

Surrealism, dreams and realities in dystopian worlds (or how “Brazil” has been inspired by film pioneers and has influenced contemporaries.)

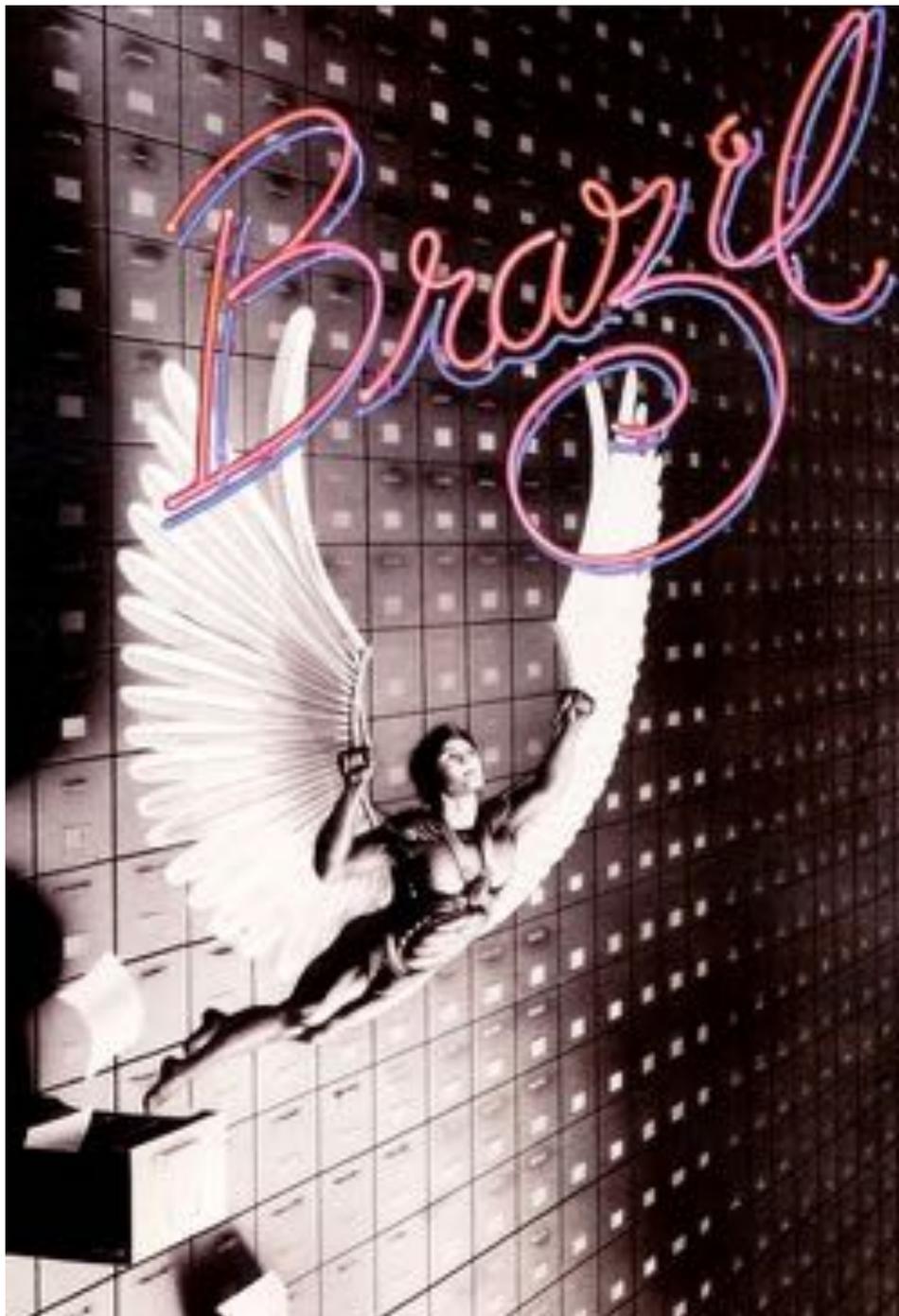


Fig. 1 – The movie poster of Brazil (Terry Gilliam, 1985).

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1...INTRODUCTION

Surrealistic art pieces always intrigued and fascinated me. The creative rage and endless poetic possibilities they were carrying just switched a button in my head and showed me how limitless self-expression could be. There was an underlying connection between those absurd works and my own. I created grim looking yet grotesque masks, wrote texts about mischievous bitter men taking revenge on helpless creatures, directed somber and uncanny animations and once built a guillotine to help me cut flowers' heads off. Still I couldn't point out what it was or why it ruled my artistic intuition so much. As the attraction for Surrealism came clearer, I decided to research and study this broad movement in order to instruct myself and become more knowledgeable about this immense subject in cinema.

In my exploration of Absurdist and Surrealistic films and their history, I found many masterpieces of cinema and wondered how to connect them together. I first studied the book *Le Surréalisme Au Cinema*¹ that made me discover a countless number of founders of Surrealist films. While starting to analyze them I realized the desire I had to focus on *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985), as my attraction to the movie and its themes was incomparable to the others. The need to deeply interpret it and compare the film to old and new works of cinema was very clear. I wanted to understand what captivated me in *Brazil* in order for me to contextualize the artistic importance and influence it had on my own creative works.

Terry Gilliam is a screenwriter, film director, animator, actor, comedian and former member of the Monty Python comedy troupe.² He is well known for his satirical, fantasy and science fiction movies. With an unlimited sense of imagination Gilliam has transported his audience in otherworldly realities that criticize the defects of our society, using black humor, tragicomedy and artistry³. Sometimes Absurdist, sometimes Surrealist, always dystopian, "Brazil" (1985), is a genius take on how Totalitarianism, bureaucracy and propaganda can only thrive in a chaotic and flawed world. ⁴

¹ Kyrou, Ado. *Le surréalisme Au cinéma*. Ramsay Cinema, 2005.

² "Terry Gilliam." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Gilliam.

³ He is an American born British in November 1940, he has directed 13 films such as "Time Bandits" (1981), "12 Monkeys" (1995) and "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" (1998). "(...) It's not primarily the bleak aspects of a totalitarian society Gilliam wants to explore; in his film, he wants to show how hilariously insane, inept and ridiculous many of the mechanisms and instruments of oppression truly are."⁴

⁴ "Brazil." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, 20 Feb. 1985, www.imdb.com/title/tt0088846/?ref_=nmbio_trv_17

As Surrealism is a big focus and starting point, I consider all analyzed films Surrealist.

But, what is Surrealism?

André Breton defined it in his first manifesto of Surrealism as “Pure psychic automatism by means of which one intends to express, either verbally, or in writing, or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, free of any aesthetic or moral concern.”⁵ All films are filled with unreasonable and unbelievable moments that become “normal” because of the dream structure that is by essence surrealist. Any viewer who has already experienced storylines that made no sense while sleeping accepted it as there was no control exercised by reason. Just like when people have violent or scandalous dreams and wake up feeling great while they’d never have done such things in real life.

By creating parallels between *Brazil* and films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) and *Metropolis* (1927) this thesis will present how Gilliam’s film was most likely shaped by those masterpieces from the 1920’s. In terms of how the movie has designed a creative path for younger filmmakers, *The City Of Lost Children* (1995), *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* (2004) and *Sorry To Bother You* (2018) will be discussed. Deconstructing the films in different categories concerning themes and visual elements, this thesis will demonstrate how *Brazil* was a key connection between pioneers and contemporaries. The first chapter is about the parallels between dreams and realities in *Brazil*, *Sherlock Jr* and *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*. The second chapter targets the depiction of the downfall of society through *Brazil*, *Metropolis* and *The City Of Lost Children* and *Sorry To Bother You*. The final chapter focuses on the importance in sets in *Brazil*, *The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, *Metropolis* and *The City Of Lost Children*.

⁵ Kline, A. S., translator. “First Manifesto Of Surrealism.” *First Manifesto Of Surrealism*, by Breton André, 1924, www.kristinedoor.com/uploads/1/1/4/0/11407928/manifestopdf.pdf.

2...DREAMS/REALITIES

1.1 (BRAZIL)

The story of *Brazil* revolves around Sam Lowry a shy man living in a grey, futuristic yet technologically regressed city, working in a dictatorial bureaucracy. He is disgustingly insignificant and doesn't seem to adapt to the rules of consumerism that drive people crazy around him. Lonely and spiritless, his only escape from the dull life he's surviving through is dreaming. He constantly sees himself as a flying hero, saving a beautiful woman again and again. Roaming through the imbecility of paper work and orders, he stumbles upon Jill Layton, a bold truck driver who is a mirror of the endangered creature he keeps on meeting every night. His fixation on the woman and the promise of happiness he projects on her pushes him to work against the highly controlled and authoritarian society. He realizes how the "terrorists" are the only generous and helpful ones and how the bureaucracy is unfairly torturing innocents by blaming them for acts of freedom. Through his quest of finding Jill he discovers the harsh truth about the organization he religiously obeys to and his dreams appear more frequently as a form of escapism. Sam's endless imagination blends with reality and the audience starts to question his identity and sanity. After finally being rejoined by his lover, the higher power kills Jill and tortures Sam. As a last essence of hope, he keeps on dreaming and sees himself being freed, finally living a happy life where he is in fact locked up in the torture chamber, half lobotomized, half smiling because of what he imagines in his mind.⁶



Fig. 2 and 3- Sam Lowry in the last moments of the film, about to be mentally neutralized (*Brazil*, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

⁶ Rogers, Richard A. "1984 To Brazil: From the Pessimism of Reality to the Hope of Dreams." 1990, p. 34-35.

1.2 (SHERLOCK JR.)

In the silent movie *Sherlock Jr.*, directed by Buster Keaton, “Boy”, the main character (played by Keaton), is a poor cinema projectionist trying to win the heart of his beloved girl. Despite his penniless situation, his biggest ambition is to become a detective. While bringing a box of chocolate to his sweetheart, his rival tricks the whole family into thinking Boy has stolen the pocket watch of the girl’s father. Defeated, he goes back to his job, falls asleep on one of the projector and duplicates himself. Boy’s double, a ghostly version of him interacts in the dream form and enters the film that is being projected.



Fig. 4 - Boy and his dream double (*Sherlock Jr.*, Buster Keaton, 1924)

The actors on screen turn around and are being replaced by the real people that Boy knows (girl, rival and girl’s father). The issues happening in his life are being transposed on screen as a fictional arrangement of his own problems and life’s protagonists. What happens in the film is a parallel of reality. Instead of the father’s watch, diamonds are being stolen and Boy appears as a renowned detective and attempts to solve the case. His clumsiness and inadequacy still shine through as the words on screen state “ By the next day the master mind had completely solved the mystery – with the exception of locating the pearls and finding the thief.”⁷ After an intense chase, Boy manages to follow the culprits and saves the girl partly, ending up sinking into a lake. Boy wakes up from his dream, and not much later the girl he fancies (who solved the case on her own and understood that he wasn’t guilty) comes to him and apologizes. Boy, being his timid self, copies the love scene he sees on screen to charm his girl and the story ends well.⁸

⁷ Keaton, Buster, director. *Sherlock Jr.* Buster Keatons Productions, 1924.

⁸ Smoodin , Eric. “JR. Sherlock - Film (Movie) Plot and Review.” *Film Reference*, www.filmreference.com/Films-Se-Sno/Sherlock-Jr.html.

1.3 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND SHERLOCK JR.)

In *Brazil*, Sam Lowry's dreams are what permit him to stay human and to escape the sense of powerlessness against the heartless and oppressive institutions ruling his world. Overworked and without an ounce of pleasure in his real life, his only satisfaction and sense of self arise in his nightly visions. In relation to others, Sam's weak character lets people walk all over him; his incompetent boss constantly needs his help but doesn't want him to get promoted; his castrating mother wants to control his decisions, and the surveillance he's under from the central government is always worrying him. Lowry has no partner, true friend and even no one to trust. However in his dreams he appears as a flying hero, saving the girl and beating bureaucracy. In his dreams he beats the colossal samurai and escapes from the massive rock humanoid representing his boss. In his dreams, he escapes his deadly fate with the help of Tuttle, a supposed terrorist and together they destroy the building of Information Retrieval. In his dreams, he escapes the post-industrial capitalistic city with Jill in search of a peaceful life.



Fig. 5 - Sam as a hero with wings saving the woman of his dreams (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

In reality though, Jill is cold bloodedly killed and Sam is in the hands of the oppressors, being lobotomized. However he won; yes he will probably be eliminated and his mother will have to pay for the bills of the bullets and incinerator, but in his mind, he escapes and resists the upper forces. The end of the movie is optimistic as it is proven that "if the human spirit can survive, there is some degree of victory and, therefore, hope."⁹ One of the positive values from *Brazil* is obviously the recurring dream in which he deserts the expressions of the negative value of reality. He is in no way physically strong enough to outplay the cruel destiny awaiting him, but he sits in this restricting chair, imagining himself happy, smiling and humming, as the tormentors stay perplexed. "They neutralized Sam as a force of opposition, but they did not neutralize his human spirit"¹⁰

⁹ 10 Rogers, Richard A. "1984 To Brazil: From the Pessimism of Reality to the Hope of Dreams." 1990.



Fig. 6 and 7- Sam flies and lands in a grey and discouraging area (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 8 and 9 - Enchained innocents confront Sam with how corrupted the government is (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

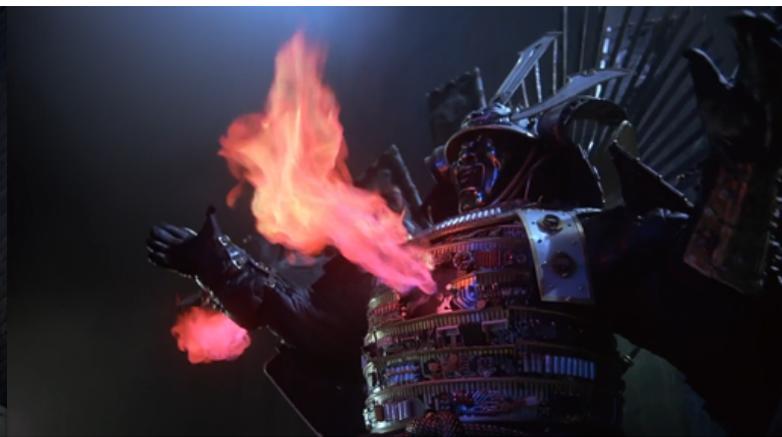


Fig. 10 and 11 - Sam beats the huge threatening samurai (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

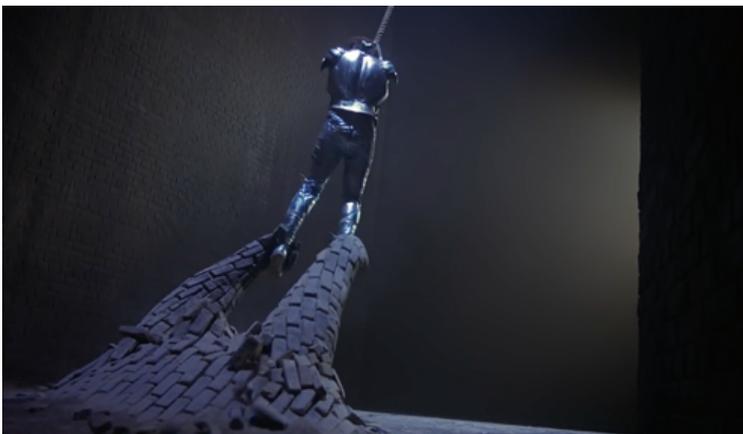


Fig. 12 and 13 - Representation of Sam's boss not letting him get a promotion (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

In *Sherlock Jr.* the main character Boy is living a meager life and isn't finding gratification at all. His work is monotonous, he's poor, the girl he likes has been set up against him and his big dream of being a detective is far from reality. However, as soon as he enters the parallel world through the cinema screen, everything transforms. In the dream form, both Boy and Sam become the opposite of themselves; they become an idealized version of what they wish they would be. Boy changes into a rich detective, well dressed and taken seriously compared to a needy uneducated and inept man in reality. Sam is shown as a strong, flying (which can be linked to the freedom he doesn't usually have) hero, saving the girl, when he actually is weaker than Jill, fearful and limited in his actions. They both need the dreams as an escape mechanism from their miserable lives. Their dreams are directed by "(...) the craziness of our awkwardly ordered society and the desire to escape it through whatever means possible."¹¹

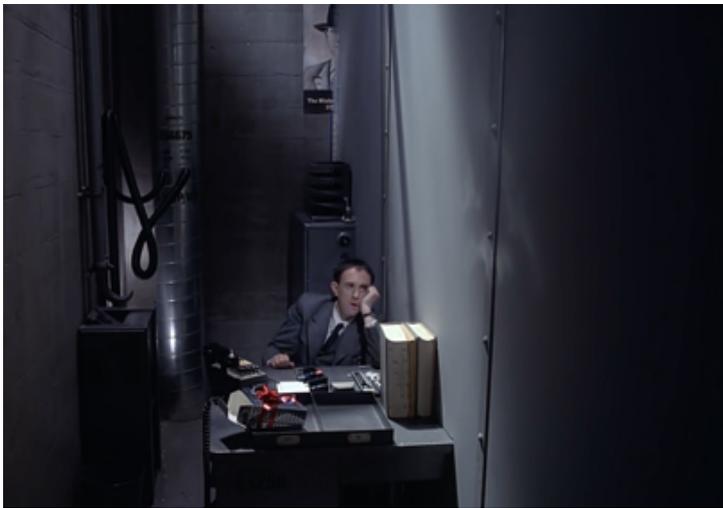


Fig. 14 - The difference between Sam's real and imagined self (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Fig. 15 - The difference between Boy's real and imagined self (Sherlock Jr., Buster Keaton, 1924)



¹¹ Mathews, Jack. "Brazil." *The Criterion Collection*, 28 Sept. 1999, www.criterion.com/current/posts/59-brazil.

“By staging the narrative within a dream-like world, Keaton can push the cinematic boundaries further than many comedians before him. Thus Keaton can perform tricks that astound and amaze audiences while remaining somewhat plausible”¹²

This is very true in both *Brazil* and *Sherlock Jr.* as they feature very incredible visuals that could only be perceived as normal in the dream context. Everything is possible in dreams and that gives endless possibilities to directors to feature surrealist elements. The contrast between their dull lives and the very surrealistic moments render those even more impactful and special.

When in *Brazil*, the dreams start to overlap with reality, the audience was already accustomed with the surreal elements so they aren't lost when the contrast between the two becomes blurry. The strangeness has been mapped out within the rules of that world before, thus giving a credible view.

Sherlock Jr. plays a lot with visual illusions, such as when Boy unlocks a safe only for the viewer to see that it is a door leading to the street. The repeated surrealism becomes comical and stimulates the audience's pattern of expectations.



Fig. 16 and 17 - Buster Keaton playing with our expectations and creating Surrealist shots compositions (*Sherlock Jr.*, Buster Keaton, 1924)

¹² strangeenlightenments. “SHERLOCK JR (1924).” *Strange Enlightenment*, 21 Jan. 2013, strangeenlightenments.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/sherlock-jr-1924/.

Another role of parallels worlds the characters swim through is the push of action in their real lives. After dreaming of Jill, Sam tries everything in his control to find and be with her romantically. For that he breaks rules and puts himself in danger, something he could have never thought of before. His dreams showed him the way and by seeing himself as a hero so often, it opened the possibility that it could be true. Dreams lead to his fall since he got caught but it was what finally made him alive, and what extorted him from his fatal end. For Boy, when the moment has finally come to be close with his loved one, unable to make any move, he looks at the film being projected and repeats the actions he sees on screen. He duplicates the actions of the actor, who himself copies reality, “reality informed by fiction informed by reality.”¹³



Fig. 18 to 23 - Boy copying the actor on the cinema screen (*Sherlock Jr.*, Buster Keaton, 1924)



¹³ Cole, Jake. “Sherlock, Jr. (Buster Keaton, 1924).” *Sherlock, Jr. (Buster Keaton, 1924)*, 9 July 2011, armchairc.blogspot.com/2011/07/sherlock-jr-buster-keaton-1924.html.



Fig. 24 to 32 - Boy in action, following the movements from the cinema screen (Sherlock Jr., Buster Keaton, 1924)

1.4 (CONCLUSION)

Through dream glorifications, Gilliam and Keaton freely deliver poetry and illusion to the narrative and reveal the characters' deep issues and wishes. Be it Sam killing the Samurai, which is a metaphor for the controlling government or Boy becoming someone knowledgeable that is taken seriously. The way they see themselves in those parallel worlds pushes them to take action in real life and lead them to the path they unconsciously always aspired for. The dream structure invites the audience to let go of rational thinking and guides them into Surrealistic elements.

2.1 (ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND)

Released in 2004, *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* directed by Michel Gondry places parallel realities at a very high stake. After a bitter break up, Joel Barish, an emotionally introverted man discovers that Clementine Kruczynski, his ex has gone under surgical procedures to erase all memories of him and them together. Furious and offended, he decides to carry out the same measure. The psychiatrist's team comes to his flat and commences the experimental operation while Joel is asleep. However he realizes while going through their memories backwards that the eradication is happening and refuses to continue. He interacts with his memories and tries to alternate them in order to save them. One example is when he understands that if Clementine and him go to a different memory, the machine working on his brain won't find them. They transfer to a childhood memory and Joel is a tiny grumpy kid hiding under the table while Clementine is talking to his mother.¹⁴



Fig. 33 to 36 - Joel and Clementine travelling through memories, he is a kid and she is supposed to take care of him (*Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*, Michel Gondry, 2004)



After multiple attempts, Joel fails and wakes up without any trace of his ex girlfriend in mind. The next day they meet each other and start their relationship again, even after receiving the records on which they stated everything they couldn't stand about the other. Even though it will ultimately end, Joel and Clementine think the love they will share is worth it.

¹⁴ "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, www.imdb.com/title/tt0338013/plotsummary.

2.2 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND)

In *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*, when Joel is discussing with the psychiatrist, the relation between memories and dreams is mentioned:

PSYCHIATRIST

There's an emotional core to each of our memories, and when you eradicate that core, it starts its degradation process. By the time you wake up in the morning, all the memories we've targeted will have withered and disappeared. As a dream upon waking.

JOEL

Is there any risk of brain damage?

PSYCHIATRIST

(...) The procedure is brain damage.¹⁵

The doctor compares the fading past as dreams that float away upon waking. Joel will likely never remember that it was all real, but it won't be as violent because of the thought of them being dying dreams. In order to compare *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* and *Brazil*, it's important to put the memories of Joel being erased while he tries to save them in his sleep and the recurring heroic dreams of Sam at the same level of analysis. First of all they are both happening in the main characters' head and involve them taking action for the first time. Secondly, they both form parallel worlds of their reality in which truth is unveiled. What is interesting to look at is the impact memories and dreams have on humans; what if Sam's dreams never occurred and what if Joel didn't fight against the removal of his past?

The philosopher John Locke asserts that personal identity is defined not by the physical body or the "soul", but by repeated self-identification.¹⁶ Thus, memory is an elemental part of the self. Another thing is that "(...) personal identity is a matter of psychological continuity. (...) Locke posits an "empty" mind, a tabula rasa, which is shaped by experience, and sensations and reflections being the two sources of all of our ideas."¹⁷

¹⁵ Gondry, Michel, director. *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*. 2004.

¹⁶ Suydam, Terren. "ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND (2004)." *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Philosophical Films)*, www.philfilms.utm.edu/1/eternal.htm.

¹⁷ Nimbalkar, Namita. "John Locke on Personal Identity." *Mens Sana Monographs*, Medknow Publications, Jan. 2011, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3115296/.

Sam's dreams are a psychological continuity process in which he keeps on projecting an idealized version of himself and his life. He turns into this character every time his eyes close. He was a deadbeat underdog, meaningless to everyone, but after countless of repetitive dreams in which he finally is someone, he becomes someone. The dreams opened up a path that he followed in his reality. Without these recurrent fantasies, who knows what would have happened? Probably nothing. Without the smallest of possibilities entering his unconscious mind he wouldn't have dared considering he was capable of such rebellious acts. The dreams forged him, at first a loser, then a dreamer of epic and fearless acts he metamorphosed into a real fighter.

For Joel, the memories he has with Clementine developed his character, from a nervous and closed-mouthed man to an audacious guy that fights his own head while sleeping.¹⁸ Many people would love to have their traumas erased forever but isn't love grieving necessary? In Joel's case it is more than that. The relationship he had with Clementine not only taught him a great deal about complex exchanges, but it also shaped him into who he is now. When he realizes the process of removal is happening, he resists it and boldly tries everything in his power. This would have never happened if he didn't meet Clementine and if she didn't influence him with her courage and determination. Lovers might separate but a piece of each will remain in the other's psyche forever. People stain other people, especially the ones that share bodies and beds.



Fig. 37 and 38 - Joel and Clementine cruising through memories; enjoying a bath in a sink and waking up on a freezing beach (Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind, Michel Gondry, 2004)

2.3 (CONCLUSION)

Memories and dreams do have enormous impacts on humans and without them, evolution and growth wouldn't be possible. In both movies they served as identity builders and personality carvers. What could have just been read as escapism turned out to be existentially instructive for Sam and Joel.

¹⁸ Barry, Tim. "Social Anxiety in Movies: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." *TZ Barry*, 25 Feb. 2016, tzbarry.com/2016/02/25/eternal-sunshine-of-the-spotless-mind/.

3...THE DOWNFALL OF SOCIETY

1.1 (METROPOLIS)

The 1927 movie directed by Fritz Lang is the tale of a science fiction city using poor men as slaves to the machines while privileged ones party and enjoy high class activities. The autocrat Joh Fredersen heartlessly rules Metropolis while his son, Freder, discovers the harsh truth about the class layers. One day, while following a mysterious woman surrounded by children, Freder goes down to the underground level of the city and comes upon the enslavement rhythm that horrifies him. Maria, the woman he chased is a prophet helping the workers' cause by arranging meetings and Freder joins the battle to help the low class. His father hears about it and asks Rotwang the inventor to use the robot he is creating by giving it Maria's appearance. In doing so, he believes he will have more control over the workers and use the android double to eliminate all of them. In the end, Freder and the real Maria save all of the children and the poor people burn the robot, realizing they were duped. Freder becomes the "heart" as he is the mediator between the "hands" (workers) and the "head" (those in power).¹⁹



Fig. 39 to 42 - Joh Fredersen and Rotwang, transferring Maria's appearance to the humanoid (Metropolis, Fritz Lang, 1927)



¹⁹ Ebert, Roger. "Metropolis ." *RogerEbert.com*, 28 Mar. 1998, www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-metropolis-1927.

1.2 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND METROPOLIS)

The sharp difference between class layers is extensively expressed in both *Brazil* and *Metropolis*. First physically, in *Metropolis* where it is said, “Deep below the earth surface lay the workers’ city.”²⁰ And “As deep as lay the workers’ city below the earth, so high above it towered the complex known as the “Club of the Sons”, with its lecture halls and libraries, its theaters and stadiums”²¹. *Metropolis* is the cinematic manifestation of what Plato said, “You have one half of the world triumphing and the other half plunged in grief.”²²



Fig. 43- The underground level of the city where workers are miserably overworked (*Metropolis*, Fritz Lang, 1927)



Fig. 44 - High above, the “Club of the Sons” where the rich play sports and enjoy themselves (*Metropolis*, Fritz Lang, 1927)

In *Brazil*, the class layers are primarily shown visually; the low class people live in dirty neighborhoods, where the children set the cars on fire and where homeless men reside. The high class goes to grandiose restaurants, organizes flamboyant parties and doesn’t have to work at all to get all of these resources. Something that the movie explores as well is the mockery of higher classes. Instead of just representing injustice like *Metropolis*, it digs into the ridiculous

²⁰Lang, Fritz, director. *Metropolis*. Ufa, 1927.

²² Plato. *The Republic and Other Works*. Knopf Doubleday.



Fig 45 - The apartment of Jill, secluded in a poor neighborhood (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 46 - The restaurant where all of the rich people eat (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

habits and practices of the wealthy. The scene in which Sam eats with his mother accompanied by her friend and friend's daughter is a perfect example. Sam's mother following the pretentious fashion trends wears a high heel shoe as a hat as they are being searched for any hint of terrorism. The pompous waiter gives them menus with pictures of the meals and everyone orders. When the plates arrive, balls of mushy and repulsive food are in the center, garnished with the picture of what it is supposed to be. Appearances are crucial. Another example is the obsession of Sam's mother and friend to undergo plastic surgery. Thankfully for Sam mother's everything goes well, leading her to look like she is forty years old but her dear friend Mrs. Terrain only suffers from failures by her surgeon. It gradually worsens until the poor (but rich) woman succumbs from the face-lifts.



Acid, on the other hand, can be used for such wonderfully subtle shading.

Fig. 47 - The deliciously disgusting looking "food", Sam's mother (wearing the high heeled hat) and Mrs. Terrain discussing plastic surgery (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Sam, it's time for you to grow up and accept responsibility.



Fig. 48 and 49 - Sam's mother at a meeting with her surgeon, giving Sam life advice (Brazil, 18 Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 50 - The important steps of any rich old woman's ritual perpetuated by the greedy surgeon (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Sam! It's me!



Mrs. Terrain has just received that most wonderful of gifts.

Fig. 51 - Mrs. Terrain's worsening condition (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Fig. 52 - Mrs. Terrain's end of condition, but at least she got gifts (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

The representation of the pathetic sides of rich people is always satirical in *Brazil* and the "terrorists" come out as reasonable and kind people in comparison. Another subject *Brazil* and *Metropolis* both treat is the importance of performance and technology. As both worlds are driven by results and consumerism, *Metropolis'* ideal is turning humans into machines that wouldn't ask any questions and thus obey and not be tired. *Brazil's* goal is that, like a machine, no one makes mistakes. In *Metropolis*, humans serve the machines and they become insignificant. Robotic marches, heads down heading to work, they all are servants, wearing the same clothing and exhausting themselves at work. When Freder first sees the connection between machines and men he has a hallucinatory vision where the mechanical engine turns into a monster and where men are being fed to him. This idea of non-identity appears in *Brazil* as well, when the workers all look the same and later on get their names replaced by numbers. They form an ant farm all providing for the privileged. In fact, the workers have become machines themselves, robotically repeating the same procedures over and over again. "Metropolis is a classic thanks to its timeless warning about the perils of technological mastery without social justice."²³

²³ O'Reilly, Scott D. "Metropolis." *Philosophy Now: a Magazine of Ideas*, 2002, philosophynow.org/issues/37/Metropolis.



Fig. 53 and 54 - The workers in Metropolis, hopelessly going to work, all wearing the same uniform and without differentiating from one another (Metropolis, Fritz Lang, 1927)

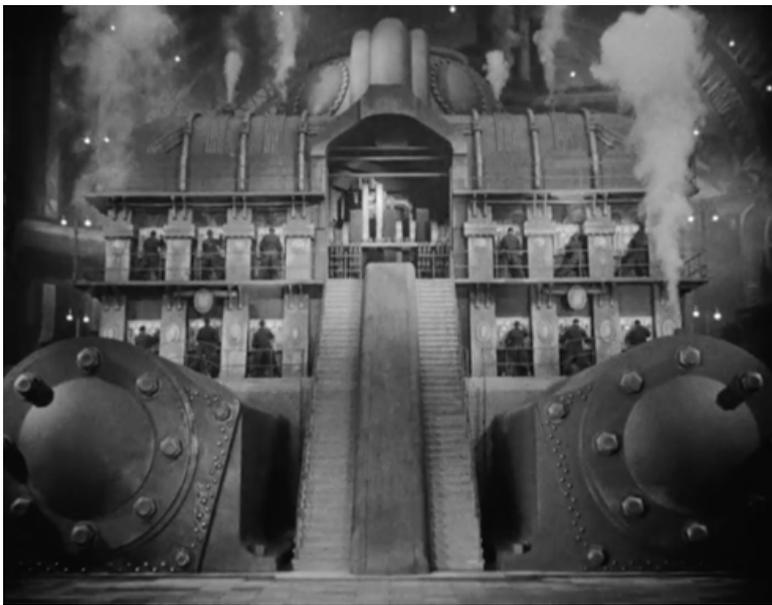


Fig. 55 to 58 - Freder's hallucination, where the machine transforms into an a monster/Aztec looking temple eating workers (Metropolis, Fritz Lang, 1927)





Fig. 59 and 60 - The name confusion between Tuttle and Buttle caused by the dead fly (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Fig. 61 - Sam and his boss looking for the culpable of the mistake (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

In *Brazil* mistakes are the worst crime anyone could achieve. The movie's plot is based on one; in an office of the Minister of Information (MOI), a worker kills a fly that falls down into a typewriter making it dysfunctional. The man being concerned on paper was a certain "Tuttle" but the bug intervention changed it to "Buttle". The wrong man gets kidnapped and killed by the government and the first to realize it is Jill Layton, Sam's love interest. The people working for the MOI invaded her home to get to Buttle's flat which is one floor below hers. When she informs the workers on the spot they respond "Mistake? We don't make mistakes."²⁴ And as they say so, the round piece supposed to cover the hole they just made through her floor falls down as it is too small. One responds "That's bloody typical"²⁵, "They've gone back to metric without telling us"²⁶. This foreshadow of denying mistakes will be repeated multiple times by every concerned character to put the fault on someone else. Another example, when Sam and his boss discover the Tuttle/Buttle confusion;

BOSS

My God! A mistake.

SAM

Well at least it's not ours.

BOSS

Isn't it? Whose is it?

²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ Gilliam, Terry, director. *Brazil*. 1985.

SAM

Information Retrieval

BOSS

Oh good.

An innocent man will be killed but it doesn't affect them as long as they're not guilty for it. Sam will later have to tell Buttle's wife that he is dead and again the mistake subject is very much cited; "Yes, they don't usually make mistakes, but uh well I suppose we're all human". Lastly, when Sam talks with his friend Jack, in charge of torturing/killing the suspects, and that Sam tells him about the confusion;

SAM

I only know you got the wrong man.

JACK

Information transit got the wrong man. I got the right man. The wrong man was delivered to me as the right man. I accepted him on good faith as the right man. Was I wrong?

SAM

You killed Buttle?

JACK

Sam, there are very rigid parameters laid down to prevent such things happening. It wasn't my fault that Buttle's heart condition didn't appear on Tuttle's file.

Thus *Brazil* and *Metropolis* emphasize the foolery of consumerist societies that use and abuse men for more results or demand that they make absolutely no mistakes.

Furthermore, the two films comment on Totalitarianism and how those in power use fear to control its people. In *Metropolis*, the creator talks about the master of the city, "Joh Fredersen wants to let those in the depths use force and do wrong, so that he can be justified in using force against them."²⁷ The sole reason of Fredersen wanting the android to look like Maria the prophet is to control what

²⁷ Lang, Fritz, director. *Metropolis*. Ufa, 1927.

the robot will say to the citizens, leading them to rebel and then to have a reason to lock them up or even kill them. He is a calculating and untouchable tyrant who would like to replace workers by humanoid machines in order to have performances improve.

In *Brazil*, in the first scene of the movie, Deputy minister Eugene Helpmann after being asked about the recent increase of terrorist bombings answers, “A ruthless minority of people seems to have forgotten certain good old fashion virtues. (...) If these people would just play the game... They’d get a lot more out of life.”²⁸ The real existence of terrorists in *Brazil* is totally unsure; the fact that the government organizes the bombings in order to keep people suspicious is more than plausible. In fact the ones claimed to be terrorists aren’t wrong in their acts and only try to help others or to render some justice to this corrupted world. However, the government workers in charge of picking up “guilty” people invade their homes, break their doors and make them wear outfits in which they cannot move or see anymore. Innocents are guilty and guilty ones are innocents.



Fig. 62 to 65 - Jill hearing noise, the Government workers capturing Mr. Buttle and inform him of his “crimes”- Jill looking down to see what’s happening (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



1.3 (CONCLUSION)

Rules are rules and everyone should abide by them. Using fear, surveillance or propoganda, everything is acceptable in order to keep problems at bay for those living in the *Metropolis* and *Brazil* Totalitarian societies. Their focus on performance leads to a loss of humanity and cruel acts justified by the government.

²⁸ Gilliam, Terry, director. *Brazil*. 1985

2.1 (THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN)

The City Of Lost Children is a gruesome and surrealistic fairy tale that was released in 1995, directed by Jean Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro. In a dystopian city, Krank an evil genius is unable to dream which makes him age precipitately. He lives in a deserted den on top of the water with six clones, a midget woman and a highly intelligent talking brain living in a water tank. Krank has a dream-stealing machine that he uses on children's brains to merge with their visions. They are kidnapped by a group of bionic sect named the Cyclops. One day they capture Denrée, the little brother of a circus strongman called One. One starts his quest to find his brother back with the help of a street kid orphan named Miette. In the end they succeed at finding Denrée and deliver all of the locked up children, while Krank dies in a dream because of an infinity loop created by Miette.²⁹



Fig. 66 - Krank waking up from a failed dream (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)



Fig. 67 - Irvin the talking brain, receiving a birthday cake from one of the clones (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)



Fig. 68 - Four of the seven clones wishing a happy birthday to Irvin (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)



Fig. 69 - Krank being angry with Irvin (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)

²⁹ "The City of Lost Children." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, www.imdb.com/title/tt0112682/plotsummary.



Fig. 70 - Krank in the process of stealing a child's dream (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)

2.2 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN)

In *The City Of Lost Children*, the propaganda for the cult of the Cyclops is omnipresent; at the local fair where the circus and the showmen perform, they are spreading their concept to try to retrieve more men, "Renounce the gift of sight and penetrate the corridor of shadows, the world of the blind. Help us build a better world or we shall witness a reign of terror".³⁰ They freely use fear as a tool and include themselves in the so-called solution for security and hope, when they really are the source of misfortune. Just like in *Brazil*, when the posters and the Ministry of Information cultivate the sick surveillance and suspicion, "Suspicion breeds confidence", "Help the ministry of information help you", "Information, the key to prosperity, Ministry of information".

Moreover the cult of Cyclops represents a Totalitarian society perfectly. They were blinded but got a third eye in exchange, which lets them analyze the area like robots. The third eye is a direct reference to Big Brother, the character and symbol of the Totalitarian state of *1984*. The gathering of the Cyclops where the cult leader Gabriel Marie praises Nazi-like ideas shows how corrupted the government is; "(...) our great superior race shall reign once more on Earth!"³¹, "The creator sent me down here to Earth to recover the power that men have illegally seized."³² This preacher with big ideas resembles the all-knowing state of *Brazil*, ordering the people to believe their dictatorial concepts. Krank, physically living higher than everyone else, is able to carry out the most horrible atrocities without any consequences; he's a true untouchable dictator. He has one goal, to dream, and that will take as many children as it needs to make his ambition come true. The Totalitarianism is also conveyed through the loss of identity, as the Cyclops all wear the same uniform and thus become anonymous,

³⁰ ³¹ ³² Jeunet, Jean Pierre and Marc Caro, directors. *The City Of Lost Children*. 1995.

half men half robots with their computerized eye. Alongside the preacher's words, they think of themselves as superior to men as Gabriel Marie says, "My brothers you who have joined me in this struggle understand that together we must fight human beings from their own grounds."³³ They all blindly obey and kidnap children on a daily basis, made to believe it is the right thing to do, just like the workers of *Brazil*, following the orders of a faulty government punishing the wrong men.



Fig. 71 and 72 - One of the Cyclops with his mechanical third eye (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)



Fig. 73 and 74 - The gathering between Gabriel Marie the cult leader and the Cyclops (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)

Moreover, both films treat somber subjects by being surrealistic and use what is called "Magic Realism"; it is an approach to art that blends fantasy, dreams and myths into the mundane everyday life. Terry Gilliam said, " I really want to encourage a kind of fantasy, a kind of magic. I love the term magic realism (...) It's about expanding how you see the world. (...) We live in a world

³³ Jeunet, Jean Pierre and Marc Caro, directors. *The City Of Lost Children*. 1995.

where we're just hammered, hammered to think this is what the world is. Television's saying, everything saying, "that's the world". And it's not the world. The world is a million possible things."³⁴ In *The City Of Lost Children*, most of the characters could be seen as mythical or fantastic creatures; Cyclops, the dwarf, the seven clones (who are all short, a hint to the seven dwarfs from snow white), the talking brain, the evil genius, the circus strongman, the malevolent Siamese twins... Their extreme appearances and compositions resemble those of Jean De La Fontaine, who wrote about the disgrace of human nature by using animal characters. However, Jeunet and Caro use their grotesque qualities to narrate a story relevant to any collapsing modern society with its crucial issues. In *Brazil*, the recurring dreams that start mixing up with reality surely have a fantasy effect, and the monsters Sam has to battle such as the giant Samurai or the imposing rock humanoid aren't exactly normal. His very boring bureaucratic world is invaded by those fantastic creatures and it forms a balanced cosmos.

2.3 (CONCLUSION)

Like *Brazil*, *The City Of Lost Children* shows the Totalitarian state spreading autocratic beliefs, in a world that is sweating corruption and where the workers have all become meaningless, serving an invulnerable leader. Furthermore it narrates such heavy subjects by using Magic Realism and creates an otherworldly mundane story.

3.1 (SORRY TO BOTHER YOU)

Sorry To Bother You, a 2018 film directed by Boots Riley, is the story of Cassius Green, an impoverished man longing for money and a sense of accomplishment. He gets a telemarketing job at RegalView where a black coworker advises him to use his "white voice" to make more money. Cassius starts to talk in a high-pitched accent and his sales sustainingly increase. His friends working in the same company revolt against the low wages as Cassius gets promoted to be a "Power Caller". He now is a privileged and scandalously well-paid employee, selling the most repulsive and immoral but profitable products. This change of direction will provoke the loss of contact with his former girlfriend and friends. Nevertheless, after discovering the evil plan of RegalView's boss, which is turning the employees of WorryFree into equisapiens (horse humanoids) so

³⁴ Rushdie, Salman. "Salman Rushdie Talks with Terry Gilliam." *Salman Rushdie Talks with Terry Gilliam*, 2003.

their performance enhances, Cassius tries everything in his power to reveal the truth and teams up with his old friends. In the end, the revelation has the opposite reaction wanted, people praise the technological advance and the media takes over the ignominy. In a final protest between the Regalview employees and the police, the equisapiens come to their rescue and everything comes back to normal. However, Cassius discovers that he also is becoming an equisapien because his boss tricked him. He and other horsemen go a take a revenge of the greedy man as the last scene ends.³⁵



Fig. 75 and 76 - Cassius Green at his RegalView job interview (*Sorry To Bother You*, Riley Boots, 2018)



3.2 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND SORRY TO BOTHER YOU)

In both *Brazil* and *Sorry To Bother You* societies, the class layers are eminently contrasting, and the poverty is clashing with the outrageous wealth. Cassius Green is absolutely in need of money as the character and his girlfriend live in his uncle's garage who is in debt and might lose his house. He's ready to do anything in order to get a job hence his lying at the job interview. The manager isn't fooled but employs him for the effort he put into the calumny and because he can read. Like in *Brazil*, both characters work in fairly boring and pointless jobs in order to survive.

³⁵ "Sorry to Bother You." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, www.imdb.com/title/tt5688932/plotsummary.



Fig. 77 and 78 - Cassius Green in his decrepit car driving through the poor area of his city (*Sorry To Bother You*, Riley Boots, 2018)



Fig. 79 and 80 - Sam Lowry arriving in an impoverished neighborhood in his ridiculously small automobile (*Brazil*, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 81 and 82 - A vision of a homeless man amongst a miniature of what was supposed to be the Shangrila Towers, the destitute neighborhood where Sam just arrived, poverty literally watches over the cursed district (*Brazil*, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Sam and Cassius both work in crowded offices, where the employees are extremely replaceable but still expected to work flawlessly and where the managers are inadequate. In *Sorry To Bother You* (a reference to what the workers have to say when calling a client), the catchphrase “Stick To The



Fig. 83 - Everyone must obey to this in Cassius' office (Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 1985)



Fig. 84 - Cassius struggling with the bureaucratic apathy he has to follow (Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 2018)

Script³⁶ accurately describes the limited amount of freedom the callers receive. Like in *Brazil*, the absence of solidarity constructed by the rules of the workplace and system forces Cassius to be in total apathy towards a heartbroken customer. He proposes the woman a new product but she answers that they don't have any money because her husband is in the hospital with stage-four cancer. Cassius has a difficult time dealing with her emotions and refers to the catchphrase "Stick To The Script". He looks at his work manual and follows order number 5 "Make any problem a selling point"³⁷. Whatever he tries to sell her next, she hangs up the phone sobbing.



Fig. 85 and 86 - Cassius' bureaucratic life, with the multiple cramped open offices (Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 2018)



Fig. 87 - Sam's office where everyone dresses the same (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 88 - Sam's second and very narrow office after being promoted (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

^{36 37} Riley, Boots, director. *Sorry To Bother You*. 2018.



Fig. 89 – Brazil by Terry Gilliam, 1985



Fig. 90 - Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 2018

A similar visual composition made in *Brazil* and *Sorry To Bother You* is the cluster of papers flying in the busy office, representing the chaos of overwork and bureaucratic rules.

Next to the very hardworking modest workers, are the ones making millions without doing much. This is also a recurring subject in both movies. The promise of maybe becoming a Power Caller (a higher rank in the telemarketing system) pushes Cassius to work harder. A glance at one of those “lucky” employees makes him envious; they can use golden elevators whereas he has to climb up the stairs. Like in *Brazil*, the difference between class layers is visually shown.



Fig. 91 - The Power Caller going up with the luxurious lift (Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 2018)

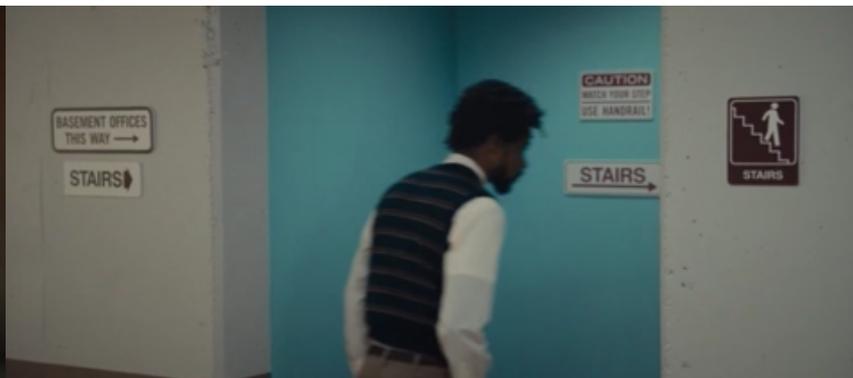


Fig. 92 - Cassius bitterly taking the stairs (Sorry To Bother You, Riley Boots, 2018)

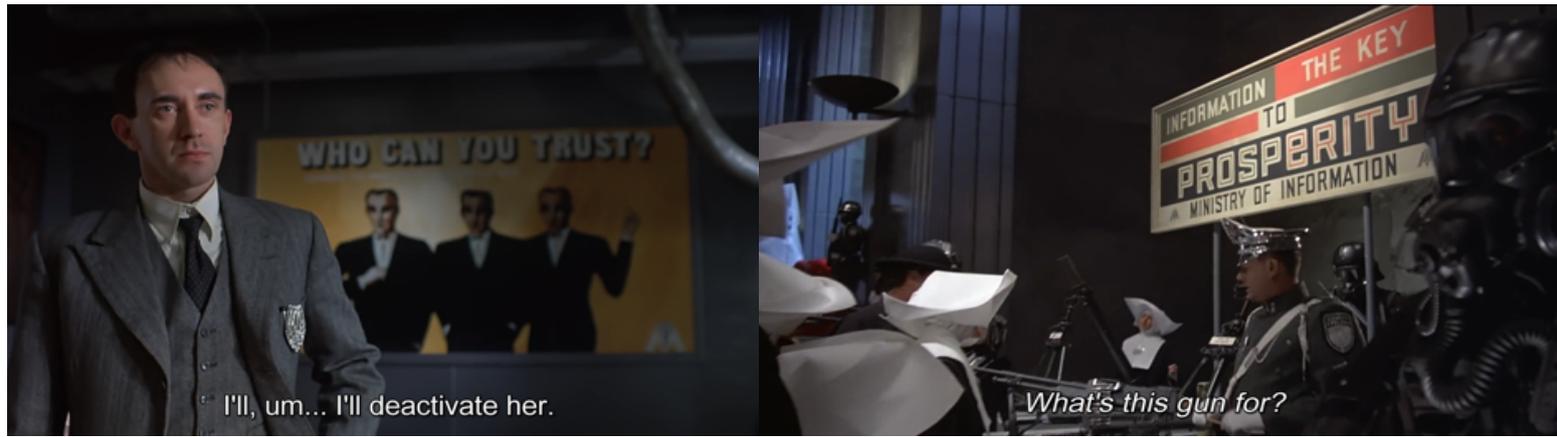


Fig. 93 and 94 - Mister Kurtzmann, Sam's boss, looking at the employees, physically higher than them. While they have to share ridiculously small amounts of space, he stands in front of his spacious and separate office. Just like a rich kid looking at his ant farm (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Another major connection between the two films is the effect propaganda has on citizens; subconsciously controlling them and pushing them to act certain ways. In *Brazil*, the focus is invested upon suspicion, paranoia and betrayal for your own safety. Posters and TV commercials spread the biased messages and it does affect behaviors. Everyone is afraid and follows orders without asking questions. In *Sorry To Bother You*, the propaganda is used for commercial purposes, advertising the revolutionary new way of living by going to WorryFree. It is an organization promising a future without any financial problems, where the applicants sign a contract for life. Once signed they all live together, in an edifice where their dorms and factory work are attached. Taking advantage of poverty, they make people believe that money won't be an issue anymore and enslave thousands of desperate civilians. WorryFree is advertised on TV and on street posters. The concept of WorryFree is a clear satirical view on consumerism and the way that certain companies exploit poor people.



Fig 95 to 98 - Some of Brazil's propaganda posters (Terry Gilliam, 1985)



I'll, um... I'll deactivate her.

What's this gun for?



Fig. 99 to 102 - Sorry To Bother You's propaganda promoting the WorryFree concept (Riley Boots, 2018)



The flashy posters almost seem normal in the films but represent dark and sharp humor, criticizing controlling states and companies that profit over worried and miserable people.

Lastly, the theme of technology and performance at work appear in both films. In *Sorry To Bother You*, when Cassius Green gets promoted as a Power Caller, he finally is allowed into the lavish elevator that is equipped with a computer voice that gives inspirational speeches. “Welcome Power Caller. Today is your day to dominate the world. You are in your sexual prime. The top of the reproductive pile”³⁸, “Greetings Cassius Green. I hope you did not masturbate today. We need you sharp and ready to go. I detect the pheromones percolating out of your pores. They say to others around you: Hold my penis while I piss on your underestimated expectations. Mr. Green, I am a computer but I wish I had hands to caress your muscular brain.”³⁹ Like *Brazil*, *Sorry To Bother You* treats themes such as capitalism and bureaucracy. The primary values can be seen for both films as individualism, solidarity and freedom. “The value of individuality is implied negatively through the bureaucracy and the resulting insignificance of the individual.”⁴⁰ That was the individualism loss that Cassius experienced at first in the company. Now that he got promoted the opposite treatment is applied to him; the elevator voice is jerking his ego off and renders his individuality grotesque. It is full of contrasts and that is why it is so shocking, because of the difference between the ways he was treated. From the gutter to the stars.



Fig. 103 and 104 - Cassius hearing the questionable pep talk made by the elevator voice (Sorry To Bother You, 2018)



³⁸ ³⁹Riley, Boots, director. *Sorry To Bother You*. 2018.

⁴⁰ Rogers, Richard A. “1984 To Brazil: From the Pessimism of Reality to the Hope of Dreams.” 1990, p. 40.

The elevator voice is supposed to boost his ego and thus, boost Cassius' performance. As a Power Caller, he is earning way more for himself but most importantly for the company. In a conversation with a Power Caller introducing him to his new job, Mr. Blank tells Cassius the kind of products they sell up there.

MR. BLANK

Ah, we sell power. Firepower. Manpower. When U.S. weapons manufacturers sell arms to other countries, who do you think, Mr. Green, makes that call at the precisely perfect time? Which is of course dinner. We do. Before a drone drops a bomb on an apartment building in Pakistan, who drops the bomb ass sales pitch you may ask Cassius? We do.

CASSIUS GREEN

Okay, so you said firepower, manpower?

MR. BLANK

WorryFree is our biggest client. We help thousands of companies utilize WorryFree workers to improve their efficiency.

CASSIUS GREEN

So wait, are you telling me you sell slave labor to companies over the phone?

MR. BLANK

God damnit. You are a sharp one.



Fig. 105 - Cassius and Mr. Blank discussing the Power Caller job (Sorry To Bother You, 2018)

The loss of morals created by the rules of bureaucracy are shocking, but Cassius adapts fast and forgets about the ignoble cause he is working for when he looks at his paycheck. That will cause him to temporarily lose his girlfriend, his friends and himself. But that can be explained by Carl Jung, “Persona... is the individual's system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world. Every calling of profession, for example, has its own characteristic persona. It is easy to study these things nowadays, when the photographs of public personalities so frequently appear in the press. A certain kind of behavior is forced on them by the world, and professional people endeavor to come up to these expectations. Only, the danger is that they become identical with their personas (...) Then the damage is done; henceforth he lives exclusively against the background of his own biography. (...) One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is.”⁴¹ Like Sam, who became insignificant because his job and social status were insignificant, Cassius became meaningful and powerful because his career became so. The money factor let him lose himself in the persona of his job, using the “white voice” for example. He forgets to talk with his regular voice once at home because he is stuck in his persona. As Jung says, Cassius lives against the background of his own biography; his friends and girlfriend are protesting and trying to make a change, while he gains money by profiting from slavery. Sam and Cassius became nothing else than what society expects them to be.

In a meeting with the boss of WorryFree, Cassius discovers that his plan is to turn the WorryFree employees into equisapiens to increase their performance. The boss sees it as the perfect solution and as a great technological find. The video promoting the new concept says, “We realize that human labor has its limitations. And so, our scientists have discovered a way. A chemical charge to make human stronger, more obedient, more durable and therefore more efficient and profitable. (...) A new day in human productivity is dawning. Our workforce of equisapiens will make WorryFree the most profitable company in human history.”⁴² Just like in *Brazil* and other films mentioned before, capitalism pushes the means of producing to extremes, making human experiments and slavery normal. They are seen as products themselves ready to be shaped in whatever form. “Technological progress has not freed labor from exploitation, but intensified it.”⁴³

⁴¹ “The Archetypes And The Collective Unconscious.” *The Archetypes And The Collective Unconscious*, by Carl G. Jung, 1959.

⁴² Riley, Boots, director. *Sorry To Bother You*. 2018.

⁴³ Mudede, Charles. “In the Film Sorry to Bother You, We See How Luxuries Like RVs Become Necessities.” *The Stranger*, 30 July 2018.



Fig. 106 to 109 - The promotional video for the equisapiens concept and the funny hint to director Michel Gondry in the first frame (*Sorry To Bother You*, Riley Boots, 2018)



Fig. 110 - An experimentation for the equisapiens concept, begging for help to Cassius (*Sorry To Bother You*, Riley Boots, 2018)

In *Sorry To Bother You*, the technological exploration eventually leads to a “success” for the equisapiens besides the highly immoral choices. However in *Brazil*, the relationship with technology is a tad more complicated. The movie is dystopian and science fictional, yet, it is also identified as retro futurist. “Design, props and wardrobe mix elements from the 1930s, Dick Barton raincoats and trilbys, through post – WWII ration-book austerity, 1950s Stalinist architecture, all the way up to computers built on to electric typewriters.”⁴⁴ For the 1985 movie happening “somewhere in the 20th century”⁴⁵, all objects related to technology are deeply faulty and slow down every process. In Sam’s apartment,

⁴⁴ Charity, Tom. “Brazil (1985).” *BFI Screenonline: Brazil (1985)*, www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/514534/index.html.

⁴⁵ Gilliam, Terry, director. *Brazil*. 1985

all appliances are programmed to work on their own to “ease” his life. Yet in the scene where he wakes up and the computerized apartment is supposed to help him, everything goes berserk and shows how inept the machinery is. It is a critic on modern life and the consumerist logic of buying robots to assist humans. In the offices, the computer screens are so small that magnifying glasses are installed in front for the employees to be able to read them.



Fig. 111 - Sam’s alarm didn’t work so he’s late to work (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 2018)

Fig. 112 - The machine preparing Sam’s breakfast spills tea on his toasts (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



Fig. 113 and 114 - The very tiny screens that require magnifying glasses to be readable (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

3.3 (CONCLUSION)

Brazil and *Sorry To Bother You* both are absurdist critics of capitalism and consumerism. Cassius Green is a telemarketer that lets go of his identity and integrity to climb up the career ladder and Sam Lowry is an obedient stooge blindly working for the murderous government. Their depiction of expected and immoral performance at work sharply mocks our modern society, obsessed with profits.

4...(THE IMPORTANCE OF SETS)

1.1 (THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI)

In the 1920s movie directed by Robert Wiene, the sets surrounding the main characters are extraordinarily expressive and of great importance to the film. It tells the story of Dr. Caligari a hypnotist who presents Cesare his somnambulist at the local fair in Hostenwall. Francis and his friend Alan visit the show and the somnambulist reveals to Alan that he will be dead by next morning. It turns out to be true and Francis decides to investigate the numerous murders that strangely appear in his quiet town. He discovers that Dr. Caligari researches on the subject of somnambulism and wants to know how far one can be enticed to commit atrocities while being in that state. Cesare is the sleeping killer and the star of the doctor who finally reached the peak of his study. Yet, the storyline isn't what it seemed as it is revealed at the end that Alan is in fact residing in an asylum and that he imagined the whole tale to reassure himself.⁴⁶



Fig. 115, 116, 118, 119 - Cesare the somnambulist (*The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920)

Fig. 117 - Dr. Caligari (*The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920)



⁴⁶ "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, www.imdb.com/title/tt0010323/plotsummary.

1.2 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI)

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari and *Metropolis* are German Expressionist films, which are characterized by “their expressive approach in externalizing human emotion and desire. These films conveyed inner, subjective emotions and experiences through external, objective means. These emotions were visually translated onto the screen using deliberately exaggerated sets and dramatic lighting, emphasizing the fear and horror that encapsulated the narrative. These films focus on a reality that has been invaded and plagued by the irrational and cynical thoughts of its characters, and consequently, the sets in these films resemble their distress.”⁴⁷

In *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the expressionist sets full of distorted lines and dangerously sharp angles reveal the instability of Alan the narrator and the schizophrenic visions he has upon the world around him. The different coloring of the frames also externalizes the inner emotions of the characters.



Fig. 120 and 121 - Cesare capturing a woman and walking through the expressive town (The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari, Robert Wiene, 1920)

⁴⁷ “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)” *Interiors*, 2013, www.intjournal.com/0813/the-cabinet-of-dr-caligari.



Fig. 122 to 126 - The different sets and colors in the town of The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene, 1920)

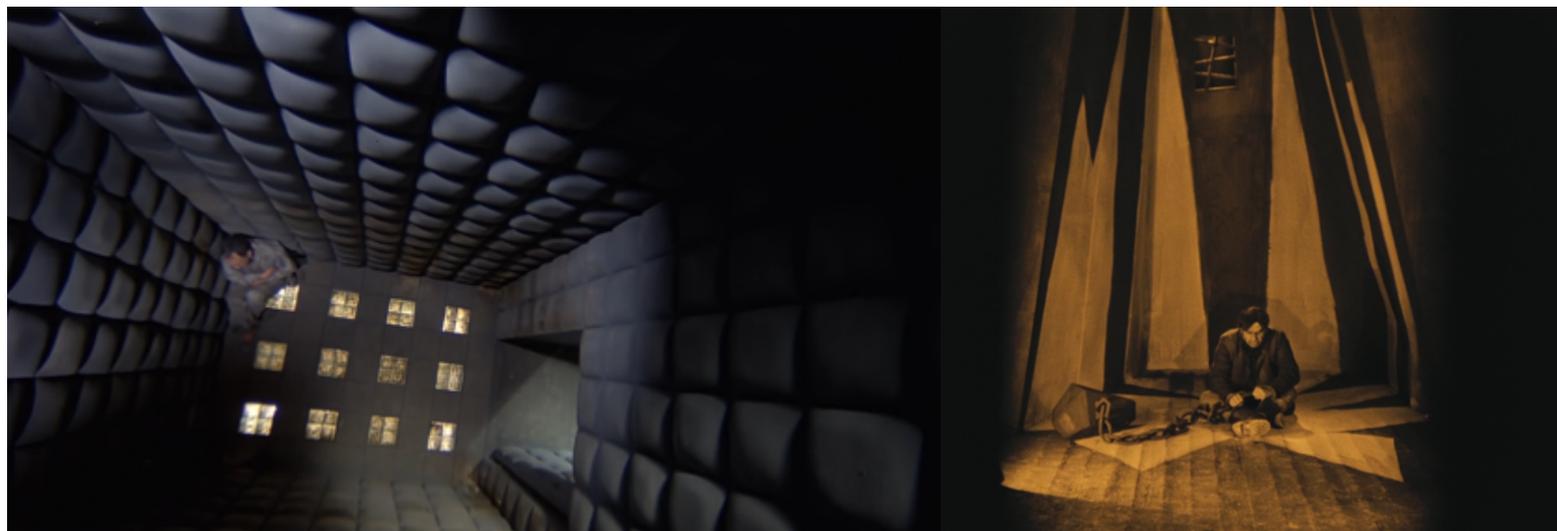


Fig. 127 - Sam locked up in a cell (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

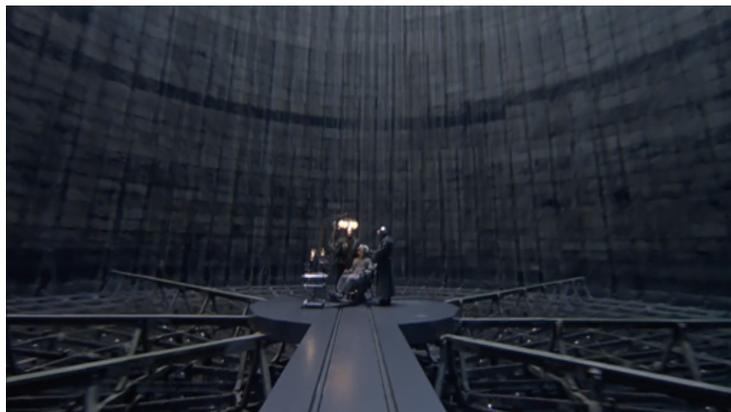
Fig. 128 - A cell in The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene, 1920)

As seen above, the visual representation of the cell in both films are very sharp, narrow and high, displaying how small and helpless the characters are.

The grey sets in *Brazil* externally reflect what the world feels like internally. Grey, dull and paranoid. The last scene in which Sam is locked up in an immense room before being lobotomized is so big that he almost visually disappears. The vastness of the set represents how insignificant Sam is about to become. He is afraid and senses the imminent doom and that is translated onto the screen by the intimidating set.



Fig. 129 to 131 - Sam about to get lobotomized (*Brazil*, Terry Gilliam, 1985)



1.3 (CONCLUSION)

Like with the German Expressionist cinema sets such as *The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, *Brazil* uses décor to externally represent the internal feelings of the character.

2.1 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND METROPOLIS)

As stated before, *Metropolis* is part of the German Expressionism movement. The science fictional and dystopian city of *Metropolis*, representing industrial advance and efficiency absolutely used sets in order to represent that. Tall buildings, modern architecture, spotlights and extensive bridges, the city is a total futuristic take on urban effervescence.





Fig. 132 to 140 - The dystopian, sci-fi vision on the Metropolis city (*Metropolis*, Fritz Lang, 1927)

In *Brazil*, the city is also depicted as futuristic and dystopian and the exaggerated tallness and clean architecture are as present as in *Metropolis*.



Fig. 140 to 143 - The city in Brazil, tall, industrial and grey (*Terry Gilliam*, 1985)

2.2 (CONCLUSION)

With no doubt, *Brazil* is inspired by the skyscrapers of *Metropolis*. Endless giants of stone, emphasizing on the class layers between high and low. The sci-fi and futuristic cities are represented with clean, tall and efficient buildings.

3.1 (PARALLELS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN)

Just like in *Brazil* with its retro futuristic décor and sets, *The City Of Lost Children* mixes the science fiction dystopian look with old looking machinery, dust and fog, resembling the imagery of the industrial revolution. With its green water, odd boathouses and water mines, the sets immediately move the viewer into a new world. The colors are evoking unsafe, dirty and grim destinies, reflecting the state of society; while in *Brazil*, the constant overwhelming greyness represents how routines rules its world. Both films show the contrast between the class layers with its sets, flamboyant rooms clashing with miserable looking places. “The bleakness of the world is mirrored in the setting”⁴⁸



Fig. 144 and 145 - The character One, sitting at the docks (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro, 1995)



⁴⁸ Webb, Jen, and Tony Schirato. “DISENCHANTMENT AND THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN.” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 13, 2004.



The exterior sets are depicting the city experienced by most of poor citizens, but Krank's lair is shockingly prosperous in contrast. He physically is above them; he lives in a house raised high over the water, isolated. Like in *Brazil*, the differences between class layers are visually pictured.



Fig. 156 to 161 - Krank's lair, wealthy interiors, with a full pantry and an impressive dream-extracting room (*The City Of Lost Children*, Jeunet and Caro)

The incredible amount of details in the sets of *The City Of Lost Children* is something similar to Terry Gilliam's richness of decors, he said; "My films, I think, are better the second and third time, frankly, because you can now relax and go with the flow that may not have been as apparent as the first time you saw it and wallow in the details of the world we're creating. I try to clutter my visuals up, they're worthy of many viewings."⁴⁹



Fig. 162 to 165 - Multiple sets in *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985)

3.2 (CONCLUSION)

The colors and scenery of the otherworldly cities created for the films *The City Of Lost Children* and *Brazil* really convey the precise visual impacts in order to make those surrealistic settings believable. They are one of the key tools that guide the viewer into this particular place and time travel.

⁴⁹ "Focus On: 100 Most Popular English-Language Film Directors." *Focus On: 100 Most Popular English-Language Film Directors*, Focus On, 2017.

5...CONCLUSION

Brazil is a sublime conveyor between the Surrealist innovators and the absurdist new directors. With its dream glorification and judgment upon our modern society, the contrast between poetry and satire is poignant and leaves the audience with many ideas to cultivate. With themes such as identity, Totalitarianism, propaganda, consumerism, capitalism, profit over humanity, corruption, illusion and injustice, *Brazil* is a film full of witty substance. Carrying us away with its magic realism and otherworldly scenery, it isn't just an escape but a true and provocative statement about what's wrong in our world.

*Science fiction films are not about science, they are about disaster, which is one of the oldest subjects of art.*⁵⁰

As for what the thesis brought to my own artistic evolution, I finally am able to put words on those itchy subjects that I love writing and creating about; the Absurdist and Surrealist spirited minds or the satirical words and unconventionality of certain characters, the underlying dark humor or the thoughts provoking dialogues as well as the critic of our own very uncanny daily life. Carrying out those subjects while inserting as much poetry as possible, it is not plain escapism but a real need to comment on profound and touching themes. For my new ongoing project, a concept album called "*deadbeat underdog*", the analysis of such films guide me cleverly between erupting self-expression, cinematic storytelling through voice, music and sounds, enraged and incisive lyrics and a clear criticism about how society shapes behavior and bleaches out eccentric personalities. Like most movies cited in this thesis, the main character of the album will start a personal revolution in order to find a particular kind of freedom, while fighting the social and societal norms.

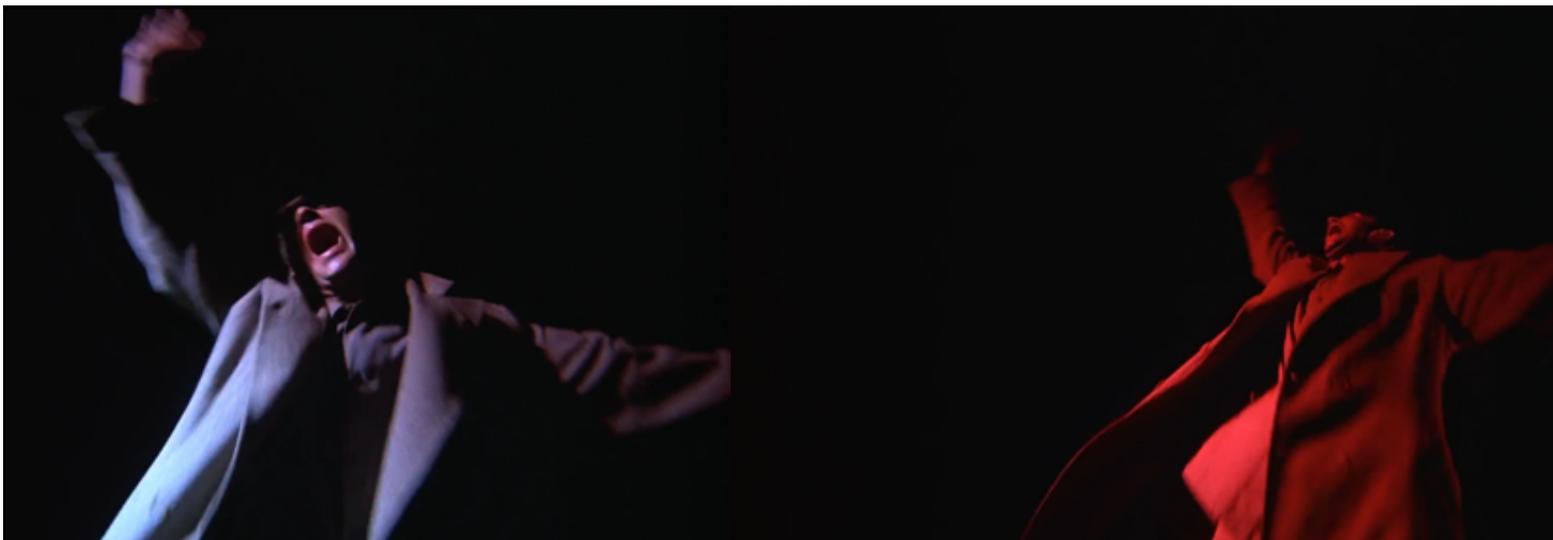


Fig. 166 and 167 - Sam falling into emptiness (Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985)

⁵⁰ "The Imagination of Disaster." *The Imagination of Disaster*, by Susan Sontag, 1964.

6...ADDITIONAL COMPARISONS

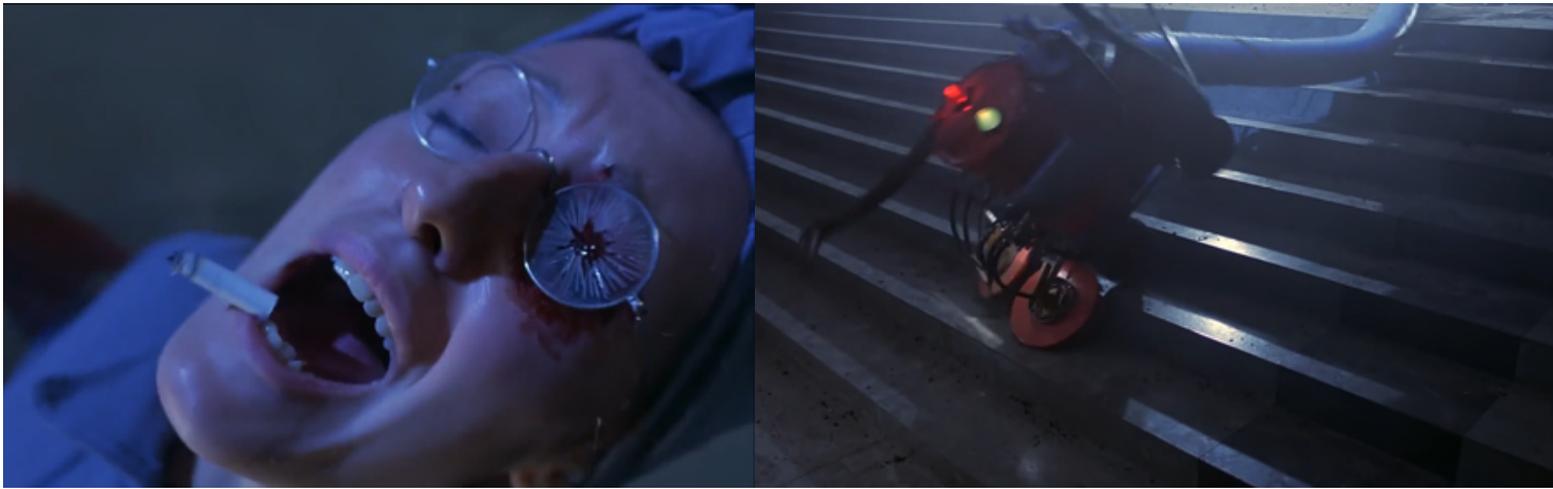


Fig. 168 and 169 – Brazil, Terry Gilliam, 1985



Fig. 170 and 171 - Battleship Potemkin, Sergei Eisenstein, 1925

Besides this visual reference, many others could be made; the way bureaucracy and consumerism are displayed in *Playtime* by Jacques Tati, or how the main character's room is automated in Luc Besson's *Fifth Element*. The surrealistic treatment of the plotline and dialogues in *Last Year At Marienbad* by Alain Resnais, the way the upper class is ridiculed in *The Exterminating Angel* by Luis Buñuel, the grotesque depiction of society in *Zazie Dans Le Métro* directed by Louis Malle. The outcast characters in *L'atalante* by Jean Vigo or even how the supposed safe and reassuring priest, who is the representation of the Church, is actually the vicious murderer in *The Night Of The Hunter* by Charles Laughton.

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