

**Fincher's *Fight Club*
as an example of a critical dystopia**

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Abstract

This article investigates David Fincher's film *Fight Club* as a critical dystopian narrative. The first part of the article provides the definition of critical dystopia as well as it presents characteristic features of the subgenre. It also sets forward the difference between classical and critical dystopias. The following sections are case studies in which different elements of the film in the context of the subgenre are examined. They focus on the construction of a dystopian society and the negative influence of consumerism on the protagonist and therefore on other people. Moreover, this paper attempts to demonstrate how the overall pessimistic tendency of the narrative is realised. Finally, the protagonist's actions as well as the aftermath of these actions are described and analysed. The final part of the article focuses on the significance of the last scene which introduces a utopian impulse into the narrative.

Keywords

critical dystopia, *Fight Club*, capitalism, consumer society, utopian impulse

***Fight Club* Davida Finchera jako przykład dystopii krytycznej**

Abstrakt

W artykule przedstawiono analizę filmu Davida Finchera pt. *Fight Club* w aspekcie cech charakterystycznych dla dystopii krytycznej. W pierwszej części pracy przytoczono definicję dystopii krytycznej oraz główne cechy podgatunku, a także wyjaśniono różnicę pomiędzy dystopią klasyczną a krytyczną. W kolejnych częściach artykułu poddano analizie poszczególne aspekty filmu w kontekście dystopii krytycznej, skupiając się na konstrukcji społeczeństwa dystopijnego oraz negatywnym wpływie konsumpcjonizmu na głównego bohatera, a co za tym idzie na innych ludzi. Dalsze rozważania dotyczą reakcji protagonisty na otaczającą go rzeczywistość i konsekwencje jego czynów. Ostatnia część artykułu poświęcona jest końcowej scenie filmu oraz jej znaczeniu. Scena ta jest bowiem kluczowym czynnikiem w interpretacji dzieła w kontekście dystopii krytycznej.

Słowa kluczowe

dystopia krytyczna, *Fight Club*, kapitalizm, społeczeństwo konsumpcyjne, impuls utopijny

1. Introduction

David Fincher's film adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's 1996 novel *Fight Club* has made a great impact on the history of cinematography. As a relatively young work, released in 1999, it has received a lot of attention on the part of scholars and critics and has often been a subject of academic writings. The present article is yet another attempt to explore and analyze the film with a view to investigating the formal strategies that position the film within the critical dystopia subgenre.¹

¹ The content of the article is partially based on my MA thesis entitled "The Problem of Dissociative Identity Disorder in Cinematography: An Analysis of Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Fincher's *Fight Club*".

2. The concept of critical dystopia

Dystopian literature of the late 1980s and 1990s differs from classical dystopian narratives. Texts from the end of the twentieth century, which “represent a creative move that is both a continuation of the long dystopian tradition and a distinctive new invention” (Moylan 2000: 188), have been classified as critical dystopias. Unlike earlier literary dystopias, which have been characterized by many scholars as anti-utopian, critical dystopia draws on the utopian heritage and “retains a utopian commitment as the core of its formally pessimistic presentation” (Moylan 2000: 156). Undoubtedly, pessimism is a dominant feature of every dystopian narrative. Classical dystopia seems to be completely absorbed by negativity and does not leave any space for resisting the overwhelming trend, whereas critical dystopia provides some horizons of change (Burns 2016: 45). Lyman Tower Sargent defines critical dystopia as:

a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia. (2001: 222)

Also Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (qtd. in Moylan 2000: 189) indicate that the characteristic feature of critical dystopia is an explicit open ending providing space for overcoming pessimistic stagnation. Therefore, critical dystopian narratives give a new positive perspective that the current oppressive situation, which is shaped by few and profitable to few, can be changed by those culturally, politically and economically insignificant people who will now have an impact on the formation of a new reality.

Considering timeframes in which critical dystopian works emerged, the ‘old’ reality described in dystopias is usually the fictionalized version of a present-day capitalism and related

terrors of the twentieth century (Mirrlees, Pedersen 2016: 307). The critique of social problems focuses on “dire consequences of the continuing concentration of wealth and power into fewer and fewer hands and subsequent reduction of agency for most people” (Kline 2013: 16). Critical dystopias describe near-future negative consequences of the development of a current system. However, the desire to annihilate the system tinges dystopianism with a utopian spirit. According to Vita Fortunati (2013: 29), the dystopian narratives after 1980s set direction for a reader (or a viewer) which he/she must follow now for the situation to change. And with the change possible, with the space left for action, critical dystopia aims at building the new “anti-capitalist, democratically socialist and radically ecologist” reality (Moylan 2000: 190). The new dystopias serve an important function, suggests Sargent in his essay entitled “Do Dystopias Matter”: “[w]e need dystopia to remind us that our dystopia could get worse, but we need eutopia even more to remind us that better, while difficult, is possible” (2013: 12).

3. Capitalist dystopian society

David Fincher’s film *Fight Club* depicts a dystopian vision of a contemporary consumer society and its negative influence on people, or to be more precise, on men. The film has been widely referred to as a vivid criticism of consumerism in academic literature, which contributes to positioning the work in the critical dystopian subgenre. Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Lausten notice that *Fight Club* presents “the universe of capitalism” as “immanent, infinite, without an end” where “the source of anxiety” is mainly connected with “too much pseudo-freedom, e.g. freedom to consume” (2002: 352). Omar Lizardo states that the film provides “a critique of a consumer society” (2007: 231) while in Lynn Ta’s view *Fight Club* highlights “late capitalism’s obsessive push for profits and excessive consumerism” (2006: 265). Elsewhere the film is directly described as “a complex and variably understood contribution to the critical

dystopian subgenre” (Kline 2013: 17-18) which as being “deeply critical of contemporary corporate and consumer culture” corresponds to “the true critical dystopias examined by Moylan” (Wegner 2009: 125).

A different view is presented by Henry Giroux who maintains that *Fight Club* “functions less as a critique of capitalism than as a defense of authoritarian masculinity wedded to the immediacy of pleasure sustained through violence and abuse” (2001: 15). Such a reception of the film could stand in opposition to classifying *Fight Club* as a critical dystopia, however, as discussed below, I present an opinion that consumer culture is the central theme of the movie, and violence and brutality are means to deal with its negativity.

The movie presents a pessimistic vision of reality, in which the system manipulates people into believing that purchasing goods is a ready-made recipe for happiness. With so many products available, people have been brought up in the atmosphere of endless possibilities, which later turns out to be just an illusion. Instead of becoming individuals, distinguished by their special talents or virtues, they all blend into a shapeless, grey mass. The clash of expectations with what reality can actually offer causes frustration. Tyler Durden explains the facts of life to the members of the eponymous fight club in one of his speeches: “We’ve all been raised on television to believe that one day we’d all be millionaires, and movie gods, and rock stars. But we won’t. And we’re slowly learning that fact. And we’re very, very pissed off”. Also, people’s beliefs in their own uniqueness have been redefined in the context of globalization. With everyone drinking Starbucks coffee, living in houses furnished according to the newest Ikea catalogue, and working in depersonalized corporations, people have become “a copy of a copy of a copy”. The dystopian presentation of consumer society emphasizes all negative aspects of reality disregarding the advantages of the system. In that sense, consumerism is not understood as a new form of hedonism but rather as a new form of social discipline, where to function properly you have

to follow certain standards. Therefore, instead of individuality and distinctiveness people face “predictability, duplicability [and] redundancy” (Lizardo 2007: 236).

Such a situation has had an extremely negative influence on men traditionally defined by strength, individuality as well as physical and emotional power. According to Omar Lizardo (2007: 222), the movie depicts the crisis of traditional manhood that cannot adapt to the new status quo. In the post-industrial society, men were forced to change their occupation from factories to offices. The disempowerment of men in the 1990s led to the emergence of a “new man” whose characteristics oscillated around sensitivity, weepiness and softness. The castrated version of a man no longer resembled the image of the working-class man from the 1950s. The macho labourers covered in dust and sweat transformed into neatly-dressed and brushed white-collar workers whose workplaces have been limited to cubicles. A working-class man shifted from a masculine element of production to a womanish target of consumption (Ta 2006: 266).

The crisis of masculinity is accompanied by the feeling of entrapment in the corporate world. *Fight Club*, like many other dystopian works, presents men as slaves and victims of contemporary culture, prisoners who perform dissatisfying jobs and spend most of the day in their cubicle cells. Moreover, men are “trapped in the depths of alienation” (Wegner 2009: 129), which is triggered by various mental problems, such as depression, problems with forging relationships and the feeling of being alone in the crowd.

4. Everyman’s everyday pessimism

In *Fight Club*, capitalism exerts a destructive influence on society represented by the unnamed narrator and the protagonist who attempts to struggle with all of the social ills of the post-industrial era. As a representative of males of the 1990s, the protagonist plays a role of an everyman. As Phillip Wegner

puts it (2009: 129), he can be understood in terms of a social stereotype rather than a fully developed character. Omar Lizardo also observes that the protagonist “is not really a ‘character’ in any meaningful of the term. He is the symbol of a collectivity, a collective that can only be defined in class terms: Jack is the ‘everyman’ of the service society” (2007: 233).

Also the protagonist's name, or actually lack thereof, deprives the character of the definite signs of individuality. Although David Fincher never used the protagonist's name in the film, he identified the character in the script as Jack, a diminutive form of John, usually used as a synonym for an average citizen. As Marek Wojtaszek notices, the protagonist also uses the name as if it represented an ordinary man. He “often calls himself using a possessive case, ‘I’m Jack’s cold sweat, I’m Jack’s smirking revenge, I’m Jack’s wasted life,’ which gives the impression of a story told by incorporeal singularities, rather than by the individualised subject” (2009: 330). Also, the protagonist himself believes to be a representative of a bigger group: “Like so many others I have become a slave to the Ikea nesting instinct”, and he retells the story of his, or everybody's, depressing existence in the consumer society.

The overall pessimistic narrative is built around Jack's total absorption in consumerist lifestyle. As a victim of omnipresent advertising, the protagonist becomes addicted to collecting goods. His behaviour as a consumer illustrates his purchasing capacity and becomes a symbol of a social status. The protagonist lives in a “condo on the fifteenth floor of a filing cabinet for widows and young professionals”, which identifies his position in a particular socioeconomic stratum. He also seeks his social and personal identity in products as at some point he wonders: “what kind of dining set defines me as a person”. In one of the scenes, the protagonist walks around his empty apartment and orders some pieces of furniture. The empty space gradually fills up with furniture and fittings from the catalogue until the condominium looks exactly like the one from the picture with the difference that the protagonist is an

additional element in the set. As Kyle Bishop describes it, gathering of goods has become the protagonist's main occupation. But the things he seemingly yearns for are mass-produced, well-advertised products. Jack, susceptible to external influences, believes that purchasing guarantees happiness and success, however, it makes the protagonist miserable. Yet, he obeys the lifestyle rules imposed by the consumer society (2006: 45-46).

Moreover, the narrator has become so soaked in the capitalist lifestyle that doing shopping and collecting products replace the need for sexual satisfaction. Jack notices that buying substitutes masturbating as he says: "We used to read pornography; now it's the Hoarshack collection". According to Lynn Ta, the scene in which Jack goes through the Ikea catalog and orders items through the telephone while sitting on a toilet mirrors a standard image of a man who, while masturbating, reads a pornographic magazine and talks on the sex phone in the bathroom. With consumerism as a new pornography, "the film suggests that commercialism has replaced normative sexual stimulator and has reduced the male sex drive to furniture, traditionally an article of the domestic, and therefore feminine sphere" (Ta 2006: 274).

Jack replicates the image of a man imposed by society. In one of the scenes, he stands next to a Xerox machine and makes copies of some documents having a Starbucks coffee, while the voice in his head comments: "Everything is a copy of a copy of a copy". The camera then shifts into a point of view shot, where the viewers see what the protagonist is looking at – a room filled with Xerox machines and people copying papers and drinking Starbucks coffees. Consumerism and commercialism destroy the potential for uniqueness, individuality and distinctiveness offering a recipe for a standardized existence.

Paradoxically, Jack does not achieve happiness by following the "standard" way of life. Instead, he develops various mental problems like insomnia, depression, and schizophrenia. He becomes apathetic, demotivated, and bored. After the explo-

sion in his apartment, Jack looks at the remains of his refrigerator with splashed ketchup and mustard lying on the street and comments: "How embarrassing. A house full of condiments and no food". The protagonist's words suggest that his life, although full of goods that should give it a nice flavour, has no substance. Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen point to mobility of the society as the cause of some of the protagonist's problems. Forced to be constantly on the move by his job, Jack becomes "a spectator of his own life and he paradoxically lives in inertia in the midst of a mobile network society" (2002: 349). Jack describes his mobility with the following words: "You wake up at Air Harbor International... You wake up at O'Hare. You wake up at LaGuardia. You wake up at Logan... you wake up and have to ask where you are... You wake up, and you're nowhere".

Jack experiences the feeling of emptiness because he has no opportunity to socialize or to establish any closer relationship with another person. As a response to his hyper-mobile lifestyle, Jack develops insomnia and depression, which dissociates him from society. The protagonist's mental illness has also been triggered by identity problems. As Jack is only a meaningless, nameless pawn in a corporate world, he faces some problems with identifying his place in this reality (Bishop 2006: 45-6). The influence of consumerism on people's lives is so strong that it destroys their fundamental value – family relations. As a child, the protagonist had to face the lack of a male role-model and the unstable family situation, which is compared by Tyler, Jack's alter-ego, to a franchise business model:

Jack: I don't know my dad. I mean, I know him, but he left when I was like six years old, married this other woman, had some more kids. He did this like every six years – he goes to a new city and starts a new family.

Tyler: Fucker's setting up franchises.

The dystopian vision of the manhood affects every aspect of Jack's, and thus an average person's life. A sense of entrapment and helplessness is known to a whole army of powerless individuals inhabiting contemporary cities.

5. Utopian potential

The protagonist starts to realize all the negative aspects and influences of the consumer society, which results in emergence of his alter-ego, Tyler Durden, who stays in total opposition to the model of a man imposed upon Jack by the contemporary world. As Kyle Bishop explains, the film's major conflict is based on the binary opposition of two main characters who contrast each other to the extreme (2006: 54). Tyler, a well-built, physically strong and handsome man, represents freedom and masculine strength. Jack, who stands for a victim of oppression, is of average appearance, and his body looks fragile and weak. The former character, played by Brad Pitt, is a colourful person that stands out, the latter, played by Edward Norton, is definitely less impressive. David Greven, who suggests that Tyler contrasts the nonentity of the narrator, describes his appearance with these words: "chiseled, trashy, given to wearing neo-70s pimp ensembles, with buzz-cut hair and big dark sunglasses and wrapping his murderous musculature in disorienting hipster mood clothes" (2009: 162). Jack, like those subjugated to the system, looks dull and boring in his gray suit and brown tie. He blends in with the crowd, whereas his alter-ego attracts the attention of others.

Tyler exposes manipulation that victimizes contemporary people. The alter-ego, a free-thinker who believes in anarchy and total freedom, serves a therapeutic function for Jack. During the course of the plot, Tyler changes the way Jack perceives reality and totally influences his life because, as David Greven puts it, "Tyler performs a salutary rescue mission on the dull Narrator's life" (2009: 162). Tyler Durden is presented as a spiritual guru, a hero that inspires and opens the eyes of

many. He is once referred to as a god, as Jack says: "In Tyler we trust". The quote bears resemblance to the American motto "In God we trust". It is Tyler who throughout the greater part of the film is perceived as a true leader that will liberate men from the constraints imposed on them by the post-industrial society. With such a good preacher as Tyler, Jack's perception of the capitalist world changes:

Jack: When you buy furniture, you tell yourself, that's it. That's the last sofa I'll need. Whatever else happens, got that sofa problem handled. I had it all. I had a stereo that was very decent. A wardrobe that was getting very respectable. I was close to being complete.

Tyler: Shit man, now it's all gone.

Jack: All... gone.

Tyler: All gone. Do you know what a duvet is?

Jack: It's a comforter.

Tyler: It's a blanket. Just a blanket. Now why do guys like you and I know what a duvet is? Is this essential to our survival, in the hunter-gatherer sense of the word? No. What are we then?

Jack: I don't know... consumers?

Tyler: Right! We are consumers. We are by-products of a lifestyle obsession. Murder, crime, poverty – these things don't concern me. What concerns me are celebrity magazines, television with 500 channels, some guy's name on my underwear. Rogaine, Viagra, Olestra.

Jack: Martha Stewart.

Tyler: Fuck Martha Stewart. Martha's polishing the brass on the Titanic. It's all going down. So fuck off with your sofa units and strine green stripe patterns. I say never be complete. I say stop being perfect, I say let... let's evolve, let the chips fall where they may. But that's me, and I could be wrong. Maybe it's a terrible tragedy.

Jack: Now, it's just stuff. It's not a tragedy.

Jack realizes that his former life was only vegetation and wants to change his current situation. After his apartment blows up, he moves into the house in which Tyler squats. The dilapidated mansion with boarded windows and no locks

where nothing works properly replaces Jack's polished condominium. As Phillip Wegner observes, "the blasted urban landscapes [...] are very much those of cyberpunk fiction: post-industrial urban cores, filled with abandoned buildings, decaying factories, and the waste products and 'throwaway' populations of twentieth-century capitalist culture" (2009: 124). Surprisingly, a visible decline in the quality of life helps Jack overcome his modern-day addictions – "by the end of the first month, I didn't miss TV" says the protagonist.

Not only does Jack change his attitude towards material goods and comforts, but also he adopts Tyler's aggressive and careless behaviour. He comes to his office dirty, bruised and with blood on his face and clothes – he clearly disregards the standard requirements as his job in the corporation no longer takes the central position in his life. Instead, a fight club, the underground boxing community, does. Jack overcomes his apathy owing to the real physical pain experienced in the fight club. Tyler claims that without pain you do not know anything about yourself: "How much can you know about yourself if you've never been in a fight? I don't want to die without any scars". With the body covered in scars from fights, you stop being "a copy, of a copy of a copy", but you become unique. Moreover, unlike anything that consumer society offers, the marks on your body are long lasting. They cannot be changed, replaced or thrown away like goods you buy. They take time to heal. Fighting is a way to experience, live and feel the life: "You weren't alive anywhere like you were there".

According to Jennifer Barker, instead of complex rules that govern the capitalist world, the fight club proposes rules of simplicity and atavistic drives that boil down to hitting somebody in a face. As she notices, "anxieties about contemporary life and meaning are simply annihilated by exhausting the body and silencing the mind" (2008: 179). Dissatisfied and depressed men from every social class, crushed by the regime of consumerism, gather together to celebrate the "cult of sensation" (Wegner 2009: 128). Their plastic lives lack excitement.

In the fight club, they celebrate physicality by giving vent to primitive instincts which have been successfully suppressed by social constraints. Tyler creates a place where it does not matter who you are outside the fight club, what you do for a living, or how much money you have. The only thing that matters is the combat to test your strength and to release the tension through the fight (Bishop 2006: 47). As Omar Lizardo puts it, "fighting can be seen as a denial and a subversion of the logic of 'niceness' and forced sociability that the McDonal-dized corporations force their workers to display..." (2007: 235). Thus, the fight club can be understood not only as a form of abreaction but also as the beginning of a rebellion against the social constraints. Under the cover of "innocent" fist fights it turns into Project Mayhem, which is actually a "Nazi-type organization" "with unreflexive skinheads who just repeat Tyler's orders" (Diken and Laustsen 2002: 356).

A seemingly positive attitude towards the unofficial organization becomes explicitly negative in the course of events. As Lynn Ta ascertains, "*Fight Club* illustrates the potential disaster that can happen when agency is privatized, and personal dissatisfactions are resolved through private means such as vigilante paramilitary groups. Members of Fight Club must take aim at an enemy culture that has crippled their masculinity, but the recourse they choose literally self-destructs" (2006: 276). The goal of this terrorist organization is to destroy credit-card companies. Unfortunately, what seemed to be a gateway to "freedom" turns out to be another source of oppression. Even though Jack is terrified with the scale of the undertaking and wants to stop the destruction of the credit card buildings, the demolition is another step forward in his process of liberation. However painful and tragic this part of the film appears to be, it serves an important stage for the protagonist to change his reality and see the utopian horizons.

Despite the fact that at some point, when the situation worsens, Jack realizes that Tyler, his "imaginary friend", is not real ("Jesus, you're a voice in my head"; "You're a fucking hal-

lucination, why I can't get rid of you?"), and that he himself is the head of anti-capitalists' army, the protagonist still believes that only his alter ego can put a stop to the process of destruction: "I'm begging you, please call it off". Yet Tyler wants to proceed with the plan for Jack's sake: "What do you want? Wanna go back to the shit job, fucking condo world, watching sitcoms? Fuck you! I won't do it". However, Jack takes some drastic measures to get rid of Tyler – he shoots himself in the cheek. As a result, Tyler, with his head blown off, disappears. Through the suicidal act Jack wins the psychological struggle over his mind and cuts himself off the maniac-rebel conduct.

The last scene presents Jack with Marla, the femme fatale of the movie, in an empty office from which the headquarters of credit card companies are visible. When Marla is concerned with Jack's condition after the shooting, the protagonist calms her down saying "I'm really ok" and "Trust me, everything's gonna be fine". In that moment the credit-card skyscrapers begin to explode. The last scene, in which Jack and Marla observe how buildings collapse one by one, holding hands, eventually looking at a limitless horizon and then affectionately looking at each other, coupled with the music by Pixie, is filled with positive atmosphere. Even though they observe the accomplishment of Tyler's plan, which the protagonist wanted to stop, the ending provides a closure for what Jack calls "very strange time in [his] life". After all Tyler did not stop the destruction because, according to his words, it would lead Jack back to the previous, consumer-oriented lifestyle. Jack, on the other hand, accepts the finale of his story as he calmly, passively observes the demolition. Then, he shifts attention to his beloved Marla, already looking into the hopeful future. As Chuck Palahniuk once said: "destruction makes way for the character to evolve into a better, stronger person, not so hampered by their past" (qtd. in Diken and Laustsen 2002: 364). The destruction also symbolizes liberation from the consumer society. Collapsed buildings expose a limitless horizon giving hope for a better future. According to Lynn Ta, "the end of

Fight Club suggests that with the return of violence and outward destruction is the return of all things 'normal,'" and "all Jack needed to do in the first place was to take Marla's hand and unite with her against corporate culture..." (2006: 276). The movie brings an end to the dystopian pessimism and retains a utopian potential. The last scene which presents the destruction of capitalist symbols, restoration of mental health, and finally forging a romantic relationship with Marla is a "direct statement of a utopian vision in the film" (Wegner 2009: 125).

6. Conclusion

The film *Fight Club* is an example of a critical dystopia which has reached a mass audience. The phenomenon of the film is based on the fact that it raises various modern world issues on many different layers, exposing the paradoxes of post-industrial society. The dystopian vision of the world, where nobody is free and nobody lives the life which consumerism has promised, is highlighted by the internal ordeal the protagonist experiences. Being suppressed by culture, the protagonist attempts to, figuratively and literally, fight for his life. The conflict between him and society is translated into a mental distortion and dystopian landscapes. The juxtaposition of contradictory elements, e.g. internal despair in a "perfect" community, calming the mind in physical violence, the protagonist's blandness and Tyler's charisma, is even more explicit when the internal paradox of the film is taken into consideration. Being a critique of a consumer society, encouraging the viewers to abandon a consumer lifestyle, the film remains the child-prodigy of popular culture itself. As it depicts socio-economical conflicts, the film addresses a contemporary viewer who may experience similar problems as the film's protagonist within the consumer society.

Fight Club, as an example of a critical dystopia, presents guidelines for a member of the consumer society concerning

what should be done in order to change the oppressing situation. It may seem that there is no golden mean when it comes to a consumer lifestyle. You are either a corporate drone or a rebel. An interesting point has been made by Michael Clark, who writes that, “the solution, however, lies not in the masculine or patriarchal paradigm of targeting consumerism as one more macho enemy; rather, the solution lies in turning to right-relational justice and eco-social responsibility – not to battle consumerism, but to abandon it” (Clark 2002). Is it not what the protagonist does at the end of the film? He started his struggle from violence but in the last scene he wants to abandon the macho-fight against society. His apparent passivity during the last scene, coupled with shifting his focus from objects of consumerism to another human being, is a sign that he has made the right decision to get away from dystopian oppression. The overall pessimism of the film is now overcome by the hope for a better future.

Although the film was released in 1999, it presents a universal vision of a dystopian society which is a continuum of the near past, the present, and, looking at the current socio-economical tendencies, the future. With such broad time-frames and accuracy in diagnosing the worst social menaces, this example of a critical dystopian film will certainly raise further interest among viewers and scholars.

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