Technological Dystopia in the Science Fiction Genre

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Abstract

Science fiction films as a mass medium for public consumption have disseminated cautionary parables of technological dystopia rooted in existing social and economic conditions. *Metropolis* (1927), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Terminator* (1984), and *The Matrix* (1999) illustrate transformations of the genre. The theme that ties them together is the representation of technology and its effect on human society in the future. Each film deals with the subject in different ways that ultimately relate to its cinematographic style, technical advancements, and the story line. And yet, the theme of the failed quest for utopia remains morally unresolved in the depiction of the rise of a technological dystopia and its effect on human society in a world to come, playing on the incommensurability of philosophical, religious, political, economic, and literary narratives of scientific progress.

Keywords

Technology · Popular culture · Film · Dystopia · Cinematography

Before the invention of "moving pictures," the theme of dystopia was represented narratively in literature and gradually became a major element of science fiction genre story lines in film (Berger 1976). The first novel that arguably broached the subject of the type of world we would want to live in was Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (published 1516) (Clayton 1996). It represented an ideal society free from crime, poverty, and antagonism in which human beings could thrive and implied that our existing state was dystopic where life was hard and unfair. The reality More fictionalized was no existing, physical place or corporeality, an *ou-topos,* nowhere.

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Its backdrop was bleak and terrifying without semblance of hope or iota of comfort. The book was a gateway to the theme of dystopia because it embodied a reaction to the fears of a world that was hostile and inhabitable. Its appearance led to works of literature – for example, Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and even Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* – that depicted different types of societies from ideal and satirical perspectives (Clayton 1996) representing a failed quest to discover utopia and even understand it. Global exploration and discoveries of unknown lands and peoples made the question of what a "new world" *would* or *could* look like infinitely more urgent. In 1895, by the time H.G. Wells had written *The Time Machine* portraying a protagonist who travels into the future to find a "perfect society," the progress of science had enriched the fictional vision of utopia and included the possibility of dystopia as a negative space in the human imagination (Landon 1992). Literature provided the backdrop for movie representations of a future world and human life gone terribly wrong in the pursuit of progress. The evolution of science fiction films as a mass medium for public consumption disseminated cautionary parables of technological dystopia rooted in existing social and economic conditions. Transformations of the genre are worked out in different ways that ultimately relate to cinematographic style, technical advancements, and the story line. And yet, the theme of the failed quest for utopia remains morally unresolved in the depiction of the rise of a technological dystopia and its effect on human society in a world to come, playing on the incommensurability of philosophical, religious, political, economic, and literary narratives of scientific progress.

The German expressionist production *Metropolis* (1927) directed by Fritz Lang is one of the first science fiction films of the technological dystopic genre, representing a clash between the wealthy and the laboring classes as the result of mechanization. In the metropolis of the film, industrialists in tall buildings hold economic and social power over workers who operate massive machines (McAuley 2015). The theme of technological dystopia is imbricated in the architectural modality of the city: a cubist monolith of buildings and rigid structures that are cold and alienating yet the result of sophisticated engineering principles. The materiality of the *cityscape* dwarfs human presence and renders the subject ephemeral in its spatial estrangement. The plot is quite simple: the privileged son (Freder) of a "master industrialist" (Fredersen) discovers how the laboring classes are exploited for profit by the autocrats due to mechanization that will eventually render the workers obsolete. With the help of young woman (Maria), the son tries to mediate between the rulers and the ruled to make society more equitable and just. Technology feeds the dystopic devolution of the social contract that is characterized by dehumanization and the exploitation of the laboring classes. The moral thrust of *Metropolis* is socioeconomic and renders the search for utopia an effect of resistance and the desire for a better life. A convoluted story of love and betrayal impels the action to drive home the humanistic message of the film on an emotional level that the audience can identify with beyond class struggle. Yet, coming after the industrial revolution, *Metropolis* is a political commentary on the social and economic division that happened in Europe during the late 1800s. This could be any city in which mechanization created

discrepancies in wealth between those who owned factories and other means of mass production and those who supplied the labor for the accumulation of capital (McAuley 2015). *Metropolis* enacts the quest for utopia as an allegorical socioeconomic sub-genre (Jameson 2005). It frames the hermeneutic for understanding the ideological conditions of alienation and the effects of technological dystopia.

The influence of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867) and the theoretical foundations of communism can be seen through the class struggle worked out in the plot of *Metropolis*. The impending threat of technology and mechanization as the root of social and economic inequality would have been very real to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century viewers (McAuley 2015). The innovations of industrialism and mass production gave rise to early forms of capitalism that paid little or no regard to the human rights of workers in the pursuit of profit. Freder accidently sees how a machine kills and injures some laborers and becomes conscious of how the ruling classes are exploiting their power to squeeze out surplus value from labor. He falls in love with Maria, an activist, who has secretly been uniting the workers in tunnels under the city to revolt against their mistreatment. Fredersen finds out and asks an inventor (Rotwang) to help stop the revolt. A complex ruse is planned to replace Maria with an android to quash the rebellion. *Metropolis* highlights the moment when the resistance of the proletariat threatens the social and economic hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Allusions to the Russian Revolution of 1917 are unmistakable. It also raises questions about the dehumanizing potential of technology as the robotic simulation of Maria constructed by Rotwang to deceive the masses ends up causing conflict and violence among the workers. The film as a form of science fiction suggests that there is something in human nature that when combined with technology for the sake of economic gain has dystopic effects on society (Telotte 1995). The plot of *Metropolis* moves toward a hopeful resolution that things may get better for the exploited masses. However, for Marx this could only happen when the workers take over the means of production, and that event would only happen through a bloody revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie (McAuley 2015). In *Metropolis,* there is hope that social and economic equality will be achieved because the industrialists have had an epiphany after a phase of ideological defamiliarization and there is the possibility of a new order after the horror of truth. The theme of technological dystopia structures the morality of the film and questions the fantasy of human progress. *Metropolis* is a parable in which social and economic injustice is revealed and defeated and there is the promise of a future utopia, although we don't know what that will look like.

The theme of technological dystopia is carried on in later films of the science fiction genre. *Blade Runner* (1982), *Terminator* (1984), and *The Matrix* (1999) represent the anti-utopia of a cataclysmic landscape for humanity, if the desire to produce perfect machines and their artificial intelligence goes unchecked. The prospect of a world infiltrated, controlled, or constructed by robots usually starts with some form of purpose that seems altruistic: to aid economic or social life and make it easier to exist (Sobchak 1987). But human ingenuity combined with rapid technological advancements creates the conditions for dystopia that force an endgame and threaten the state of the world.

Blade Runner depicts the problems of bioengineering life. The destructive "mechanical bride" of *Metropolis* is replaced with "replicants" or hyperreal simulations of human life (Baudrillard 1983). The film is based on an adaptation of Robert K. Dick's science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1991). Whereas the replicants of *Blade Runner* are not robots, they serve the same purpose in threatening the existence of human life and the power of the economic elites by attacking the class structure of society (Landon 1992). They are stronger and more capable, so they must be controlled and policed to do pre-programmed tasks. The alien aspects of technology that are represented in the robots of *Metropolis* are not as pronounced in *Blade Runner* since it is quite difficult to distinguish between a replicant and human being without specific tests of empathy (Begley 2004). The replicants don't fall apart and devolve into "pure machines." But simulating human life is not that same as being human for the scientific and corporate powers who want to preserve the status quo in *Blade Runner* and keep these bioengineered beings as an enslaved labor force (Kellner et al. 1984). The Tyrell Corporation was responsible for creating these synthetic forms for the purpose of populating work colonies off Earth. There is the suggestion that human world has profited economically from the creation of replicants and their labor, thus creating the possibility a society that reflects the effects of globalization (Kellner et al. 1984). Although the scene of 2019 Los Angeles is very multicultural and cosmopolitan, there are chaos and disorder separating the elites from the masses. The first scene sets the world of *Blade Runner* against a backdrop of mushroom clouds, smoke, and a rain that never stops during the film. The suggestion is that the location is somewhere in a post-nuclear war landscape where people have escaped to. The urban backdrop is neon, glass and steel but dark, wet, and dreary: a reflection of Deckard's state of mind perhaps (Landon 1992). The camera pans the scene of glowing signs advertising "off-world" holiday "adventures" while sounds of cars and thunder are heard in the decaying city. We see people of diverse "races" scattering in all directions below flying cars. It is a science fiction multicultural society the audience can acknowledge as familiar, channeling Time Square in New York City or downtown Tokyo, but after an implied technological age that has created the nightmare of this dystopia (Shanahan 2014). Marshall McLuhan (1964) coined the term "global village" to acknowledge the immediacy of information dissemination and exchange through electronic media, in essence, the shrinking of distance and time for communication. Another effect of technology in this scenario is globalization and the creation of hybrid and unequal societies. *Blade Runner* reflects the social and economic culmination of the movement of people across digital and physical neighborhoods at a time when barriers to migration have been removed, by choice or necessity (Shanahan 2014). The urban landscape portrayed is hopeful for some and not for others as Deckard moves between decadent bars and squatter-filled residences. *Blade Runner* suggests that the crime is not fitting into the mix of what society is, even for simulated human beings.

The existence of the replicants is considered problematic because, like the cyborg terminators, they do not have empathy (Williams 1988). Three of the bioengineered

beings – Roy Batty, Zhora, and Pris – escape the work colony and need to be "retired" because they begin to seek autonomy and free thought. The possibility of a society ruled by replicants with no respect for human life is the essence of the technological dystopic vision that the film represents as a piece of science fiction. However, Ridley Scott makes these creatures seem vulnerable and introduces a moral dilemma into the narrative (Williams 1988). There is little if no reflection on the plot or its meaning outside of the film, or even within it, by the characters for that matter, although there are symbolic elements in the story and action that have thematic significance. There is very little dialogue in the script. Judgment and interpretation are left up to the audience after the chase is finished (Shanahan 2014). There are complications along the way for protagonist Deckard, an ex-cop and reluctant replicant hunter, who is going through the motions to find rogue "humanoids" that are the products of misguided scientific experiments. Protagonist Deckard is hired by the corporation to "take out" the rogue replicants before they can do more social and economic damage, but he is introduced by Eldon Tyrell (the inventor) to Rachel, a simulated being who has been given memories. Unlike the others, she was programmed to live beyond a 4-year limit. Rachel is dangerous because she thinks that she is human. Surprisingly, she does not act like a replicant and saves Deckard life, only to disappear after realizing the truth of her origins (Doane 2004). A sense of hope for the future of humanity does not underlie *Blade Runner* other than these artificial creations of science. The premise of the film suggests that the human world is in decline and the replicants are a new model for being and existence that must be destroyed to prevent resistance against the status quo. Technology becomes a way to take control of one's life and freedom in *Blade Runner,* something that must be policed by the state. There is an underground community of bio-creators who manufacture bizarre new life forms (e.g., animated mannequins, puppets, and stuffed animals) as "friends" to populate that world. It is truly a horror show but normalized in the science fiction film world of *Blade Runner*. Deckard is forced to become a replicant hunter to save himself from persecution by the authorities. He takes on the role with methodical precision, killing a female replicant dancer, but then after he develops affection for Rachel, he is not without inner conflict. This relationship foreshadows a seemingly new era of life, a hybrid fusion of human being and replicant, or at least the possibility of living side by side. The idea raises questions in the film about the ethics of technology and what should be created (Landon 1992). Although the issue is not addressed directly in the dialogue, it is a motivation revealed in the plot because Deckard can see the transformation of the replicants from unfeeling automatons to emotional subjects. He identifies with them after getting close to Rachel. *Blade Runner* exposes the problem of reducing the space between what is human and the essence of technology by making the violence of the film physical and not a product of CGI (Shanahan 2014). When replicant Roy meets his creator Tyrell, he gouges out the eyes of the scientist like Oedipus does. It is as if he is avenging the deaths of others like him, so no more damage can be done. *Blade Runner* is like a morality tale in this respect because it foreshadows how the misuse of technology without responsibility ends up in creative and destructive forms of expression and resistance. The film presents

a dystopic world where the evolution of science tries to overcome the essence of the human spirit (Shanahan 2014).

Blade Runner debuts while the cloning controversy – raging since the mid-1970s about the possibility of synthesizing life – was about to become real with lab-manufactured lamb embryos being replanted in the womb of a sheep resulting in births. Genetic engineering seems normal in the techno-scientific world of *Blade Runner* in order for corporations to achieve mastery over the raw materials of the physical universe and profit from it without having to pay for labor. It seems easier to exploit replicants for the work since they have no rights, although the society represented through the conventions of *film noir* is very much dark, fragmented, and decaying (Sobchak 1987). The Tyrell Corporation is an all-seeing and all-knowing entity like Big Brother, but may be not as ruthless, although its practices produce a technological dystopia (Sammon 1996). Deckard is blackmailed into hunting down the replicants and cannot hide from authority; however, he wants nothing to do with the status quo. His moral dilemma resembles the movie *Frankenstein* (with Boris Karloff) in which the creator is sympathetic to the monster and repulsed by it (Clayton 1996). The replicants are illegal on Earth but more importantly their existence goes against nature. Science facilitated the creation of a post-human world in *Blade Runner* to exploit the environment, but its products, the replicants, are not accepted (Sammon 1996), maybe as a necessary evil, but that is all. Except for Deckard, other human beings do not empathize with them, and even he manages to kill most of them. It could be because the replicants are considered too alien, but another explanation is their social and economic function as essentially slave labor "dehumanizes" them (Williams 1988). *Blade Runner* is a critique of advanced capitalism in this sense like *Metropolis,* where the industrial elites are in direct conflict with the masses and the workers, manufactured as robots or replicants, who have no rights or autonomy (Kellner et al. 1984). Both films reflect the same sense of desperation in the depiction of technological dystopia but end in radically different ways. *Blade Runner* foreshadows a romantic reconciliation of the human and post-human when Deckard and Rachel run away to nature. *Metropolis* suggests the hope that socioeconomic difference can be bridged for a better community. Overall, however, the sense of disillusionment that the depiction of technological dystopia promotes in *Blade Runner* is not overcome when Roy dies. There is no redemption for humanity, even though he becomes a Christ symbol, one hand pierced with a nail and the other holding a white dove (Kellner et al. 1984). In the end, Deckard sides with the replicants and takes Rachel away to nature to escape the social and economic system that has made her existence possible but could also enslave her.

The Hollywood blockbuster *Terminator* (1984), directed by James Cameron, depicts cyborgs from the future whose purpose is to exterminate human beings. The robots were made possible because an engineer invented a type of silicone chip developed by Cyberdyne Systems that eventually led to a self-aware, self-replicating, and autonomous artificial intelligence (AI) called Skynet. Eventually, the cyborgs from the future that come to kill Sarah Connor – the woman who will organize the resistance against the machines – are human simulations that look very

real, but without feelings or emotions. In such a dystopia, non-technological beings are considered irrelevant by the AI in the grand scheme of things and must be enslaved or destroyed (Telotte 1995). The cyborgs embody the possible technological dystopia of a future. Human life thus becomes not needed or dark in its hybridity, like the menacing figure of Darth Vader in *Star Wars* (1977), perhaps the most memorable image of director George Lucas' franchise debut. The character is a frightening blend of man and machine that represents what happens when "the dark side" overpowers the human. But Darth Vader also shows the extent to which technology is integrated in human life because he is a functioning cyborg. The lack of empathy that he has for the rebels is explained by his physical makeup and "the force." In *Star Wars,* there is a division between good and bad that is rooted in how technology is used, for what purposes. When Darth Vader cuts off Luke Skywalker's hand, the prosthetic is accepted as a natural substitute, whereas it is not for any "evil" or antagonistic characters (Cavlelos 1999). The armor of the storm troopers removes any of their individuality, and they look like automatons rather than human beings. The R2D2 and C3PO are drones with personality and a sense of right and wrong despite being machines; consequently, they are more or less personified and appealing. *Star Wars* takes the science fiction genre and creates a type of melodramatic space opera out of the plot, but with light saber duels and holograms (Kaminski 2007). This has been a criticism of the film (and of the various prequels and sequels) because technology never seems to advance and forms almost a neutral backdrop to the action (Cavlelos 1999). The story is the main thrust rather than creating a scientifically progressive universe in which the weapons become more catastrophic and the spaceships more capable. Despite the "stagnation" over the series, *Star Wars* was original at the time in the way it created a future world that embedded technology within everyday life and integrated it with human action.

Machines are naturalized within the science fiction genre as a part of existence to the point where they are expected and become a stock feature but at the same time predictive of what the future could be like (Cavlelos 1999). The *Terminator* reflects concern over the social and economic futurism of the science fiction film genre and the dystopia it represents through unrestrained technological progress (Tellote 1995). We can place it during the early 1980s, when advancements in chip technology resulted in the first desktop computers and the prospect of AI being used to manufacture self-thinking machines such as robots (Landon 1992). *Terminator* asks hard questions: What will happen to us if technology can reproduce itself? How will this affect human life? Will we survive? In the later *Terminator* films of the series during the 1990s and 2000s, the vision of technological dystopia is resisted in a struggle of humans against machines (Telotte 1995). The ethical questions eventually became unavoidable because AI had social and economic implications and the science fiction genre could not avoid addressing them. Ironically, there is an affinity developed between the cyborgs and the rebels in the later *Terminator* films. After the near extinction of humanity, the series progresses to suggest that AI can be an ally if there are parameters for control that are set up to prevent the takeover of life by intelligent technology (Bukatman 1993). In more recent science fiction genre films, the machines become personified and exhibit emotions as well as the ability to

think but still reflect the theme of technological dystopia. The boy-bot in *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001) is programmed to mimic feelings of love and takes the place of a child put in a medical coma to help the parents cope. *Her* (2013) is about a computer-simulated woman that functions as companion for a lonely "tech nerd" living in self-created digital world. *Wall-E* (2008) is an animated film about a drone who watches old romantic movies and becomes infatuated with an EVE probe in the junkyard that used to be the Earth. Technology is depicted as having some positive values in these films, but in dystopic worlds where humans become extinct because of climate change, have little or no social contact with each other due to the Internet, or transform into lazy, unrecognizable creatures because of mechanization. In these films, the science fiction genre becomes a way to reflect on the effects and significance of problems that pose a real and present danger to any possibility of achieving utopia such as bad environmental practices, social alienation, and overreliance on technology (Berger 1976). *Terminator* is a parable about trying to avoid the possibility of dystopia through the use of AI technology without any foresight or correcting the self-destructive path before it happens. The AI in *Terminator* is alien, hostile, and antagonistic, and this representation supports the sense of fear that drives the story of the film as a variation of the science fiction genre and its theme of technological dystopia (Tellote 1995).

The Matrix (1999) caused a paradigm shift in the science fiction movie genre. The Wachowskis succeeding in tapping into fears about the rise of technology that films such as *Metropolis, Blade Runner,* and *Terminator* (1984) had brought to the cinema about the tyranny of machines and the dystopic future of humanity if science continued on the path of cyber-evolution (Baker 1993). Among many, there are two noteworthy innovations to the genre that *The Matrix* brings to the screen: (1) groundbreaking special effects and computer-generated images (CGI) to transition between the real world and the digital space where the normal laws of physics are manipulated and bent (King 2000) and (2) symbolism in the cinematography and story lines that play on philosophical, religious, political, economic, and literary narratives.

Perhaps the most striking features of the Wachowskis film are the special effects and the use of CGI. This combination in *The Matrix* facilitates the audience's journey down the rabbit hole between the world of reality and the empire of the machines (Irwin 2002). The first scene of the movie depicts Trinity, a member of the rebel gang of Morpheus, trying to find a phone to be teleported to safety. It sets up what the viewer should expect in the digital world of *The Matrix* as Trinity walks on walls, pauses in midair, and jumps superhuman distances between buildings to escape being killed by the agents. These imaginative demands of the story line on the audience are characteristic of science fiction and represent "the essence of [this] Wonderland" (Wood 1986, p. 166) and its spectacle. *The Matrix* plays on the tensions between what we expect to see and what is happening so that we become confused about what is real (Irwin 2002). We must believe the premise and accept that Trinity can be superhuman to get past any resistance to the action of the film and accept its story line within the suspension of our disbelief. There is a juxtaposition between the bleak environment of the *Nebakanezer* and the hyperreality of the matrix. The utilitarian deck of the ship that is a mishmash of wires and computers

looks ragged and makeshift. The characters are not glamourous, composed, physically dominating, and "cool" as in the matrix environment: they are pale, gaunt, and neurotic and still have that ghastly input at the base of the skull. The scenes moving from the darkness and shadows of the "mothership" into the simulation of the machine environment explode with light and color. While the bodies of the rebels are physically present outside the coded space of the matrix, the action is mundane, slow, and undramatic (Manovich 2001). CGI enables the plot to move forward and works to draw us into the magic of the film by revealing the difference between the real world and the mental constructs of the matrix when the humans are "plugged into" its frame (Doane 2004). The Wachowskis are expert at marking the scene transitions and highlighting their significance for the story through the use of special effects. When Neo puts his finger through the cracked mirror and melts into his own image, the moment is a turning point for the film and the viewers as the character undergoes a physical and mental transformation and is wrapped in a liquid metal cocoon (Doane 2004). The special effect echoes the type of shape shifting performed by the T-1000 cyborg in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). After taking the red pill, we see Neo being consumed by the "silver goo" as he breaks through the illusory wall of the matrix simulation keeping him from perceiving his actual self and the form of his existence. CGI makes the representation intense and gives us a look at an alternative reality, a science fiction rendering of the present and possible future of humanity, if technology progresses unchecked (Irwin 2002).

The Matrix takes the field of special effects further than any film before it because of the evolution in digital processing and graphics. It creates a hybrid "Hollywood blockbuster" and science fiction cinema verite to form a new genre that plays on philosophical, religious, political, economic, and cultural narratives through dialogue and symbolism (Irwin 2002). Neo (the One) is selected by Morpheus (the god of sleep) because humanity is looking for a savior from a terrible existence as slaves to technology. The story contains allusions to Judeo-Christian narratives as well as symbolism. It is a baptism or anointing of sorts when he falls into the water and he is reborn, expelled from his cyborg "womb pod" because he has become self-aware and useless for the matrix. In the previous scene however, Morpheus makes reference to Neo going down the rabbit hole after he breaks through the looking glass, obviously citing *Alice in Wonderland* (Irwin 2002). He frames how we should decode the elements of the CGI image and its specific rendering of the action according to the religious and literary allusions. *The Matrix* makes technology a part of its focus like all films in the science fiction genre.

Morpheus points out to Neo that CGI is used to make the virtual become real and that they have to remind themselves that it is all an effect of simulation. He calls it the "desert of the real" after Jean Baudrillard (Poster and Baudrillard 1988) whose philosophy the Wachowskis sprinkle through the dialogue and cinematography. Morpheus asks "What is reality?" and shows Neo the fields where humans are grown to perform an economic function of being a battery to supply the machines with endless power. Unless one has the ability to step outside the matrix and see the horror of this reality, then one is doomed to live in a simulation that is more "real" than reality itself or a "hyperreality" (Irwin 2002; Poster and Baudrillard 1988).

Neo had been existing in that ideological prison before Morpheus had opened his eyes to the truth to see reality for the first time outside the matrix. Only then could he enact some sort of resistance to his technological enslavement and exploitation.

The Matrix basically reverses the premise of *Blade Runner*. Instead of bounty hunters searching to neutralize replicants that are posing as human beings, the machine agents are the pursuers of rebels trying to cleanse the system of a mortal virus. *Blade Runner* was the first science fiction film (1) to overtly represent the decaying urban futuristic landscape of the twenty-first century like a "global village" (McLuhan 1964) and (2) to show how technology gone mad leads to forms of expression and resistance that are creative and destructive at the same time (Shanahan 2014). The movie is a complicated and dystopic vision of what the world could be if the evolution of cybernetics replaces the desire to preserve the human spirit.

The theme of technological dystopia in the science fiction film genre is reflected in the story lines and production features of *Metropolis, Blade Runner, Terminator*, and *The Matrix.* These movies have been influenced by the issues and debates of the time in which they were written and produced. Similarities and variations in the theme of technological dystopia within these films regarding can be explained by the literary, social, and economic forces that have influenced the science fiction genre and the particular styles of the directors that have moved the art form of filmmaking forward. The progress of technology has always included the possibility of dystopia instead of utopia in the quest to create the "perfect society." *Metropolis, Blade Runner, Terminator*, and *The Matrix* are representations of what the world and human life could look like in a future gone terribly wrong after technological progress. As part of the science fiction film genre, they are parables of technological dystopia that are rooted in existing social and economic conditions very familiar to us now.

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