unfathomable intreys in a noir world where the boundaries between real and virtual experience and human and artificial intelligence dissolve”. (Warren, Warren, Nunn, Warren:2004,396)

As McCaggrey (1991) notes, cyberpunk writers were “the first generation of artists for whom the technologies of satellite dishes, video and audio players and recorders, computers and video games, digital watches and MTV were [...] part of a daily ‘reality matrix’”. In coming together, these authors presented themselves as “techno-urban-guerillas” with the manifesto that said:

Both the technological dreams and nightmares envisioned by previous generations of science fiction artists were already in place, and that writers as well as the general public needed to create ways of using this technology for their own purposes before we all became mere software, easily deletable from the hard drives of, multinationalism’s vast main-frame. (McCaggrey:1991,12)

Cyberpunk’s social, political, and economic structures are an extreme version of today’s headlong movement to the privatization of public functions and evidence that the national state can disintegrate. An increasingly small and powerful set of multinational corporations and crime cartels become the controlling institutions. Class-based representations of the industrial age are masked or replaced by fragmented cultural and ethnic formations at the local and regional scale that have tribal characteristics. Some urban landscapes are recognizable and viable; others are mutations; and there

is a capability of constructing whole cities overnight with new technology (Featherstone and Burrows:1995,7).

#### 4 - Anatomy of Dystopia

**Dystopia is a relatively new term that is mainly defined by being the antonym of the term 'utopia'.** Naturally, it is made of the terms dys + (u)topia. Utopia is the "ideal imagined country", so the way we would define dystopia would be "an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives" (Merriam Webster:2010), "a society characterized by human misery, as squalor, oppression, disease, and overcrowding" (Dictionary:2010). The word itself was created and used in the late 1860s.

As for the expression of dystopias in media, it started with the expressionist movement, in Germany. The expressionists strived to depict the human mind. This goal made expressionists tackle the dark side of the human mind thus what they produced as art, had a sense of horror (Gibson:2006).

The birth place and time of the expressionists was the post war Germany where there was a "general excess of emotions such as: unrest, confusion, hysteria, and despair. These feelings gave way to the creation of great psychological horror films such as Robert Wiene's 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari', and Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis'." As these films were directed inside the studio which allowed "the director to fully transcend reality and create his own environment, one that includes: surreal settings often angular in nature, exaggerated lighting with an emphasis on shadow, and a dream like atmosphere" (Gibson:2006):

the frown of a tower, the scowl of a sinister alley, the pride and serenity of a white peak, the hypnotic draught of straight road vanishing to a point - these exert their influence and express their natures; their essences flow over the scene and blend with the action. (Vidler:c1996,16)

Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' is considered the highest point of the German expressionism movement (Gibson:2006). This film is perhaps one of the most animated testimonies of its time, dealing with topics such as: political conflicts, hope, fear, enthusiasm for technology, and the American way of life (Neumann:c1996,94).

We mainly encounter dystopic cities in science-fiction. As we've seen under the title of science fiction, technology is an important part of science fiction, which picks elements of science and explodes them into fictive dimensions. **It is here that nature and technology meet and conflicts or even fusions bring in new forms. This translates in the layered structures that compose the dystopic cities portrayed in this genre.**

Anyone who has seen enough cyberpunk or film noirs could see the striking similarities between these many movies. Not only movies, these similarities stretch into video games, who have been compared or even structured on film narratives. By dissecting the spaces in these movies and comparing the similarities, Humphrey is lead to put down in his essay, an understanding of the 'Anatomy of Dystopia':

“The basic infrastructures of the city (City Below, City Above, Outer Realms) provide the environment in which the mediators, governments or controlled and controllers (Seats of Power) can act upon the cities’ inhabitants (Sensory Beings, Flesh and Form, and Inner Realms). Arguably, it is the combination of the civilians with the cybernetic built architectures that form these cities as an amalgamated whole. What arises from the hybrid realms of nature and technology, then, are further unisons of ‘being’ and ‘city’” (Humphrey:2006).

**To create a sense of dystopia, one has to eventually include “extreme segregation of the realms” in the narration of the cyberpunk genre. This segregation comes in two basic forms: vertical or horizontal segregation (which usually happens from the center of the city towards its peripheries).**

The following are a few examples of segregation in cyberpunk narrative:

a- Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927):

In this very first cyberpunk movie, which was an inspiration to all coming cyberpunk movies, the vertical cut is with the underground city of the working class who work on the machines that sustain the city above, which is a utopic vision of a metropolis.

Views of the Utopic side of the aboveground

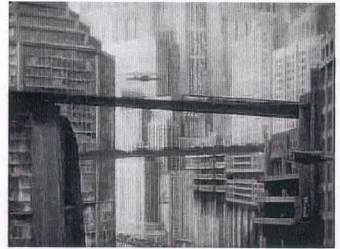
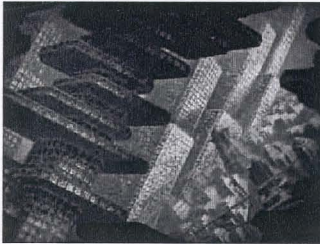
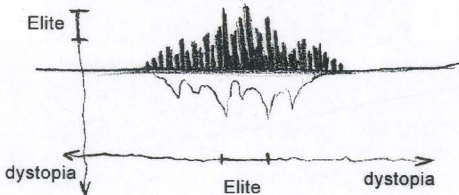
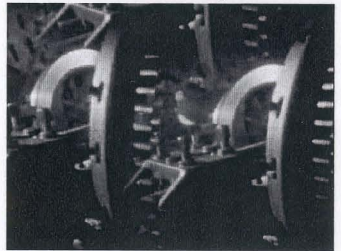


Diagram of Dystopia



Views of the Machines In the underground

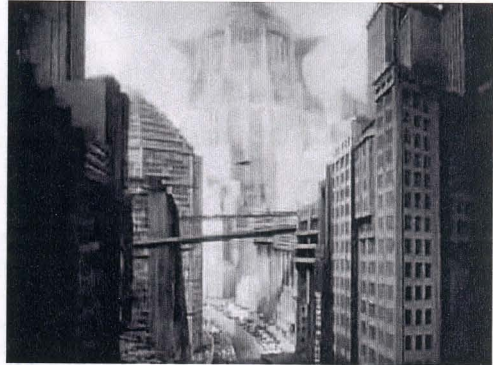


b- Osamu Tesuka's Metropolis (film adaptation in 2001):

Osamu Tesuka's been directly influence by Fritz Lang's Metropolis, thus we find many of the elements of Metropolis (1927) in the anime movie of Metropolis. Such elements are the Central Building of the city. The tower in Metropolis (1927) is called the new Babylon tower, the one in Metropolis (2001) is called the Ziggurat. This type of building also occurs in Blade Runner (1982) where Tyrell Corporation is nested in a great Mayan Temple-like building.



First picture - the Tyrell corporation  
Second picture - the Ziggurat tower



The Tower of Babylon

In the case of Metropolis (2001), the city's segregation becomes slightly more complex between the underground and the aboveground. In this case, the underground itself is divided into several zones, and the city center is the only rich and prosperous area of the metropolis, where only the higher social classes of humans are allowed to live.

Views of the Elite streets, the dystopia around the elite zone, the Zone 4 of the machines where only robots are allowed, the underground streets view

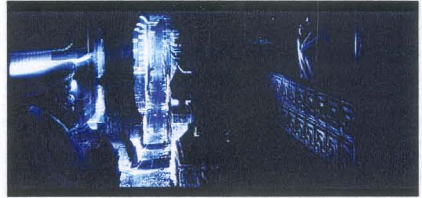


c- Blade Runner (1982):

“[Blade runner] shows a city with history, with buildings that have been there for a long time and have survived beneath gargantuan modern high-rises. In metropolis, these survivors were the cathedral, the house of the inventor, and the ancient catacombs. In the decaying Los Angeles of the future, we find the Yukon hotel, Union Station, the Bradbury Building, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Ennis Brown House.” (Neumann:c1996,148)



Scenes from the Elte's views of the city in Blade Runner



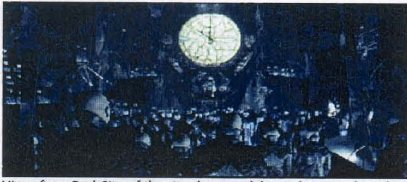
Scenes of the dystopia of the city, relating to the presently existing streets of LA.

In the case of Blade Runner, the city is again divided vertically and horizontally as the lower areas of the city and the peripheries that are mainly the following: public areas, the police station, the hotels, the laboratories, the abandoned streets of LA, the home of J.F. Sebastian, the animal shops district, the 4th sector the red district, the transit areas (cabs, buses), etc. These all fall in the dystopic side of the city, while Tyrell Corporation, Deckard’s home and the police transportation all fall on the higher and central area of the city.

d- Dark City (1998)

In this narrative, aliens have abducted several humans, and are conducting experiments on them. They have created the city above where their experiments happen and they have hidden themselves under this city from where they control the cityscape and the humans that live in this city as guinea-pig.





Views from DarkCity, of the city above and the underground machine that controls the city above

#### e- Matrix trilogy (2003)

Zion is probably the only human city left on planet earth, or more exactly underground. The Zion people live under the layer of the AI robot cities. The surface of planet earth is not livable by humans nor robots, as the atmosphere and the magnetic field of the planet is disturbed after the war between the A.I. robots and the human race. The sun no longer shines under the constantly dark cloudy skies. This human city must remain hidden therefore it should be untraceable by the AI robots who have won the war. Yet, they cannot stay away from the robotic base either in order to survive underground. Thus the city is located below the robotic city and on its periphery.



Images of the trilogy Matrix, depicting first the upper city that is completely empty and deserted. Next the city of the AI robots. The last pictures depicting the environment where the humans live in.

f- Ergo Proxy (2006):

This post apocalyptic anime series' narrative starts from inside of a single city, Romdo, and then spreads to other cities around the planet. The cities are all inside great domes of glass to protect the citizens from the toxic atmosphere of the planet. These cities have become separate islands creating segregation between cities, as opposed to the idea of cities being not only points of concentration but also points of connection with infrastructure that link all the cities of the world together.

In this anime, the segregation starts to get to a new level of complexity. The humans of the city are all appointed with an android that assists them through their lives. The 'raison-d'être' of these androids is to serve their masters. As a virus attacks these androids, they become aware of their existence, yet this puts them into a huge confusion of why is it that they live for. Thus, not only the citizens of this city are segregated between the ruling class and the rest of the population, but also the robots start causing a new layer of segregation. On another level of segregation, some citizen who have not been accepted in the domed city, or have decided to abandon the city life are left to live on the periphery of the city, if they are able to withstand the toxic atmosphere. They live out of the garbage generated by the domed city.



View of the Dome of Romdo from the outside.



Internal machine area of the city of Romdo.



The Utopic side of the city of Romdo.



A view from a higher Elite's position of the whole city.

In his essay, Humphrey notes that most of these cities are sustained by machines. And "often along side the mechanized underbelly of the dystopic future city, lays the more organic, seemingly natural caverns and catacombs, from which an uprising against the oppressive forces above will begin. [...] This organic setting, however, seems important as a place where the notion of 'peace' is delivered, remaining in our psyche as some ultimate place of truth, justice, and nature, at the core of the earth." (Humphrey:2006)

## 5 – Definition Steampunk

Steampunk is mainly a subcategory of Cyberpunk. There is not much written about this subcategory but pointing out some works involving steampunk is rather simpler. **What we refer to by steampunk would be the science-fiction narratives that happen not in the future with respect to today, but to a projection of a future at some point in the past at the around the industrial period.**

Steampunk is again made out of two words steam+punk. As we mentioned before, punk refers to rough, alternative edge, a “hip self-marginalization in opposition to dominant life-styles” (Fitting:1991,296). As for steam, it refers to steam machines and mainly Victorian age science and technology. It is called as such, since the elements of this subcategory are picked from these technological elements and blown into fictive exaggerations. In such narratives, one finds steam machines that have never been created or implemented in the past. Monster steam machines attributed with huge destructive forces or abilities to fly, populate these types of narratives.



Image from PCgame Machinarium showing the steampunk aspect of the environment.



Enormous steam machine in anime movie Steamboy

These machine filled narratives have a tendency of having a rusty looking environment and mood filled with white or gray smoke heaps, not necessarily reflecting a sad or depressing mood in the narrative.

Examples of such narratives would be many of Hayao Miyazaki's movies such as 'Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind', or other animations such as 'Steamboy', anime series such as 'The daughter of Twenty-faces' and , video games such as 'Bioshock', comics such as 'The League of Extraordinary Gentleman', movies such as 'Wild Wild West', and television series such as 'The adventures of Brisco County Jr.' and the list goes on.

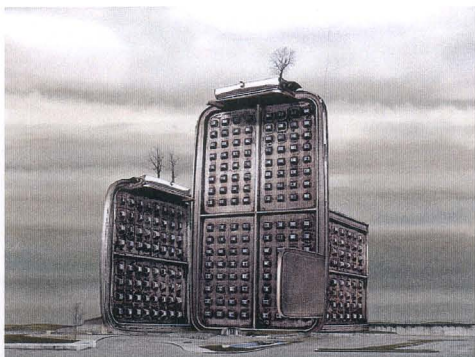
## 6 – Machine Architecture

Nevertheless, if one would want to know more about steampunk architecture or even machine oriented architecture, one would look at the artist David Trautrimas's work and the architecture of 'Centre Pompidou'.

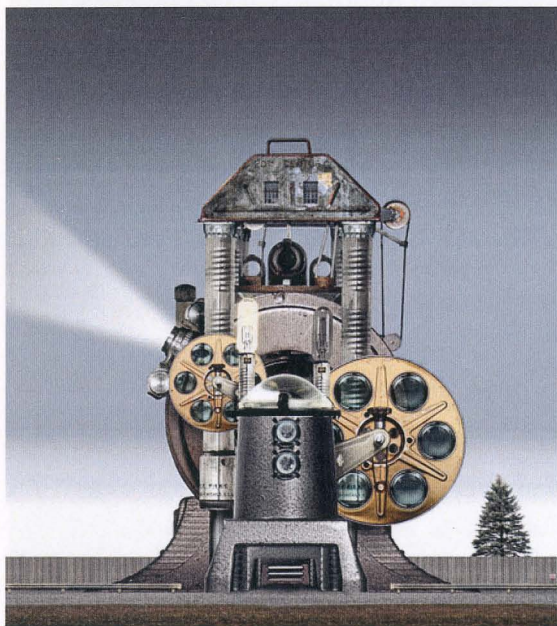
David Trautrimas is a contemporary Canadian artist whose work is called 'steampunk'. “With images borrowed and photographed from his surroundings, Trautrimas crafts images with a familiar yet unsettling existence. Shifting scales and positions, his images range from fabricated Space Stations



to rotating pencil sharpener restaurants all incorporating the signifiers of our local and regional lives. Canada Post boxes become two storey homes and coffee cups become fountains for birds. Satisfying a desire to pull apart and reassemble objects and environments around him, Trautrimas delicately fabricates multiple landscapes inviting the careful consideration of their viewers.” (L.E Gallery:2010)

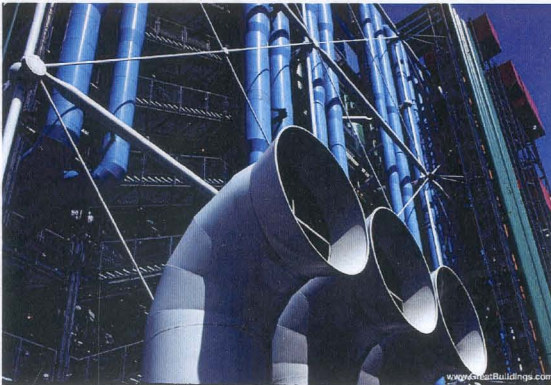
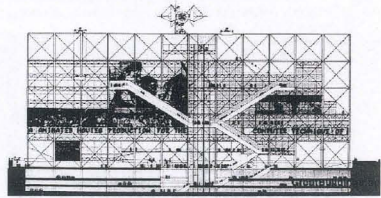
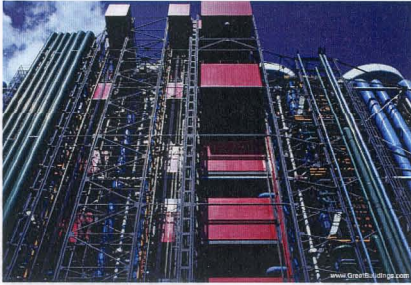
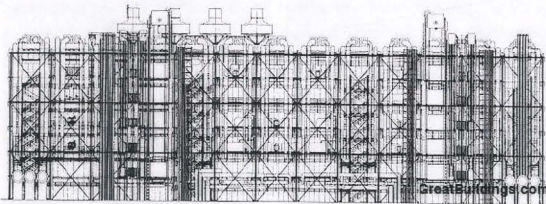


Various works by Trautrimas that are mainly known as Steampunk Architecture.



As for 'Centre Pompidou', the thing that attracts the viewer first would be its aspect, which is a rather unusual aspect for a building of its time. This building, unlike its contemporary buildings, does not try to hide the way the building functions. On the contrary, its exterior treatment expresses the functional and mechanical side of a building. The treatment of its facades eventually gives an alien and avant-garde look to the building, which could be defined as a rather futuristic look. It also qualifies 'Centre Pompidou' as a machine architecture.

Images of the facade of Centre Pompidou showing the mechanical aspect of the building.



## E – Users of a narrative space

It is important to note that in the case of a narrative, the approach to the users of a narrative space differs from that of spaces in the real world. Here, there are two main and distinct types of users: first, the characters in the narrative and second the people exposed to the narrative – the receivers of the narrative through a given spatial media.

Thus, one has to account for the characters in the story: their nature, their physical abilities and activities, just as much as one takes them into account when designing for users in the world we live in.

This is an important point because the second group of users – the receivers – keeps on relating to one or more characters in the narrative. They try to live the experiences of these characters by identifying with them.

After interviewing several people, I have realized how different people have the exact same approach to narratives, independently of the type of the media through the narrative is expressed.

They all refer to the dream-like dimension of a narrative. They expressed their tendencies of identifying with characters in the narrative and living the narrative through these characters. Similarly, when asked about why they would prefer a narrative over another, their response was that **the narrative must be credible enough so one can project the imagined into real and live, through the characters, an array of lives that is, most likely, impossible for them to live in a single life time.**

A certain feel of possessiveness towards the narrative comes to them: most expressed how a narrative would provide them with a certain **escape from reality** and how good narratives leave an emotional mark on them. The more successful this identification process is, the more the receiver feels that the narrative was constructed specially for them and that it is their own.

Based on this information, one can see the strong link between the first and second group of users. One of the most important things in a narrative is to keep the ones exposed to it in the flow of the narrative (Glassner:c2004,348). This is where the influence of the second group of users comes into the frame: no matter how sophisticated or different the characters populating the narrative are, they must be in one way or another credible enough to keep this almost holy link between the characters and the narrative's receivers.

An intersection between the first and second group happens creating another type of user-group which, again, is very dependent on both of these groups. This is the case of the video gamer. The video gamer is not only exposed to the narrative but is an active participator in this narrative. This gives him the opportunity to live the life of the character. Instead of using the method of identification, he controls the character's actions and walks through the narrative space which we call the cyberspace.

“The difference between the imaginary worlds of television and movies and the ones that we can create in the computer is that we can actively partici-

pate in and change the computerized environments. This ability has two important consequences. First, rather than simply view those spaces, we can inhabit and move through them ourselves. Second, rather than passively watching other people take action, we take action ourselves and see the effects of our actions in the world. [...] The psychology of an environment is most visible in the effect it has on the characters that inhabit it. The feeling and mood of the world we move through can't help but have an effect on us." (Glassner:c2004,330-338)

Moving towards a more specific crowd of receivers, the science fiction reader is a reader who has yet another layer of expectations from this genre of narrative. This receiver is one who likes the feeling of unpredictability in a science fiction narrative although it is a deeply anxious one. "It creates intense curiosity, as well as the pleasure of working out, in the long run, the logic underlying the author's decisions, vocabulary and invented world. It is a powerful stimulus to the exercise of 'cognition', of putting unknown data into some sort of mental holding tank, to see if and when they start to fit together and what happens when they do" (Shippey:1991,17). Tom Shippey points out in his introduction that the ones who fail to grasp the 'more than an edge of the whole reality' are inattentive readers of this genre. They fail to accept the novum and the sudden jolt of 'high information' that the narrative provides.

From this review of user groups, the requirements of the narrative space become more obvious.

**Above the credibility needed to keep the receiver in the flow of the narrative one must take into consideration, in the case of the narrative of this thesis, the more specific user group's requirements: a credible and a high information narrative space.**

## F- Rules

**As a sum of what I gathered out of the various issues tackled in this chapter, I was able to deduct a set of preliminary points that one should consider while constructing the images of a narrative space. Thus, the architecture of such narratives as science fiction should provide:**

### **1- light and shade, scale and movement:**

Environmental elements such as light and shade are to be used to create visual codes for the user. In cases of a dystopia, the stark segregation of classes and the emphasis of hierarchy inflicts a need for a visual indicative of such states. Scales and perspective, affecting motion patterns are also investments in the generation of narrative moods.

### **2-Discovery**

In order to devise a trajectory into the narrative, an addiction to the storyline, there must be an element of proposed mystery. The character must be in situations, where the whole is unclear, or juxtaposed in a manner that the receiver or the story is kept yearning for pieces of information in order to be active in the construction of the 'scene'.

### **3-Emotions**

In the production of space, an element of dictation must be taken into consideration. The space must rely on precursors and aesthetic aggression that it becomes a storyteller, just as much as the actions are.

### **4-Segregation**

A characteristic of a dystopia is hierarchy and polar differentiation between activities that are occurring simultaneously, yet cyclically feeding into each other's flow. So in order to contain this flux, the space must be composed of a negative / positive charge analogy, and mutually dependent oxymoron.

### **5-Explorations and a new perspective to the city**

The dystopic setting brings forth an opportunity of studying an existing city from a different perspective. The elements of a fictional narrative open options of data and inputs that could act as simulations that would normally not be viable in other media.

### **6-Novum/information**

This is a main characteristic of science fiction, if not the main. It is the utilization of present science with alternative use or exaggeration. Without a rigid Novum, a science fiction piece becomes fragile and an active reader would not feel interested because of the lack of intellectual ground. Information must constantly be used, shuffled and reshuffled in order to continually make the receiver involved in the questioning and grasping of the reason behind the setting and sequence.

### **7-Machine architecture**

This acts as a storytelling element linking directly to spatial interpretation. Because the narrative is belonging to Steampunk, the issues of dystopia are closely related to production and consumption in an experimental ambiance aesthetically hinting a futuristic set-up relying on exaggerated technologies of the past.

### **8-Credibility**

This is the binding force that must regulate the elements of the narrative. If there is no sense of a relation with the 'real', where the perceiver can relate to the story, then it is a failure, no matter how imaginative it can get. It is crucial that the reader feels closely towards the setting and characters, so that he becomes intensely involved, enough to understand and enjoy the narrative.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

PHILOSOPHY 301

LECTURE NOTES

BY [Name]

DATE

TOPIC

CHAPTER

SECTION

## **Chapter II: a Construction**

**A - The Becarre**

**B - The cycle of life**

**C - The blocking of the awareness**

**D - Vazrig Lutski's background and  
information**

**E - Sayatnova**

1- An approach to constructing Sayatnova:

Imagery

Cognitive maps

Mental representation of city  
environments

2 - Psycho-geography of a city

3 - the construction of Sayatnova  
architecturally

**F - The Rebels**

**G - The aboveground and its underground**

1 - Description

2 - Architectural Inspirations





## Chapter II: a Construction

*"Interdisciplinary distillate universcience is based on science, dominated by technology, and holistically including philosophy, architecture, art and the entire range of engineering and natural sciences."*  
- Lebbeus Woods

*This exercise is an attempt to work the three parts of a narrative together and develop them taking into consideration the various rules of a science-fiction narrative and allowing the influence of one element of a narrative on the others, while constantly developing the narrative and pushing it towards a more mature level. The product of this work can be translated into any kind of media, one of which are architectural drawings that will be part of this work.*

### A - THE ORIGIN...



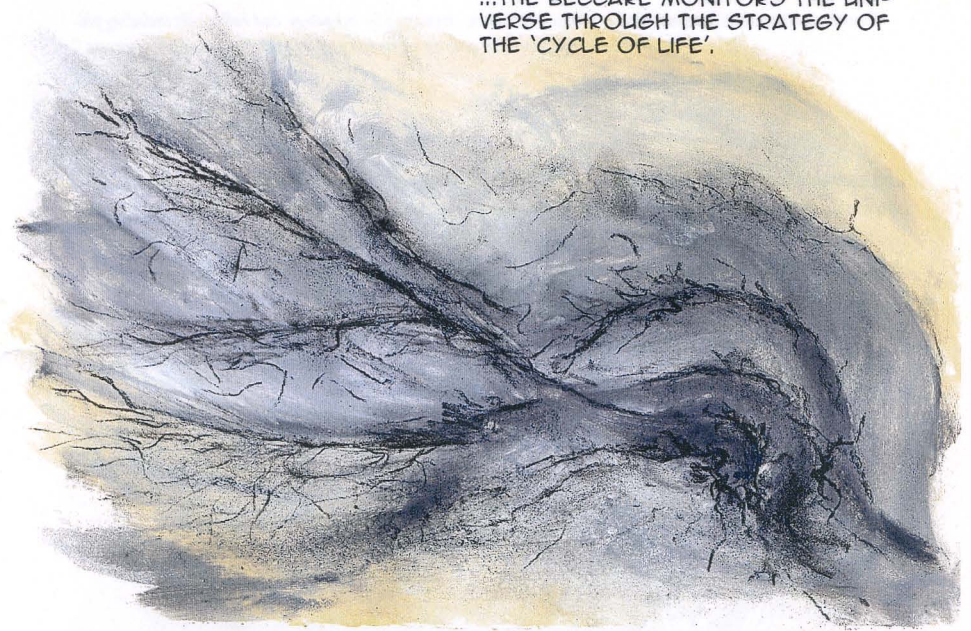
...THE BECARRE\*.

THE BECARRE IS THE ESSENCE OF ALL THINGS IN THIS UNIVERSE. IT IS THE CREATOR, THE ENTITY THAT CONTROLS EVERYTHING. IT IS THE KEEPER OF THE EQUILIBRIUM OF MUSICAL FLUCTUATIONS AS THE BECARRE ITSELF IS FLUCTUATION.

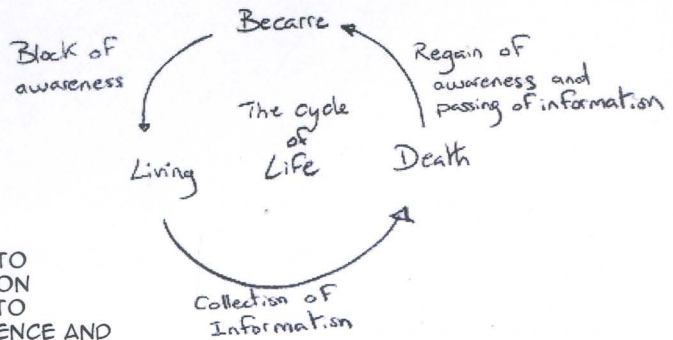
\* MORE ABOUT THE BECARRE AND THE STORY CAN BE FOUND IN THE APPENDIX.

## B - THE CYCLE OF LIFE

...THE BECCARE MONITORS THE UNIVERSE THROUGH THE STRATEGY OF THE 'CYCLE OF LIFE'.



IT SENDS OUT, IN THE UNIVERSE, PARTS OF ITS AWARENESS IN THE FORM OF LIVING BEINGS. THESE LIVE TO COLLECT INFORMATION OVER TIME AND DIE TO RETURN TO THE ESSENCE AND REPORT THE COLLECTED INFORMATION TO THE SOURCE; THE BECCARE.



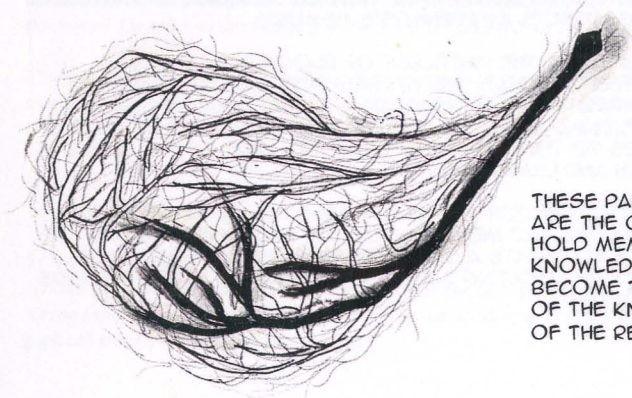
## C - THE BLOCKING OF THE AWARENESS

BUT, TO BE ABLE TO SPLIT FROM THE BECARRE, THESE PARTS MUST BLOCK THEIR AWARENESS OF THE BECARRE FROM THEIR TOTAL AWARENESS. IT IS ONLY THEN THAT THEY BECOME INDIVIDUALS ABLE TO LIVE COLLECTING INFORMATION FOR THE BECARRE,



AND DIE TO DELIVER  
THE INFORMATION  
THEY GATHERED  
TO THE BECARRE.

BUT, THROUGH THESE ACTIONS, THAT PART OF THEIR AWARENESS BECOMES ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE UNITY OF AWARENESS AND LOOSES ITS SENSE OF UNITY AND BECOMES IN ITSELF PARTICLES OF AWARENESS.



THESE PARTICLES OF AWARENESS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO STILL HOLD MEMORIES AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE BECARRE AND BECOME THE LOYAL SAFE GUARDERS OF THE KNOWLEDGE, UNTIL THE DAY OF THE RETURN.

THE FOLLOWING IS A CHAPTER FROM THE STORY OF VAZRIG LUTSKI, A LIVING BEING WHO, LIKE ALL LIVING BEINGS, WALKS IN THE CYCLE OF LIFE.

## D - VAZRIG LUTSKI'S BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

VAZRIG LUTSKI DIED AT THE AGE OF 31, IN THE ELEVATOR, AS HE WENT UP TO HIS APARTMENT.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE NEVER NOTICED HIS DEATH, AS HE WAS INSTANTANEOUSLY TRANSPORTED INTO THE REALM OF HIS BLOCKED AWARENESS: SAYATNOVA.

VAZRIG LUTSKI WAS A MAN WHO LOVED LITERATURE AND READ BOOKS SINCE A YOUNG AGE, ESPECIALLY SINCE HIS FATHER WAS A WRITER AND A PROFESSOR. HE GREW UP AND LIVED IN BOURJ HAMMOUD ALL HIS LIFE, SO HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH MOST OF THE CITY AND ITS STREETS.

## E - SAYATNOVA

SAYATNOVA IS BEST DESCRIBED AS BEING A WORLD OR A CITY THAT HAS COME TO EXISTENCE BY THE REPLICATION OF THE MENTAL IMAGERY AND COGNITIVE MAPS OF VAZRIG LUTSKI'S AWARENESS'S MEMORY.

SAYATNOVA IS POPULATED BY THE PARTICLES OF BLOCKED AWARENESS CALLED THE HYKSOS. THESE PEOPLE, THE HYKSOS NEED TO LIVE TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY AND PROTECT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BECARRE WHICH IS THE ONLY WAY OF RETURNING TO IT AND THE ONLY KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE OF A PLACE TO LIVE COMES TO THEM THROUGH THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BLOCK WHICH THEY CAN WATCH AND LEARN FROM.

THOSE WITH THIS ABILITY TO WATCH AND LEARN WERE CALLED THE ELITE. BY OBSERVING THE KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORIES OF THE AWARENESS BEHIND THE BLOCK THEY WERE ABLE TO CREATE A CITY WHERE ALL THE HYKSOS COULD LIVE. THUS, WE SET OFF BY LOCATING A CITY THAT COMPLIED WITH THE NEEDS OF THE HYKSOS COMMUNITY.

We can use imaginative memory to enhance games with very little cost. Famous places are natural: if we set a story in a well-known environment, then people will bring to the story all of their knowledge and associations with that place without requiring us to explicitly create them all. In some ways, the place itself can handle some of the exposition. Even for people who have never visited the location personally, a place that's well-known through the culture can still evoke strong feelings. (Glassner:2004,460)

Since Sayatnova had to be a city populated by the Hyksos - a population with an introverted nature and a society that feeds upon itself and is in an isolated environment – the most appropriate city for them was a city in which a similar kind of population lives. Bourj Hammoud replied to the requirements of such a city:

Mainly, Bourj Hammoud is located between the main coastal highway leading to Central Beirut area and the river Nahr Beirut which the highway crosses from the North and the East of Bourj Hammoud respectively. While the South and the East are both not clearly cut and are delimited by the Nabaa residential area and the Dawra residential area, respectively.

Bourj Hammoud's main population is composed by the large part of the Armenian community in Lebanon. This community is known to be a rather introverted community, boosted by the culture that was brought with the population from Armenia, the Armenian language used as the mother language and the Christian religion of this specific community. Moreover, Bourj Hammoud is a dense residential area that also contains important commercial and industrial areas which feed this specific community, including many diverse institutes ranging from educational, artistic, political and social to religious with a number of churches.

These aspects of an introverted community and the urbanly introverted form and the large density of the population of Bourj Hammoud, including the fact that this is a rather well known area of Beirut – the capital city of Lebanon – give all the ingredients needed for the purposes of the narrative and therefore the site would feed into the narrative new dimensions that are more site related, and moreover, the architectural element of this narrative gains a more credible dimension in which the rest of the rules to the design process, sited in Chapter I, can flourish.

Through picking Bourj Hammoud as a field on which to grow the narrative, Vazrig Lutski automatically becomes labeled as a Lebanese, of Armenian origin, who has lived his entire life in Bourj Hammoud. (more details about Vazrig Lutski can be found in the Appendix)

## 1- An approach to constructing Sayatnova

As one of the tools of constructing the replica of the city space that is constructed in the mind of Vazrig Lutski, it is primordial to figure out how the mind functions when it comes to psycho-geographical mental representations of a city.

## > Imagery

In his book titled 'Imagery', Richardson (1999,1) first defines what imagery is, by quoting the Oxford English Dictionary: "A mental representation of something (esp. a visible object), not by direct perception but by memory or imagination; a mental picture or impression; an idea, conception." Richardson follows this idea saying that "imagery is functionally equivalent to perception to the extent that similar mechanisms in the visual system are activated when objects or events are imagined as when the same objects or events are actually perceived." (Richardson:1999,50)

Later on, Richardson (1999,50), through his experiments notes that "imagery plays an important role in tests of spatial ability.[...] Both the use and the phenomenal experience of visual imagery depend upon a system of visuo-spatial working memory that contains a visual buffer in which images can be constructed on the basis of information about the appearance of physical objects held in long-term memory" (Richardson:1999,75).

Imagery is an internal representation. Indeed, images have certain functional properties that should enable them to be useful in a wide range of cognitive tasks, especially in spatial thinking and remembering. [...] it would appear that imagined objects, events, and scenes that they represent, and that they can be compared and manipulated in a manner that is analogous to the way in which real objects, events, and scenes are compared and manipulated.

The use of imagery as an internal representation appears to depend upon a system of visuo-spatial working memory which contains a passive store or visual buffer in which images can be constructed on the basis of information about the physical appearance of objects, events, and scenes that is held within long term memory. (Richardson:1999,138)

Through Richardson, **we understand that the way we think of space, is similar to the way we perceive space.** This is an important element to take into consideration when it comes to reconstructing a replica of Bourj Hammoud, and later on, **re-constructing the site according to the imagery one captures of it, in their long term memory.** Yet one also must take into consideration another important element as "we often have the perceptual experience of things that aren't physically there. [...] knowledge has been internalized through biological evolution and so, for each individual, is pre-wired rather than acquired" We converse, project and transform "objects in three-dimensional Euclidean space." (Shepard, Cooper:c1982,324)

One may say that "the mental construction of geographic knowledge is done using visual mental images" (Barkowsky:2002,63).

## > Cognitive Maps

A cognitive map is "a construction which encompasses those cognitive processes which enable people to acquire, code, store, recall, and manipulate information about the nature of their spatial environment" (Barkowsky:2002,23).

Spatial knowledge in mind is usually referred to metaphorically as “cognitive maps” in psychology, anthropology and geography. Although called mental maps, numerous empirical investigations in cognitive psychology have revealed that these are unlike the maps we draw on paper. **“Instead of being coherent, veridical and complete, mental representations of spatial knowledge must be conceived as fragmentary, distorted and incomplete.”** (Barkowsky:2002,1)

Barkowsky goes through a set of possible kinds of distortions that are involved in mental maps:

- mental representations of distance and orientations between geographic locations show systematic distortions with respect to their actual values;
- shapes of geographic objects and angles between linear features are mentally modified to fit more ideal forms (i.e., lines are straightened, angles are idealized towards right angles);
- objects are displaced and rotated to form more schematic configurations;
- spatial aspects that form symmetric relations in the environment (e.g., the distance between objects) often result in asymmetric mental representation (i.e., the distance from a location A to another location B in its mental representation may systematically deviate from the distance from B to A);
- mental representations of spatial knowledge do not form a single homogenous structure but are organized in a hierarchical manner (for instance, the spatial relationship between a building in a city A and a building in a city B is given by the spatial relation between the two cities).

Barkowsky (2002,2) explains that **mental maps are not stored in one’s mind, but are a construction processes:**

The view of memory for the visual world that the data seem to favor is a constructionist view, that representations of the visual world are constructed, and that systematic errors may be introduced in the construction of representations as well as in retrieval of information from them. (Tversky, 1992)

Barkowsky (2002,3) explains that “when we think of geographic facts represented in our minds we usually do not have the impression that our knowledge is deficient. The characteristic of our spatial knowledge as resulting from construction processes suggests that we are able to envisage many more pieces of spatial knowledge that we have explicitly represented in the mind. We can use knowledge that actually is stored in memory to construct mental representations that help us envisage the tentative spatial situation we are currently interested in.” He later adds that “the mental image is constructed partially by knowledge explicitly retrieve from long-term memory and partially by default knowledge that compliments information not represented in long-term memory.” (Barkowsky:2002,11)

> Mental representation of city environments

**According to Lynch(1960) the city image can be constructed by five main elements that build people’s cognitive maps:** landmarks, paths, nodes, districts, edges. These observations are to be taken into consideration while reconstruct-

ing the site:

Nodes + Landmarks: zero dimensional (punctual)

Paths + Edges: one dimensional and 2 dimensional area

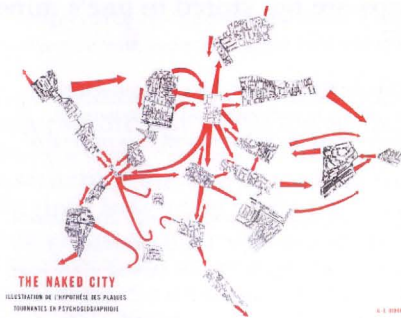
Paths + Nodes: elements used to navigate the city

Landmarks, edges + districts are used for structuring the environment and providing clues for orientation.

Lynch adds that there seems to be sets of images, which more or less overlap and interrelate, typically arranged in a series of levels, roughly by the scale of area involved.

**If attempting to reconstruct the mental image of the city one should also consider that “the mental representation severely deviates from reality, it eliminates existing entities or adds entities not found in the world, it induces distortions and artificial structures. Nevertheless, mental representations typically preserves an important spatial aspect: the topological relationships between entities in the world [...] whereas shapes, distances and directions can be distorted to an arbitrary extent.”** (Barkowsky:2002,24)

## 2- Psycho-geography of a city



On these terms, the mind of Vazrig Lutski is constructing a city that is very particular to his perception of Bourj Hammoud. This mental construction of a city springs from one's exploration of the city. This brings us to the doors of the Situationists who saw the city as a spectacle – a series of events and images (Sadler:1998.15). These are events registered in the mind, in the long term memory. From this memory starts the construction of the mental city, a constantly renewed and reshaped image of

the actual Bourj Hammoud. It is the drifts from Vazrig Lutski's daily life that start producing sets of images of the city. Thus, basing on the Situationist city, I can proceed in forming a map of the mental city on paper, following the 1956 “Guide psychogéographique de Paris” and 1957 “Naked City”. “One measures the distances that effectively separate two regions of a city”, notes Debord, “distances that may have little relation with the physical distance between them.” (Sadler:1998.82) Yet one can push the Naked City's map from just being fractions of a map rearranged into recreating the map of the city as one constructs it in his mind. This can be compared to the Ancient Romans' maps that represented Rome as the center of the world, and enlarged into a majestic size to cover enormous areas on the planet.



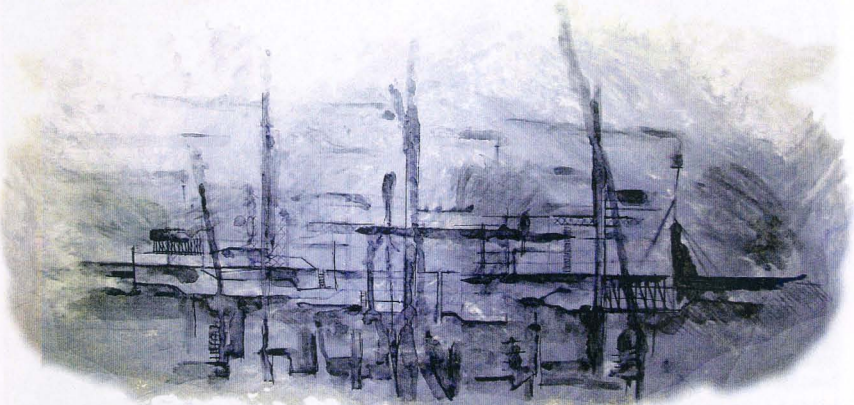
### 3- the construction of Sayatnova architecturally

Although the Situationists came up with ways of mapping other layers of the city, yet the work that must be done for Sayatnova addresses not a mapping but a total construction of the world out of which new sets of maps can be created. And therein lies the challenge of structuring a sensible representation of a person's mental space that would reflect a new perspective of the city, seeing Bourj Hammoud through the mind of a person.

## F - THE REBELS

THE HYKSOS COMMUNITY WAS DIVIDED INTO A HIERARCHY OF THREE: THE ELITE WHO WERE MUCH LIKE A RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS, THE REGULAR POPULATION AND THE LETHARGIC, WHO WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD TURN INTO ELITES WITH PROPER TRAINING, YET BECAUSE OF THEIR LETHARGY, THEY SPENT THEIR TIME COMPOSING THOUGHTS WITHOUT FEELING THE OBLIGATION OF ACTING UPON THEM.

OVER TIME, AS THE BARRIER BETWEEN THE TWO AWARENESS REALMS LOOSES POWER BECAUSE OF THE GROWING KNOWLEDGE OF THE HYKSOS, THE ELITE GET DIVIDED BETWEEN THE ONES WHO KEEP BEING TRUE TO THEIR INITIAL VOW OF PROTECTING THE TRUTH AND BETWEEN THE ELITE WHO START WANTING TO BECOME LIVING BEINGS THEMSELVES.



BY SPLITTING INTO TWO, THE REBEL ELITES HID IN THE TERRITORIES OF THE LETHARGIC WHILE THE ELITES WHO KEEP TO THEIR CONVENTIONS STAY IN SEAT OF POWER. THIS SPLIT IN THE ELITE'S SOCIAL CLASS CAUSES THE AWARENESS BEYOND THE BARRIER TO BE TRANSPORTED INTO SAYATNOVA BY CAUSING THE DEATH OF THE LIVING BEING.

## The site

The hid out of the Rebel elites required me to look for a site that existed in the memory of Vazrig, yet was not a place where he went to, except occasionally if ever. This kind of place was required because Vazrig has to discover over time that there was an unnatural thing going around him, and would set out to look for it.

Also, this kind of site would have given the Rebel Elite the opportunity to build underground since cunks of this area would be distorted in a way that provides the perfect hid out for them.

To be more credible, I chose to pick a site towards the peripheral side of what we now can call the central Bourj Hammoud, as opposed to the areas towards Nab'a that are mixed or completely abandoned by Armenians (Khayar:2002).



The new highway bridge of Ashrafiyeh has provided yet another layer of alienation of the zone of Bourj Hammoud that is towards Nab'a by visually and spatially dividing the urban fabric.

Less and less Armenians dwell towards the other side of the bridge these days. And this is where I located a site, of around 100x100sqm, which would provide a proper hid out for the Rebel Elites. The site is located towards the Nahr Beirut and right next to the bridge highway. There is an Adventist Evangelical church inside the site, next to abandoned center. Being a non-orthodox, non-catholic and non-evangelical, the church is almost deserted and one barely finds passers by that are interested in the church, which is a rather 'alien' looking elements in an Armenian community, regardless of its

many years. The heart of the site is a rubble filled area where nature was allowed to grow and cover the ruined rests of the buildings. Yet the heart is clearly visually 'secured' from the peripheries and only gives glimpses of what is inside the apartment houses that surround it.

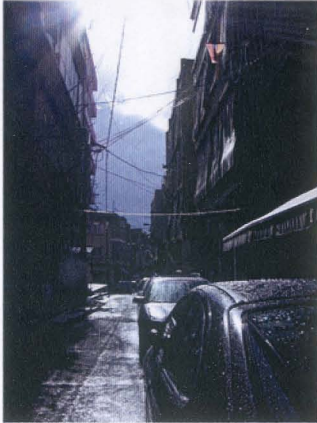
In addition to the 'alien looking' church, the site is also exposed to the 'alien looking' and relatively new bridge which gives it a more interesting dimension that could take into consideration this forced addition to the urban fabric and project is further through the approach of the narrative and the new perspective that science fiction gives to Bourj Hammoud.

> A walk through the site:





L



D



I



H



A



J

G

B

E

C

## G - The aboveground and its underground

### 1- Description

THE LETHARGIC KEEP THE REBEL ELITES OUT OF THE CONVENTIONAL ELITE'S OBSERVATION, CREATING THE PERFECT HIDE OUT FOR THE REBEL ELITES WHO BUILD UNDERGROUND STRUCTURES THAT STRETCH UP TO THE ABOVEGROUND IN HIDDEN AREAS.

IN THEIR UNDERGROUND HIDE OUT, THEY START CONSTRUCTING MACHINES AND CONDUCT VARIOUS FORBIDDEN RESEARCHES TO FIND WAYS TO ACT UPON THE BECARRE IN ORDER TO BECOME LIVING BEINGS.

IT IS IN THIS UNDERGROUND AREA, BENEATH THE AREA WHERE THE LETHARGIC INHABIT, THAT VAZRIG WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE ANSWER TO HIS QUESTIONS, WHEN HE STARTS BECOMING AWARE OF THE UNUSUAL ASPECT OF HIS LIFE IN SAYATNOVA. IT IS IN THIS UNDERGROUND THAT THE TRUTH WILL BE DELIVERED TO HIM AND THROUGH THE TRUTH, HE WILL REGAIN AWARENESS OF THE BECARRE AND BE REUNITED WITH THE ESSENCE.

This leads to a program that is mainly based on the dwellings and environment of the Lethargic Hyksos and an underground hideout of the rebel Elites, where large libraries, research laboratories and mechanical objects are being constructed.

### 2- Architectural Inspirations

To depict the general mood and space quality that Sayatnova would have, I have selected a few images that can become inspirational objects in constructing parts of Sayatnova.

coldsnap - Stephan Martinlere



ravnica - Island forest - Stephan Martinlere



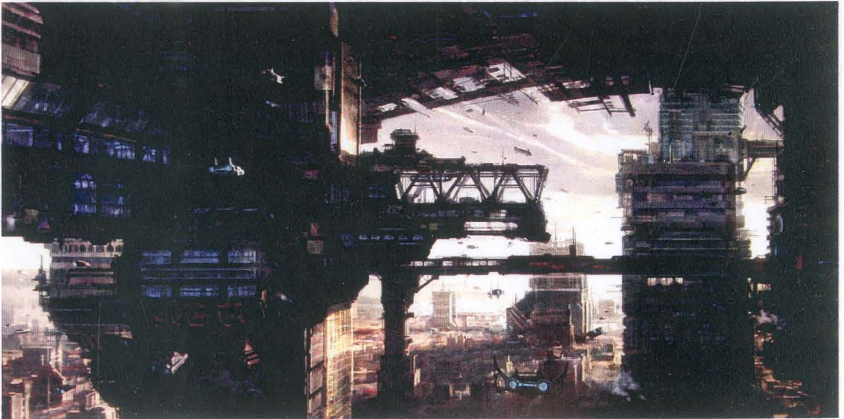
gothic city - donato giancola



ravinca - box art plains - Stephan Martinlere



Travel - Khang Le





an Epilogue



## an Epilogue

This is not an ending of a sum of work that characterizes the answer to a hypothesis. This is a benchmark in design process separating a conceptual backdrop from its implementation.

This thesis stands as the retaining wall for what is yet to come. It is the thorough definition of the status-quo and building ground in order to sculpt a methodology for design maneuver.

Taking this as context, the epilogue of the thesis is the direct lubrication of the design of the setting. It is at this point that Bourj Hammoud enters center stage as the main focus of discussion to feed on and feed back into the narrative to produce architectural representation of space as vivid elements in the production and comprehension of an experience.



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Shukou Murase's *Ergo Proxy*, 2006

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Rintaro's *Metropolis* based on Osamu Tetsuka's *Metropolis* (1946), 2002

Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, 2001

## Appendix

Information

History of a construction

Story Map

The life history of Vazrig Lutski



## Information

Vazrig – Armenian name. This name was carried by a young Armenian who became martyr of war \ during the Nagorno-Kharabakh war. He was a courier who passed messages to the parties.

Lutski – Armenian word. Literally means light match.

Hyksos – An ancient people who lived in the mountains of Anatoly. They were masters of horses. They attacked the ancient pharaohs and ruled over them for 150 years. They were able to conquer the strong Egyptian country because the Egyptians had never seen horses before.

Sayat Nova – the title of a famed Armenian popular musician, named Haroutioun Sayatian. He lived in 1700s. His title means 'King of Music', in Persian. The motion picture "The Color of Pomegranates" (1968) by Sergei Parajanov, is a biography of the life of this musician.

Becarre – In musical notation, a natural sign (♮) is a sign used to cancel a flat or sharp from either a preceding note or the key signature."Both the natural sign ♮ and the sharp ♯ derive from a square b, signifying the B of the hard hexachord, that is, B natural (hence the name of the natural sign in French "bécarre" from medieval French "bé carre", earlier "bé quarre" — modern French "bé carré" — or "square b") and originally meant only B natural."

## History of construction

The narrative started by the thought of a science fiction setting of decay and a complex structure in which people nest to live. A structure that reaches the underground and takes a large area where a specific group of people, from a well defined social group, can live.

After some research and thinking over, the thought of basing the environment on a narrative came to mind.

I asked my author to come up with a kind of science fiction story. I chose him because while I was talking about science fiction, he expressed a huge interest and started giving me names of books and authors and such. It made sense to ask this second year architect, to come up with a narrative of his own.

After a while we met, he told me that he has a friend who is a fan of science fiction and who work in the field of theatre. He told me that they discussed it together. They put down two ideas of which I preferred one: an old man who somehow falls in a vortex and is transferred into a parallel world that is created out of his own mind's nature, a kind of utopia.

He lives in this world, not knowing that a dystopia is starting to ravage his city from the underground. This might have been caused by the man's mind's imperfection, or by the intrusion of someone else's mind.

I approved of this start and decided to push it forward. Next time we met, the three of us sat and discussed the story together. We ended up with a sheet where thoughts have been thrown so we understand what each of them meant. Slowly, links between diverse ideas were brought together and we reached a sort of maturity where we could write a story map.

After writing the story map, we were able to add to it more information and enrich it. We spent another couple of hours deciding on the main character, his name and background.

As we went on, we tried to abide by the norms of science fiction and played with the credibility of the story and the amount of information that we were throwing in it.

The story map developed slowly to a new level of maturity.

This narrative is a work in progress. It sways between the three elements of the narrative where one can see the input of each and every element into the narrative. Being three, we had divided the elements between each other and in the meetings we'd discuss where we reached and developed each of our elements according to the other elements, and make the valid changes through discussion.

# Story Map

## Basic story map

We will start this map by planning out the main forces of the world we're constructing.

We will start by specifying the origin of the world. This origin is an entity called the "Becarre". This entity is what we can call the core, the essence of everything. One of its main functions, therefore, is to monitor everything that happens in the universe, lest the equilibrium needed to keep things under the Bekard's control, is broken.

An important thing about the functionality of the Becarre is that, the Becarre functions through a very specific type of signal that is musical vibrations. The whole universe becomes the result of the fluctuations that the Becarre produces and sustains. Fluctuation is the essence of things, thus it is the Becarre itself. It becomes primordial for the Becarre to keep its equilibrium. It is the way of sustaining itself, thus sustaining the universe and all life forms within it.

Now, in order for the Becarre to be able to sustain the fluctuations, it monitors this universe, through specific parts of the Becarre that are 'born' in the universe: agents of the Becarre. These entities turn into living beings because they are subjected to death, a certain end. This end is a must because, through their lives, they collect information about the universe such that when they die, they transfer the information to the Becarre, making death an important character for sustaining the equilibrium. They follow a specific cycle that is called the cycle of life and death.

Mainly these entities are parts of the Becarre that have some kind of awareness of things, such as their own existence. Some are more aware than others. But, in order to be able to become individuals, as they must be if they are living beings, the Becarre has to block a part of their awareness: that which is aware of the existence of the Becarre, thus detaching them from the Becarre. These entities then become alive, living being: they follow the cycle of life and death.

To cause the death of a living being, so that the being transfers the information to the Becarre, the Becarre has to make sure the living being is able to detach itself from its individuality. For this reason, a specific cycle is created. To explain one such cycle, we will go into the story of Vazrig Lutski, a living being from Bourj Hammoud in the years to come. In the story of Vazrig Lutski, it will be explained how the Becarre intentionally keeps on risking its own destruction (by causing the locked awareness to grow stronger) to prevent its own destruction (which is to gather information to keep the equilibrium as all destruction would come from a failure in the equilibrium).

## The story map of Vazrig Lutski

Our story evolves around an agent of the Becarre, thus a life form and in this case a human. The agent's name is Vazrig Lutski. Just like all other life forms, Vazrig Lutski was forced to block from

his awareness his awareness that his essence is the Becarre, so as to become an individual.

Through this forced blocking, this part of his awareness turns into a semi-independent entity, an entity that becomes divided into multiple parts of awareness, called the Hyksos, which exist in the blocked zone: the world of the Hyksos.

The Hyksos live in their world, being the only entities that know that the essence of all things is the Becarre. But, their existence is limited to this awareness. So, over time, some of these Hyksos start to believe that because of this awareness, they are worth being more than just this entity that is dependant on Vazrig Lutski's existence. So, they start planning ways to get their independence and act on the Becarre in such a way that they too, can become complete independent life forms.

In fact the Hyksos live in a certain hierarchy. There are the Elite who govern the population, the regular population and the lethargic population that are the only ones that have the ability to turn into Elites, yet, because of their lethargy, they need to undergo training to become Elites.

In fact, the blocked awareness becomes stronger over time and threatens to break free while the living being is still alive. If this would happen, there would be a break in the equilibrium as the living being may become an entity similar to the Becarre and become a threat to the essence of all things. Therefore the defense mechanism of the Becarre becomes the following: once the forces of the Hyksos become too strong, the rest of the living being's awareness would be transferred into the blocked realm, that is called Sayatnova.

But by this transfer, the living being returns back to its essence, marking its death point. He is now on a mission of recovering his previously blocked awareness to be able to return to the Becarre and transfer his information.

At this stage, Vazrig Lutski's awareness is transported into Sayatnova. Unfortunately, Vazrig is mainly clueless of his mission since he has not yet recovered any of his awareness of the Becarre. Moreover, Sayatnova appears to be a replica of his original world. This makes it more difficult for him to detect changes and difference to allow him to realize that he is no longer in the world he was living in.

To make this mission possible, the Becarre has devised a specific strategy on which the Hyksos act unaware of the Becarre's control.

Mainly, what happens in Sayatnova, is that the Elite start to argue between themselves: one half claims that the conventions are sacred and they must obey the rules of the Becarre and the other half decides that they should obtain the full awareness and become individuals themselves. They have set out on making great amounts of research and create underground laboratories and machines to control the Becarre in order to get to their ends. This engenders the weakening of the block on Sayatnova, and causes the death of Vazrig Lutski by his transportation into Sayatnova.

In the mean time, Vazrig Lutski is transported to Sayatnova and he starts probing what was happening to him, until he finds out, through the secret sect of the rebelled Elite, the truth: the Becarre. For



this he would go to a district in the replica of Bourj Hammoud, where mainly the lethargic Hyksos live. This district is filled with trinkets and places that are complicated and unknown to him yet are built on things that are extremely familiar to him. It is the result of the lethargic Hyksos' nature and his own conception of the area being a zone of BH that has been left behind. Through this area, he finds ways to the underground and learns much about the Becarre and the world he is in, until he realizes what has happened to him. At this moment, the Hyksos become part of his awareness and he directly becomes one with the Becarre, ready to continue the cycle of life and death.

As the cycle continues, he'll be born again, and the Hyksos will be re-created, and the cycle continues, thus keeping the equilibrium of the fluctuations.

In fact, all life forms reach a point where the barrier that keeps them from discovering their essence becomes weaker. Thus, the Becarre infuses more awareness in the Hyksos such that they seek their independence causing the transportation of the agent to their world by seeking to become whole and trying to change the Becarre's vibrations. But, their deeds add up into the death of the agent and later their own dissolve, and not their independence.

This is primordial from the perspective of the Becarre, because, if the living form finds out about the Becarre without experiencing death by the transportation into the Hyksos world, the fluctuations' cycle would be destroyed and the life form will live forever becoming itself an independent core capable of acting like the Becarre but outside the Becarre's will.

So, if we want to describe the Hyksos, how can we describe them?

The Hyksos come to exist the moment the awareness of the Becarre is removed from a life form. They create their world through this life form's knowledge of how the world of this life form is like. They live knowing that they are the keepers of a secret and work directly under the will of the Becarre. For this, they have a counsel of the wise, the Elite, who govern their world and keep the population in line. Yet, at some point, some of the Hyksos start becoming more self-conscious of what they are and what they can be if things were slightly different. So, they gather and start creating labs and do researches to change the vibrations of the Becarre. Somehow, this means that the rest of the awareness of the life form is summoned into the blocked awareness's side, under the form of the life-form (example Agent Vazrig).

What the Final Year Project will focus on, based on this storymap?

Based on this story map, the FYP will be focusing on the design of the street where the rebel Hyksos have developed their secret base. This is to be an old district, away from the main city's rich and beautiful districts, and specially away from the counsel's base. This is where Vazrig Lutski will reach after his quest of searching what is happening to him and this is where he will have full awareness of what the essence is and cause the Hyksos to link with the rest of his awareness and then they will all become one with the Becarre, their essence.

The main character, Vazrig Lutski is an Armenian from Bourj Hammoud, living in a certain future in reference to our present. He is teleported into his own blocked part of awareness – the world called Sayatova – because of the cyclic nature of the world he lives in. At first, he cannot tell the

difference between the world he lived in and Sayatnova.

Mainly, this is based on Sartre's idea of the imaginary object. When we know an object we can see it in our mind as a whole and it's an object that we cannot make observations about, because it is the construction of observation. This object cannot tell us something new.

Linking this to Sayatnova. Sayatnova is created through Agent Lutski's mental image of the world he lived in. It is a replica of his mental map of the world. But now, as he has been transported into his blocked awareness, he is living in something that looks as if it were the world he lived in.

What happens next is that Lutski starts to notice differences, areas that he cannot remember are replaced by something else, the length of days are different, his age is different every day. The people whom he knows act differently. So, agent Lutski detects that there is something wrong with this world and that it is not quite the world he used to live in. And in his chase for the reality, he ends up figuring out what has happened to him:

He figures out that there is something called the Becarre, then understands that he is inside the blocked part of his awareness. So, at this moment the block is dissolved and in his full awareness he becomes one with the Becarre, where he transfers his collected information to the Becarre and follows his life cycle.

How Vazrig discovers this reality is when he stumbles on the underground research center and labs and machines of the Hyksos people that populate this replica of his mental map, Sayatnova.

What this thesis will elaborate is this very important part of the setting of the story map, which is the district of Bourj Hammoud, under which the whole sewer/research center/labs/libraries/etc exists in Sayatnova.

## The life history of Vazrig Lutski

[the life history of Vazrig Lutski is not yet completed]



