CityScope: The Cinema and the City

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Abstract

Why is it that the city has become such an aesthetic focus for cinema? Like the cinema, the modern city is an iconographic form of the twentieth century and shares many of cinema's obsessions with speed, light and movement: the cinema and the city are kindred expressions of modern humanity. In this article, the author discusses the history of this relationship and how a particular visual approach to the city has developed, the concept of 'CityScope', and shaped how spectators and citizens comprehend the spaces of the modern and post-modern conurbation.

Why is Cinema Fastcinated by the City

The West

The western cityscape that the public recognises, with ever-rising towers of steel and glass, neon lights and constant motion, is an icon of the twentieth century and a metaphor of a concept of 'progress'. More than an icon, however, it is a machine created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to marshal the masses and has a fundamentally ideological function. Throughout the enlightenment and into the 1800s, city architects across the West were redesigning their metropolitan areas, destroying the medieval rat-runs and creating vistas that clearly evoked the powerhouses of the city (e.g. Pall Mall leads the eye of the spectator towards Buckingham Palace in London). In Paris, for example, the redesigning of the streets aided in marshalling protesters through the city whilst the military were able to keep them in their sights during the difficult years of dissent, revolution, empire and republic. The city architecture became a model of governmental power and vice versa:

> The idea […] was […] that the government of a large state like France should ultimately think of its territory on the model of the city. The city was no longer perceived as a place of privilege, as an exception in a territory of field, forests, and roads. The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead, the cities, with the problems that they raised, and the particular forms that they took, served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory.

(Foucault, 1984, cited in Rabinow, 1996, p241)

Rationality was the byword of design during this period: the enlightenment, fuelled by both the industrial and social revolutions in myriad ways, whilst the fires of romanticism were also stoked, lead to utopian views of society in which the people and their spaces were categorised and that in a notion of *place* within society could also be found freedom.

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Yet, as Foucault notes in his 1984 interview with Paul Rabinow, this model of utopianism "*cannot*" succeed. If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of liberty.

Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in slums, thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there" (ibid: 246). Yet, ironically, this thought that the slums somehow afforded a freedom that the crescents and streets of neo-classicism is precisely an idea with which the great realist writers of the 19th century, such as Charles Dickens and Fydor Dostoyevsky, engaged in their depictions of social lives without the dishonesty of 'polite society' in novels such as *Bleak House* and *Little Dorritt* (Dickens, 1852-1853 and 1855-57), *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brother Karamazov* (Dostoyesvsky, 1866 and 1879-80). The slums and their anarchy were seen as signifiers of a dead or dying world in both positive and negative ways: they are both places to hide as a criminal, decaying and ready to crumble, as in 'Tom All Alones' in *Bleak House*, but also where family ties, seen as disintegrating because of the increasing mobility of working people, were held together with a strong sense of social responsibility (as seen in the Micawber family, despite their faults, in *David Copperfield*, 1849-50). These alleyways and poor spaces become, through these dual representations of their social function, a connotation of the past and, as such, are subject to both a nostalgic and critical perspective. The past is the space dominated by the poor and the week in crowded, dirty tenements: the future is, by implication, wealthy, strong, spacious and clean.

Whilst aesthetically pleasing, street planning of the 19th century in most European and American cities was closely linked to socio-political concerns about the growing masses and how they should be corralled away from the middle-class areas, those modern spaces that signified the future. The mass migration towards the urban contradictorily both reminded the planners of the very thing they sought the city to become and also of the people it aimed to modernise in a way which encouraged the perception of those people as 'a problem'. Like Jeremy Bentham's 1787 panopticon, and Edward the II's medieval castles (such as the Tower of London), the city roofs became a series of potential watchtowers from which the systems of power could observe and control the people below. Consequently, the western city became a mechanism of the state, a State Apparatus - Louis Althusser's device by which the state controls the public (Althusser, 1969). Throughout his essay, Althusser sets out key repressive, physical State Appratuses (such as the army or the prison) and a selection of more abstract ideological ways of manipulation by the state (for example, the religious ideological state apparatus, or ISA, the legal ISA (of which the prison is part), the political ISA and, pertinent for an analysis of human spaces and creations, the communications and cultural ISAs). The modern western city, however, is both physically *and* ideologically repressive because, on the ground, it is capable of controlling the movement of people yet, at the same time, 'urban' living becomes desirable and a marker of social achievement due to the connections made since the industrial revolution between the city and potential wealth. It is also interesting to consider the extent to which the physical control mechanisms of a city are struggled against by those for whom the dream becomes a nightmare. A struggle which emphasises the "imaginary assemblage" (Adams & Searle, 1986: 240) which a belief system can only ever denote. This backlash against the city as an effective State Apparatus was evident in Krakow, when the city was partitioned into the ghetto spaces during World War II (as seen in Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* – 2003), and in the wall-divided Berlin of the Cold War. The ideologically influenced divided spaces cannot maintain their ahistorical existence in a context where the dominant power persists in historicizing its own behaviours, making the apparatus imperfect, because the ideology, in being historicized, cannot respond to the here

and now: "What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (Adams & Searle, 1986: 242). This is the crux on which belief and dogma turn. In recognising the imaginary (the utopian) in ideology, the belief is more powerful; but in trying to give the imaginary historical resonance, the ideology becomes flawed, a closed system in which only the initiated can participate. Yet the flawed ideology is that which interpellates many subjects because humanity seeks meaning and significance in acts which depend upon being able to create a trace of behaviours in the past. Consequently, it is possible to argue that ideology is divided into the consistent and the inconsistent, the rational and the irrational only through the subject's working definitions of these terms: as Althusser writes, "there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects" (ibid: 244). By contrast to the nightmare the western city *can* become, the popularity of urban spaces and cultures in recent times also needs to be considered: as the carefully considered architectural symphony of the 19th century gave way to the post-war cacophony of styles, did the western city as a physical form lose its ability to engineer behaviour and instead become a post-modernist location for anarchy?

The City of the Other

The representation of the city of the Other has typically been dominated by a certain anarchy of both space and behaviours. Consequently, one has to question the nature of the perspective if there is a sub-textual value judgement in this articulation. Is the concept of the city of Other driven by western definitions of the modern city? If the western city is predominantly high-rise then its inverse is mainly low-rise. If the western city is filled with Patrick Bateman-like yuppies (as in Brett Ellis Easton's *American Psycho*, 1991), over-achieving and turning city spaces into commercially fed killing-fields (both literally and metaphorically for some writers – as also seen in *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999)), then the city of the Other is dominated by the small timers, the failures and the hoods. These dichotomies help to create an articulation of the city of the Other both distinct from and *within* the modern city just as they did in Dickens. The city of the Other is populated by the marginalized, whether in western representations of those from other cultures: it is the space occupied by those abjected from society and those who become deject. In the west: the immigrants, the druggies, the prostitutes, the suicides waiting to happen. Elsewhere: those who are Other to that culture (including those groups above). Even whilst the depictions of Hong Kong, Bangkok, Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai have, in travelling around these spaces, emphasised the alleys and the confusion of images which echoes that of western visitors lost in their labyrinths, the vision of the modern city as a place of electric light, hustle and bustle and the love of speed still dominates and cars jam and drivers honk their horns in the clogged arteries of city spaces not designed for contemporary transporters. The antiquated city meets the modern city head-on and the friction is palpable. Significantly, however, the city of the Other, in its microcosmic rendering, has an almost anthropological quality and the spectator becomes a flâneur viewing those designated as Other. The city of the Other, in being represented rather than experienced manifests itself as social tourism: both an "obstacle to the new society… and its prototype" (Lefebvre, cited in Shields, 1999: 149) – and that was precisely the concern of those who sought to be architect of a new social environment.

The Attraction of the City for Cinema

Cinema, like the city, is also an ISA (part of the communications ISA) and a machine of the late-nineteenth century (the first film *Workers Leaving the Factory* by Louis and August Lumiére was exhibited in Paris in 1895) that has changed the nature of society. Without the

physical controls of a State Apparatus, the ideological variant as exemplified by the cinema achieves the manipulation of behaviours through the use of iconography. By creating cinema icons, the film industry influences how the spectator responds to actions and events. In the early cinema, iconographic imagery is used with full political awareness to present the moral and the immoral to audiences in the pre-censorship era: films are used by the temperance movement to persuade the largely working-class spectatorship not to drink and strident female characters are seen punished for their actions in the suffragette period. Cinema has been used for propagandist purposes, either official or unofficial, since its inception. What varies is the extent of that propaganda's success within the specific political environment. Consequently, like the city, cinema has always had its filmmakers and icons that work in opposition to the Ideological State Apparatus and work for the Ideological Anti-State Apparatus (my term - those bodies which counter the dominant ideology of the state).

Tom Gunning described the early cinema as "the cinema of attractions" (Gunning,1989), meaning that the early audiences were attracted to the spectacle and the novelty of moving pictures and not to the concept of cinema as an Art (a concept which doesn't develop until the early 1900s and was argued right into the sound era). Early films play on this sense of novelty and newness, including the 'phantom rides' where the camera was placed on top of a train or similar moving object to thrill the spectator into feeling the exhilaration of speed. In many senses, the response of the public to the new electric-lit cities was similar, especially as the gradual encroachment on the streets by the other new invention of the age, the automobile, made the city a site of movement and excitement:

> [T]he spectacle of the cinema both drew and contributed to the increased pace of modern city life, whilst also helping to normalise and cathect the frantic, disadjusted rhythms of the city […]; reflected and helped to mould the novel forms of social relations that developed in the crowded yet anonymous city streets; and both documented and helped to transform the social and physical space that the modern city represented.
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> (Clarke, 1997, p3)

The city seemed alive, new and was changing attitudes to work and leisure: the cinema became the citizens' most popular pursuit.

The 'kinematograph' (as it was first known) in these early years only referred to the machine and the film itself. Today, we use the term cinema to also include the physical place we visit to watch films. Earlier terms include, the "moving picture house", the "movie theatre", the "nickelodeon" and the "dime theatre" (in the UK the "penny theatre". These latter terms are rooted in the adaptation of old variety theatres (for the working classes) into movie theatres (and the corresponding demise in variety or vaudeville in the 1900s is no coincidence). These new picture houses were primarily urban spaces developing on the street from 1900 onwards and although initially owned by independent exhibitors, as the film industry developed, theatre owners were bought out by the developing studios, creating 'vertical integration' whereby the film studios controlled production, distribution and exhibition. Financial concerns, profit margins, were always at the heart of the 'dream factory' (Hollywood) and this was partly because of the role the industry played for the early film producers: the potential to make a 'quick buck'.

The early American cinema *industry* (post-1905) was the fruit of two key factors: European immigration into the US and the invention of more stable film materials (less flammable celluloid, for example). In terms of the political operation of the industry and its construction

as an ISA, the composition of the immigrant filmmakers cannot be underemphasized. The late 19th and early 20th century saw the largest influx of European immigrants into the US than at any time before or since: and the largest contributors were Italy, Ireland, Germany and Russia. The common factor with all was the poverty and suffering which dominated the lives of certain people within those nations at that time (for example the pogroms of Russia persecuting the Jews and the attack upon Catholics in Ireland, at that time entirely dominated by English rulers). These immigrants were therefore both political and economic migrants and most truly believed in the American Dream, the beneficent, benign, melting pot and the call to the poor at the feet of the statue of liberty:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door
>
> (Emma Lazarus, 'The New Colossus', 1883 – Lazarus herself was from a Russian Jewish family).

Films such as Chaplin's *The Immigrant*, from 1917, challenged both the representation of the immigrant and the view of the New York as a welcoming city of opportunity by revealing how the immigrant was frequently labelled as inherently criminal and often lost in the city, left to grub in the dirt for a lucky find, in Chaplin's tramp's case, a coin with which to buy food, which he later loses.

As a result of the creative influx, the first American film industry sprang up in New York and around the studio of Thomas Edison (who invented and patented the 'kinematograph' machine) in New Jersey. Consequently, whilst most early films had little or no plot and were expressions of display rather than being specifically 'cinematic', some of the first narrative films concern urban issues, particularly crime, and the chase sequence is formulated very quickly as extreme movement within the moving image. It is for this reason that the financial base of American filmmaking can still be found in Wall Street. A similar argument is also true of the financial reasons for filmmaking in Paris, Berlin and London.

It was not just New York, however, that inspired filmmakers (especially after the US film production moved to sunnier California from 1908 onwards – fuelled by the nickelodeon boom of the previous three years). Filmmakers throughout Europe were recording their urban spaces for posterity. The financial reason for this was that, in the years of "the cinema of attractions", people mostly wanted to see themselves on film and a filmmaker could record the streets of a local city on one day and play it back to those same citizens on another – creating a vain self-reflexivity in the new modern world. The cultural reason, meanwhile, was linked to the awareness that the world was changing very rapidly and to preserve dying practices and changing landscapes on celluloid was understood to be important, with a sense of losing history already expressed within the literatures of the wider period (for example in the science fictions of HG Wells and Aldous Huxley). Finally, the artistic reason was that the city of the twentieth century was the apogee of modernist art, architecture and design and was as potent a symbol of the zeitgeist as any expressionist painting or sculpture. One such early example of this fascination with the city and change on film is the 1906 short *The Skyscrapers of New York* (filmed by Fred A Dobson), which was an old-fashioned yet socially aware narrative of unemployment that visually exploited the mechanics of building a city.

Figure 1: 'Woolworth Building at Night, New York City' Detroit Publishing Co. Between 1910 and 1920. Touring Turn-of-the-Century America: Photographs from the Detriot Publishing Conpany, 1880-1920. From Library of Congress Archive: www.americalibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/progress/dobson_2

Consequently, it is evident that cinema's fascination with the city began very early in its history and shifted as early filmmaking progressed from the non-narrative actualités that recorded everyday events (*Workers Leaving the Factory*) to the early narrative action movies, the Keystone Cops and beyond. One of the key aspects linked to this fascination is the symbolic function of the cityscape as a metaphor for modernity and, in the international years of silent cinema, nation.

Each of the famous cities of the world has architecture and skyline features which operate as shorthand for the city and its nation: in London, Big Ben, in Paris, the Eiffel Tower, and in New York of the 1930s, the Empire State Building. As a result, architecture and skylines become associated with national characteristics and even fictional cities borrow from the real in order to communicate symbolic meaning. A recent filmic example of this can be seen in the symbolic operation of the US Robotics tower in *I, Robot* (Alex Proyas, 2004), shaped as a billowing sail (echoing the Burj al Arab Hotel in Dubai) with the profile of an Angler fish at its tip, signalling the trap the protagonists are about to enter towards the film's conclusion.

CityScope

Filming the Western City

Cinematographically, the western city is not filmed like any other vista in the movies. Images are filled with striking architectural features, motion in light streaks and disturbing angular effects that disorient the spectator and hint at vertigo. The city is filmed to augment both height and depth, not width, to emphasise the juxtaposition of empty skies and filled horizons. Technically, there are similarities between the shooting of the city and of any outdoor space: the use of high angle shots and crane systems looking down on the space below, the classical composition of line which emphasises the scale of the image; but there are fundamental differences which believe a different perspective on the world that the wide-screen landscapes of historical epics. In landscape the balance of sky and land is usually roughly equal, reiterating width and therefore the unknown expanses of a landscape but in the city the sky is marginalized to the edges of the image and hacked into by the sharp edges of modernist skyscrapers. In some films, indeed, the sky becomes irrelevant and is simply a light-source alluded to by light and shadow: and it is in these images, of a terranean city (if not a

subterranean one) that the city as ISA is most clearly represented as crushing identities and obliterating hopes and becomes a pessimistic, dystopian cityscape. Yet there is also an optimistic, utopian city that can be represented within these same limitations. When the roofs of the city become the dominant level upon which the film engages with the city and the sky is more widely viewed, or when the greenery and life of the city is manifested as ultimately freed by human endeavours, the city can become a beacon and the lights of those same skyscrapers a glowing siren calling the spectator and the protagonist to the productivity of benevolent capitalism. Thus, the filming of the city, in emphasising the partitioning of space by architecture, delineates the image of the city, the cityscape, as a primarily human creation and, framed by specific stylistic devices which seem ever more claustrophobic, even from high angles, evokes an image of the city which, in tribute to the wide-screen technology CinemaScope, can be called CityScope.

A key film in which both the utopian perspective and a dystopian critique of the same conceptual spaces are expressed is Fritz Lang's modernist-expressionist masterpiece *Metropolis* (1926). In the activity of the city, juxtaposed against gardens and a seeming idyll, the city presented is initially denoted as one in which the people live in the clouds, in the Penthouses of the skyscrapers, playing out faux-pastoral, Greco-roman fantasies for their entertainment. Leisure is emphasised over work and the participant appear innocents at play. Later in the film, however, these leisure activities become hedonistic and it is evident that the cityscape in the clouds is only for those who are at the literal and metaphorical pinnacles of the class system. The activities of the workers, though, mired in the darkness of Metropolis' halls and the cogs which drive their lives, are not represented as fruitful but rather the instigators of a slow death with the workers' gaunt faces reiterating the contrast with their masters. In shooting these two facets of the city, Lang revealed to the audience how the modern city, exemplifying twentieth-century 'progress' could potentially also be the means of society's downfall and the collapse of humanism. The difference in how Lang shot the two cities he represented is fully within the visual tropes of CityScope because the panoramic views of the light filled city in all its architectural detail (evoked through matt paintings and miniature models moving through the space) are juxtaposed against trapped images of the dark underworld with all exits from the image blocked by haunting shapes on the edge of the frame, providing the "monstrously expressionist form" Clarke describes in *The Cinematic City* (1997:36). In *Metropolis*, Lang's expressionist city works as a powerful metaphor for what is and what could be the post-industrialist society in any Western nation: its primary function is symbolic, as the name Metropolis clearly denotes. Lang's city stands for all cities. Like Superman's Metropolis and Batman's Gotham, it evokes a specific idea of progress, one which alludes to money, to capitalism and, further back, to a communication of humanity's power which all can recognise through its most potent icon, the skyscraper, Babel.

Strictly speaking, all cities within film, as an artificial representation of the city, are fantastic and symbolic. However, it is within the fantasy genre film where the city as an ideological concept is most richly evident. This richness is, in part, linked to the role cities play in twentieth century utopian and dystopian literatures. Just like *Metropolis* in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), the city is divided into two spaces but, unlike Lang's earlier film, where light at the skyscrapers' summits implies hope, Scott's film is filled with darkness and lit only with neon advertising, ejaculating oil fields and search lamps from the police 'cars'. In this sense, this city is without hope, without redemption. The skies are filled with blimps advertising an escape to the colonies but these promises are empty and the Replicants, the dead humans, the cyborgs, emphasise this vacuity in their need to return to the world, to life, even if the world offering a life of sorts is corrupted and rotting away like JF Sebastian. Yet, still, despite this darkness, the city of *Blade Runner* is still filmed in CityScope. The subject

may be seen at night, but the twinkling lights of the buildings still dominate visually and, in the panoramas seen in the opening titles' sequence, the beauty of these fairy lights in the darkness is unmistakably related to the conventions which create the iconic night-time city, the same conventions which open every episode of *Crime Scene Investigators* in Las Vegas and attract the spectator as a moth to the flame.

Typically, the proportion of these night-time, high-angle, shots is little different to the views of the city in day-time but, since Superman flew across the pastiche of New York in Richard Donner's1978 film about the eponymous hero, the day-time cityscape has largely been one in which the spectator interacts, moving through the city's spaces from establishing shot to initial scenes. Most recently, this CityScope extended establishing long take has been seen in films like *Spider-Man* (Sam Raimi, 2002) where the virtual camera echoes the 'phantom rides' to which I referred earlier. More interestingly, however, in how the cinema has used the extended establishing long take to unify the spaces, and a quality only really possible with CGI, is the way in which Chris Wedge's and Carlos Saldanha's 2005 film *Robots* has reoriented the classic CityScope high angle shots towards the subjectivity of the protagonist whose perspective the camera takes. Stylistically, this device, on a purely visual level, has been seen in other CGI heavy features, specifically, Spielberg's *Minority Report* and Proyas' *I, Robot* (2004) but it has lacked the signification that *Robots*, a film really designed for an audience of under-12s yet with a sophisticated analysis of consumer culture which adds depth for the adult spectator, imbues. In the form of a roller coaster ride (surely with the actual ride in the planning) the virtual camera introduces Rivet City with the protagonist's entry into it by taking the spectator on a break-neck journey across many levels, from the light into the dark and vice-versa. What this does, symbolically, is to eradicate the representational divide between the heights and the depths of the city – and the metaphorical readings encouraged by that divide. As such, the subterranean dystopian aspects of the city are represented but juxtaposed against light and hope, thus symbolising the idea of meritocracy and achievement as being tangible and possible; presenting an ideal of the world which might be described as eco-capital-socialism.

Nevertheless, regardless of the way in which the city is represented, fictional or otherwise, and however differently the political spaces are rendered, the concept of the city is iconic and specific cities are indelibly etched onto the minds of most who have never seen them except on the screen. This is the realm of the iconographic city, the *re*presented city played back to the spectator and reconfigured as a place for worship.

Throughout this essay, although there are other models to draw upon, fictional western cities which are shadows of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, London or Paris, the city to which film keeps on returning again and again is New York, a city filled with images which are simply short-hand for modern America: the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the Chrystler Building, the Two Towers. Before 9/11/2001, the Two Towers of the World Trade Centre were second-rate icons of New York, well-known but not viewed with the architectural fondness of the art deco skyscrapers which reappear in film after film. In recent years, however, since the horrific attack which served as a catalyst for a reinvigorated New York self-identity, the presence or absence of the towers in films has taken on a new power, a power almost akin to the fetish object in that it is the locus of great emotion surrounding a lost love object (both in terms of the people and the fact that the World Trade Centre was a metaphorical representation of capitalism's power over the city). The presence of the towers in films made before 9/11 triggers recognition of the *re*presented city, the fictional city, but they also emphasise the malleability of the city as human productivity. One of the best-known examples of the response of filmmakers to September 11th was the removal of the towers

from Raimi's *Spider-Man* trailer: specifically a sequence in which Spider-Man trapped the villains in a web between the two buildings. This altered response to the *re*presented New York, however, is most clearly evidenced in how spectators act when seeing the Two Towers on screen. When *AI* (Spielberg, 2001) was released on the weekend following the attacks, the CGI towers, swimming in a post-apocalyptic Big Apple, elicited an audible intake of breath from the audience at a Merseyside (Switch Island) multiplex, followed by a subdued few moments. The spectator's relationship to the icon was fundamentally changed forever and the CityScope stylistic reiterated that alteration through its lingering shots of the city as icon.

In a sense, this response, and this changing of the way in which the city is viewed, must have been foreshadowed by the audiences' first reaction to the rusting Statue of Liberty in *Planet of the Apes* (Schaffner, 1968) as Charlton Heston realises where he is, rounding the corner on horseback and clad in a loincloth. At its heart, any change in the iconic cityscape, and the impact of that change, emphasises the fragility of human achievements and so challenges the immortalistic ideology of the contemporary: the belief that humanity is at its zenith is shattered by the negation of longevity through destruction and corruption.

CityScope in non-western Cinema (filming the City of the Other)

In contrast to the imagery of iconic cities, the city of the Other is filmed quite differently yet is subject to some of the same principles: images which sum-up the social framework of the space, use of high or low angle shots, the emphasis on speed (sometimes through hand-held cameras) to denote the space as a place of action. Earlier, I outlined how the city of the Other can be both within and without the already extant 'modern' western city. The case for the former can also be seen in the way in which the key iconic city (New York) of the previous section is films from the position of this subcultural *non*-iconic cityscape that is dominated by those abjected within American society. Two useful examples come to mind, *West Side Story* (Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, 1961), which is dominated by the division of spaces into gang lands, and *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989), set in Brooklyn and again dominated by gangs but playing more consciously with the concept of 'no-go areas' (as does *Bonfire of the Vanities* (Brian de Palma) also made in 1989 but released in 1990). More interestingly though, and bearing in mind the questions about whose version of the city is the spectator seeing, is the representation of cities outside the west but which are doubly cities of the Other. One of the most interesting of which can be found in Fernando Meirelles' much applauded *City of God* (2002).

The narrative is set during the 1960s and '70s and follows the life of 'Rocket' as he grows up, surrounded by gangs, drugs and horrific gun violence by children and teenagers caught in these groups, to become, by accident almost, a photographer who will help to record the terrors of 1970s Rio de Jeneiro. As the constant backdrop to this action the spectator sees not the iconic Rio with the statue of Christ overlooking a sun-drenched city (only seen once as a blur of white as 'Rocket' delivers newspapers in the early hours of a morning) but the gradual development of the *favelo*, the slum, from a series of newly built one room houses to the rubbish strewn shanty-town imagery more easily recognised as the domicile of the marginalized no-Hispanics in South America or of the Blacks in apartheid South Africa. There is little comment on this changing space but the simple tracking shots that take the spectator through the temporal ellipses and dirt streets evoke so much of South American history that the knowledgeable spectator cannot help but read significance into the architecture of gradual decay.

The main characters living in the *favelo* are black-South Americans: they are the descendants of the slaves brought by the Spanish and Portugese to work on the plantations in this part of the New World. The new houses that are erected in the 1960s are one room apartments set only feet apart from each other with dirt tracks between. Few people have shoes but the community land seems spacious and clean. In the background can be seen the much larger homes of the middle classes and the community halls. These people still live in slave houses, they are still abjected by society to the extent that, trapped within their communities, they become dejected and the only way they escape, like L'il Dice, who become a notorious gang boss, is to become criminals, or, as in the case of Clipper (who rejects a life of crime after a violent robbery), to turn to the Church. Time progresses, the spaces become more crowed, dirtier, public areas become crowded more building materials but the *favelo* no longer resembles a kind of village, more a scruffy suburb with wall covered in rotting posters. The filming of the space, still dominated by tracking shots, morphs into something more jagged and yet also fluid with the use of cinema verité techniques (such as hand-held cameras and complex sound) but the spaces are made more claustrophobic. Even when a map of the gang areas is rather oddly displayed as a narrative device to the spectator, the image is seen through a magnifying glass, blurred and without true contextual meaning. The spectator does not learn what the rest of Rio looks like, anything outside the *favelo* is filmed at night: there is nothing beyond the *favelo* except another city, the city of the whites and Hispanics. The chicken's eye view that the film begins with, as it escapes L'il Ze (formerly L'il Dice)'s macheté can be read as symbolising the look of the entire film. The Other, the black drug dealers with their gun battles, is trapped by the wealthy society which they so want to be part of, something exemplified by L'il Dice's repeated destruction of his competitors so that *he* can be the richest, get the girls and con the white students who seek him out for cocaine. This CityScope, whilst similar to the cityscape of the western representations of the city, is myopic and in representing Rio's past in *City of God*, Meirelles emphasises the link between slums and the past without presenting concrete signifiers of the present (2002) and thus making the *favelo* timeless, or terminally never-ending, depending upon the perspective and the position of the spectator.

Conclusions: The city of the everyman

As a representation of human endeavour, of Babel's architectural achievement, the cityscape, in a way that landscapes never can, will always emphasise humanity's place on earth and its dominance over nature. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that the city's multi-layered spaces have come to function as a metaphor of society. What the visual approach to the city does, though, that particular mode of representing that I have labelled CityScope, is to construct a space which is expressive, active, dynamic and capable of representing the city as an organic form. The city represented on film is a city for every human, regardless of its specificity but bolstered by its iconicity, the city is both every city and of the everyman. The city may be a state apparatus, the cinematic city its image as rendered by the ISA but its CityScope is a mode for empowering the anti-ISA: it has the potential to represent both the physical imprisonment of space and the seeming intellectual freedom of soaring vertical axes of concrete and steel.

Movie Stills Webpages for Reference

Stills images released by studios are not always useful in analysing a film because they are typically restaged and, sometimes, re-lit, publicity shots. It is far better that the images used in any discussion are from the films themselves. However, using the true images is not actually what studios want writers to do, so frames from the films rather than publicity shots are

prohibitive in cost for the analyst seeking accuracy. Consequently, below. is a list of webpages to which the reader can go to see a selection of useful reference images in supporting their reading, although these are no substitute for going and watching the films themselves.

Blade Runner – http://www.moviebox.se/recensioner/reclas1.asp?recID=375 – A Swedish site with some frames from the film rather than publicity shots – the first one epitomises the medium scale shot of Blade Runner's cityscape.

Pianist, The - http://www.imdb.com/gallery/ss/0253474 – Internet Movie Database entry containing all publicity stills for Polanski's 2002 film. Fragments of the city can be seen in some images.

Spider-Man - http://www.allmoviephoto.com/photo/2002_Spider-Man_photo.html. – See particularly the image headed "Willem Defoe as the Green Goblin" which shows the juxta-positioning of shape and the use of the skyscraper in Raimi's film.

Workers Leaving the Factory - http://www.acmi.net.au/AIC/LUMIERE_STILLS.html – Adventures in CyberSound: Auguste and Louis Lumière. Containing stills from a selection of the Lumière's earliest films.

Twin Towers imagery - http://septterror.tripod.com/movies.html – 'Movies and the Second Day of Infamy'. Discusses at some length, with close-ups the changes in Spider-Man because of 9/11 and the impact on the wider film industry.

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