

Cinematic space in dystopian narratives: Social construction of home in the film *High-Rise*

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Abstract

In cinema, space is an important element that provides a foundation for the narrative, establishes the impression of reality, and contributes to the aesthetics of the film. As a cinematic space, “home” also generates meanings in accordance with the universe constructed in the film. In dystopian cinema, the home image offers designs that not only serve as aesthetic elements but also open up new lines of thought at both individual and societal levels. This study aims to trace the image of the home in dystopian cinema, question the individual and societal meanings of the home as a space, and determine how it is positioned within the relevant film genre. To achieve this goal, the film *High-Rise* is selected as an example, and the spaces of home are examined in relation to Lefebvre’s concept of The Spatial Triad and Freud’s concept of The Uncanny following a two-phased method consisting of formal analysis and conceptual analysis. As a result of the research, it is revealed that due to the dystopian theme present in the relevant film, the home image is abstracted from its personal meanings and represented as a social structure functioning as a practice field for power struggle.

Keywords: Dystopia, Architecture, Space design in cinema, The image of home, The spatial triad

Extended Abstract

Introduction: In cinema, space is one of the important elements that provide a concrete foundation for the narrative, establish the impression of reality, and contribute to the aesthetics of the film. When cinema first emerged, it created a more direct connection to reality than other forms of art. This claim emphasizes how cinema, as an artistic medium, changed the world by introducing a new way of representing reality that was remarkably similar to people’s real-life experiences. One of the most prominent aspects among the representations of reality in cinema is the use of space. Cinema, as an art form predicated on narrative and visual imagery, is inherently spatial. Viewers get a glimpse of the world on the big screen and form a genuine connection with the location they are seeing. Still, space has a lot more to offer in terms of cinematic art. Cinematographers can approach spatiality as a potent tool to reveal the artistic, political, social, and historical meanings of the cinematographic image, as opposed to seeing space as merely a formal element whose functions are limited to placing stories and providing a representation of reality (Da Silva & Cunha, 2017: 2). The cinematic portrayal of home is one of these endeavors. Home has several connotations and is a complex concept in the social realm as well as the cinematic diegesis. Dystopian films famously known for creating imaginary spaces, utilize designs of home spaces to convey multiple meanings to the audience.

Purpose and scope: By examining how dystopian narratives in film use space, particularly the image of home, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between architectural design and cinematic imagery. We looked at and identified films where the space of home takes on social meanings in order to understand the complex composition of cinematic space in dystopian narratives. The movie *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015) was purposefully picked for sampling because it conveys a dystopian story that explores the social, cultural, economic, and individual aspects of home. Freud’s *The Uncanny* and Lefebvre’s *The Spatial Triad* are used to interpret the sample film.

Method: The two-phased method of film analysis proposed by Ryan and Lenos is applied to the analysis of space as a social construct in the movie *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015). A quantitative formal analysis makes up the first stage, and a qualitative contextual analysis is included in the second stage. With the quantitative analysis, it is aimed to put forward the use of space in numbers. Using the video editing program Adobe Premiere Pro, the sample film was edited and its image content was separated into segments that each showcased a distinct cinematic space. The linear image sequence was interrupted every time the filmic space shifted and a new spatial setting started. It was calculated how many of these sequences there were and how long they lasted. The goal in doing this has been to define the spaces portrayed in the movie. In the second phase which is named the contextual analysis, the researcher can analyze “the meanings that permeate the movie and reflect elements of our related historical, social, political, cultural, gendered, and economic contexts” (Ryan & Lenos, 2012, as cited in Çam, 2016: 26).

Findings and conclusion: As a conclusion of the formal and contextual analysis conducted on the film *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015), it is observed that the use of space plays an enormous role in the meaning-creation process. As a result of the formal analysis carried out for this study, the bulk of the filmic time is spent in the apartment complex, which is made up of the protagonist’s and his neighbors’ homes, shared spaces, the top floor, and the exterior view. In the second phase of the analysis, Lefebvre’s spatial theory is qualitatively supported by the use of space as a social construct. The apartment building that was designed as the primary location has direct influence over the characters. It causes the characters to adhere to contemporary social norms. The occupants of the apartment complex are a community, and the authority that exercises its power there dictates all of their actions. Because the space is designed to support the existence of a higher intelligence, it is in line with Lefebvre’s concept of conceived space. Secondly, using Lefebvre’s terminology, the narrative’s change with the middle-class uprising against the ruling class can be understood as a change in space from perceived to lived. Although the characters use the space initially within the constraints of societal norms, they soon start interacting with it in their own ways. This change is also seen as the rise of individualism and the decline of community-based modernity. However, this change results in severe violence and an unsettling scenario where homes lose their privacy and become hazardous public areas.

Keywords: Dystopia, Architecture, Space design in cinema, The image of home, The spatial triad

INTRODUCTION

Narrative practices have continuously lingered in the history of mankind as a form of communication. Narrative traditions flourished in various parts of the world, narrating stories of past events and locations. These narratives were passed down from generation to generation and they had a paramount place in the public sphere because they shaped cultural identity and transmitted collective knowledge. In ancient Greece, epic narratives took place in a far-off past, in terms of both time and space (Çıraklı, 2015: 12). Although place and time were never described in detail, they were tools to connect people to distant places (Allen & Møllegaard, 2019: 1). However, with the effect of the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, reason as a mode of thinking roamed around the Western world and initiated a new form of narrative, namely the novel. From the start, the novel genre has been realistic about the representation of place and time. Bakhtin conceptualizes this shift from the ambiguity of place and time to specificity with the term *chronotope*. In the novel genre, time and space are described in a realistic way and they have developed into concrete and visible entities through the perception of the readers. Time and space have become an indispensable dimension of the narrative (Bakhtin, 1981: 84). At the end of the 19th century, the emergence of cinema took this realistic approach to place and time one step further. Cinema is known for being closer to reality than any other art form before. Bazin underscores the notion that cinema’s ontology is grounded in reality. The photographic image has such a profound relationship with reality that it shares an identity with the object it captures (Bazin, 2022: 24). This insight shows that cinema offers a realistic vision of place and time. As a matter of fact, within cinema, space serves as the foundation that facilitates the unfolding of action. As an art based on both narrative and visual imagery, cinema is fundamentally tied to space. The audience sees a glimpse of the world on the cinematic screen and they constitute a realistic bond with the place they observe. However, space has much more to offer within the art of cinema. Rather than viewing space as merely a formal component whose functions are restricted to placing stories and offering a representation of reality, cinematographers can approach spatiality as a powerful tool to reveal the aesthetic, political, social, and historical meanings of the cinematographic image (Da Silva & Cunha, 2017: 2). In this sense, movies act as a medium for cultural and collective memory that responds to the past and present through a range of spatial forms in the narratives (Batori, 2018: 6).

Most academic discussions concerning cinematic space have focused on off-screen space as the pivotal element where chronotopic and narrative spaces intersect (Rosário & Álvarez, 2019: 2). One of these chronotopes is the image of home in the cinematic narrative. In the social sphere, home is a multifaceted issue and it stands for multiple meanings. Home can be a personal, collective, or physical space (Sixsmith, 1986: 281). Likewise, a cinematic home is not merely a product of an architectural design. It connotes intertextual meanings through the interplay between the exterior and the interior (Andrews et al., 2016: 1). One may find many illustrations of the home according to the film genre and the tone of the films. These representations of home constitute various meanings. In a rom-com, a home can be displayed as a haven, a peaceful place that represents the meanings of coziness and security. On the contrary, in a horror film, a home can be a figure of threat and create meanings of terror and fear. Likewise, dystopic narratives embody uncanny home images. Freud relates the term *uncanny* to “all that is terrible – to all that arouses dread and creeping horror” (Freud, 1955: 154). It is possible to see the uncanny attributions in the use of space in dystopian films. Considering this insight, it is observed that the use of place in dystopian narratives gives the audience an uncanny feeling. Especially, the design of the home as a dystopian space transmits the meanings of anxiety, violence, threat, and power struggle. Therefore, one could argue that in dystopian narratives home is deprived of its positive meanings and becomes “unhomely”, which is a term associated with disturbing places (Avery, 2014: 4).

In light of the above, this study aims to question the relationship between architectural design and cinematic imagery through the use of space, especially the image of home, that dystopic narratives in cinema produce. In order to grasp the multifaceted constitution of cinematic space in dystopian narratives, films in which the space of home takes on social meanings were examined and identified. After careful consideration, the film *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015) was purposefully chosen for sampling due to its suitability in exploring the individual, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of home within a dystopian narrative. The sample film is analyzed utilizing Lefebvre’s terms *The Spatial Triad* and Freud’s *The Uncanny*.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptualizing Space, Place and Home

Space, being a complex concept, has attracted the attention of many scholars as a study framework. It is noted that various scholars have defined space in different ways. These definitions sometimes seem ambiguous and contradictory. However, in its most common form, it is defined as “a boundless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction” as per its dictionary meaning (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.a). In this definition, the adjective *boundless* refers to the limitless characteristic of space. It is immeasurable and without restrictions. Another feature of space is that it accommodates objects and events; hence, it is an embodiment that exists through the interaction of entities and occurrences. Some aspects of this definition appear to have validity, dating back to the earliest theories proposed about space. Aristotle approached space in an ontological aspect. According to him, everything that exists is somewhere. Places must exist somewhere if everything that exists is in a place, and if places exist, then “they are in something which exists” (Morrison, 2002: 86). This notion brings up the issue of infinity. The space that covers an existence in the world stretches to infinity. This logical reasoning refers to the ontological affirmation that places embody entities that exist. From the 17th century through the modern period, under the effect of modernity and reason as its dominant system of thought, philosophy and science collaborated on issues related to both space and place. A focus on space and place is clearly observed in the works of Gassendi, Newton, Descartes, and Leibniz (Casey, 1998: 137-138). Newton (1643-1727) was the first thinker who revitalized Aristotle’s theory of space in the field of classical mechanics. Newton posited that space played the role of an ontological prerequisite for the first law of motion and he defined space as “infinite, homogeneous, and absolute in the sense of existing independently from bodies”. According to him, space functions as a container that allows motion to occur. Leibniz (1646-1716), on the other hand, examined space in a relational approach. From his perspective, space consists of “different bodies in relation to each other” (Rau, 2019: 10). Moreover, Kant (1724-1804) discussed the issue of space in relation to time and he defined space as “an appearance of external relations” in his early writings. This appearance is filled with substances. However, Kant later changed his discourse about space and he introduced his idea of “absolute and original

space” in which physical objects are found (Hatfield, 2006: 72). These insights of prominent thinkers of the Enlightenment era show that space was seen as an infinite concept that serves as a container to substances and materials in relation to each other.

In the 20th century, Heidegger put a central emphasis on the issue of spatiality making a distinction between space and place. It would be accurate to state that he initially carried on the Aristotelian approach to space highlighting the fact that it is a container of substances. This view can be traced in his concept of *Dasein*. The meaning of the word becomes clear when its syllables are broken down. *Da* means *there* or *here* and *sein* means *being* comprising the compound word *there-being* or *being-there* (Rause, 2021: 201). Though *Dasein*, as used by Heidegger, has a direct bearing on the ontological distinction between entities and their being, it is closely intertwined with spatiality, because it naturally extends to *being-there-in-the-World*. *Dasein* is fundamentally a concept that transpires in the world, not just in the sense that it shares space with other things but also in the sense that it constantly interprets and interacts with other things, their surroundings, and the world at large (Wollan, 2003: 34). This interplay between the subjects happening *here* and *there* demonstrates what the spatiality in Heideggerian thought is about. Space is ontologically linked with the actions of the agents. Space is not fundamentally given; rather, it exists only when it is perceived by subjects or when they take on spatial actions within the world (Rau, 2019: 214). This insight makes space an active organism that is bounded by human existence. Engaging with the world including its objects and events, thinking about the world, and finding oneself in it are considered to be the prerequisites of *being-in-the-World* (Malpas, 2004: 8). Therefore, Heideggerian view of spatiality is a social construct in which agents communicate and act through relational actions which bring back the notion that space is actually a container. However, at this point, it is worth mentioning that space refers to an abstract as well as an objective view of the world. It is commonly defined in terms of dimensions, distances and physical descriptions and it serves as a framework in which objects and beings are located. Along with space, another term that Heidegger conceptualizes in his writings is place. Although place is traditionally regarded as secondary to space (Malpas, 2006: 3), it is actually not an inclusive part of space. There is a certain kind of belonging in the concept of place (Gorner, 2007: 47). The sense of belonging attributes place subjectivity. Our experiences, memories, and feelings are all connected to the concept of place. This Heideggerian perception of the difference between space and place can also be observed in Tuan’s conceptualization. Tuan states that “space is more abstract than place”. Space transforms into place as one learns more about it and gives it significance (Tuan, 1977: 6). Nonetheless, the idea of social space that is utilized by Lefebvre seems to confuse Heideggerian space/place dualism. According to Lefebvre, a “socially constructed space” serves the same purpose as the concept of place (as cited in Cresswell, 2004: 10). Heideggerian and Lefebvrian concepts are frequently used interchangeably in this study to refer to social spaces as well as places.

Lefebvre is frequently cited among the most influential scholars when it comes to research on the concept of space. His book *The Production of Space* (1991) mainly suggests that space is a constructed entity, so it does not exist on its own. It is produced by people. He declares that “every society-and hence every mode of production... produces a space, its own space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 31). This well-known quote reveals the central idea of Lefebvre’s Marxist perspective, stating that space is a component of society, meaning it is created within the system of economic and ideological relationships. He highlights that space plays an important role in our comprehension and interaction with the outside world. According to his view, space is an abstract concept through which people interpret and experience daily life making space “a tool for the analysis of society”. Space encircles social agents and articulates the social sphere as a reality that facilitates making sense of the dynamics of society. Thus, his work proposes that space is a part of the social construction processes. He puts forward that people sculpt the environments they live in, making them fit their needs and constantly reproducing them through their experience (Lefebvre, 1991: 33-34). As a Marxist, he employs Marxist concepts like “class struggle, alienation, division of labor, and commodity fetishism”, as well as the necessity of combining them with a critique of contemporary issues like “everyday life, consumption, and technocracy” (Stanek, 2011: 3).

As mentioned before, Lefebvre interrogates the social production processes in urban planning and architecture from a Marxist point of view. Lefebvre’s conceptual framework, known as the spatial triad approach, offers an alternative perspective to traditional conceptions of space by demonstrating the sociology as well as the

political-economy of the production of space. This holistic approach allows to comprehend and analyze space in a social setting. In what follows, it is best to elucidate Lefebvre's concept of spatial triad in order to explain how space is produced in the social context.

Lefebvre considers space as a concept far from being static and fixed; on the contrary, the relations occurring in it are constantly on the move. According to this viewpoint, space is dynamic, ever-changing, and responsive to different kinds of influences and interactions, just like a living existence. Its essence is, therefore, essentially malleable and fluid, constantly changing. In order to examine this ambiguous concept, Lefebvre offers three interrelated aspects: spatial practice or perceived space, representation of space or conceived space, and representational space or lived space. The first division, spatial practice or perceived space, has a great association with the term perceived space because it suggests a dialectic relationship between the agents' sensory experiences and the everyday spaces such as urban, private and leisure spaces. All societies produce their own space, reproduce it and adopt it based on the needs of the inhabitants. These spaces become unique in time and respond to people's subjective perceptions. In other words, the agents of the society perceive this kind of space with their senses. In order to guarantee the regular operations of the society, a certain degree of cohesiveness and competence is required (Lefebvre, 1991: 38). Secondly, representations of space or conceived space stand for conceptualized spaces. They function as the domain of *scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, social engineers* who blend the art of social construction and science. These spaces, which essentially take the form of a system of spatial planning and organization, are conceptualized as theoretical constructs through mental abstraction and imagination. What these professionals merely do is connect the perceived and lived with the conceived. In every society, this constitutes the dominant space. Ideologies, power dynamics, and ideas all influence how space is perceived. It encompasses the symbolic and abstract representations of space that affect people's understanding of and interactions with the real world (Lefebvre, 1991: 38-39). The third aspect of Lefebvre is the representational spaces which are directly linked with lived spaces. People attribute symbols and meanings to the space they inhabit, so lived spaces serve as the domain where people actualize their activities and practice their emotions. Lived space is the setting for routines, social interactions, and the creation of social meanings. This division of the spatial triad highlights the meanings and lived experiences that individuals associate with space as a result of their regular interactions and activities (Lefebvre, 1991: 39).

Lefebvre's conceptual spatial triad consisting of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces gives the researchers a set of data to delve into different aspects of space. One of these spaces can be the homes where people dwell. Similar to his conceptualization of space, Lefebvre defines dwelling within a social context. He stresses that dwelling encompasses a variety of practices and behaviors that are connected to diverse social processes operating on different scales, as opposed to being limited to the physical structure of a single residence (Stanek, 2011: 86). On the other hand, Tuan's subjective description of place that is based on experience has a certain association with Heidegger's concept of dwelling. People dwell in the world and experience being-in-the-World by living in the space. It is natural to state that the first and foremost encounter of humans with the world is through dwelling. Therefore, dwelling is encrypted in the human existence. Since we always experience through a web of interactions and a lived presence in the world, the most fundamental aspect of our experience is this world, which gives our lives meaning and context. This might be called a *lived-spatiality* and it is correlated with the concept of *home* (Russon & Jacobson, 2013: 346). Home is where one experiences a sense of belonging. Therefore, we might naturally call home a place. We can also observe this association in everyday language. The words place and home can be interchangeably used. When one says "Would you like to come round to my place?", *place* means *home*. This implies a sense of ownership or a relationship between a person and a specific place, structure, etc. It also alludes to a sense of seclusion and inclusion (Cresswell, 2004: 1). This concept relies on being familiar to the place where we live in (Young, 2021: 256). However, as a place, home has many more meanings. When one checks the dictionary meaning of home, he/she encounters a set of definitions. These definitions vary as "one's place of residence", "the social unit formed by a family living together" and "a familiar or usual setting : congenial environment/habitat" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.b). As is apparent, home is strongly tied to its dwellers and it reflects the meanings of familiarity, privacy, security and dwelling. To delve into specifics, it is necessary to refer to Després' conceptualization of the 10 categories of the meaning of home. Some of these categories include meanings of privacy, physical security, refuge from the outside world, permanence and continuity, relationships with family

and friends and ownership (Després, 1991: 97-99). On top of all that, home is a place where a single person lives or a number of people live together which makes it a part of the social construct. Accordingly, there are clear indicators that housing studies can be classified within sociological literature. In social theory, the concept of home is closely affiliated with social class, gender and ownership (Somerville, 1997: 229). According to popular discourses, even though home is a space that protects individuals from the outside world and separates the private and public spheres, it cannot escape being influenced by social apparatuses of dominance such as religion, culture, gender and class (Andrews et al., 2016: 2).

Cinematic Space and The Image of Home in Dystopian Cinema

Thus far, the idea of space has been investigated from a physical standpoint, stressing its observable properties and the ways in which it manifests physically. This section refocuses the attention to look at the representation of space in movies and the importance of these images. Instead of focusing on space as a tangible thing, we also examine how space is portrayed in movies, where it acquires symbolic meaning and transforms into a visual language, then continues with the image of home in dystopian narratives within the context of *the uncanny*.

Cinema reproduces images through its creative tools, and the images of spaces constitute a big part of this reproduction. Koeck (2013: 1) emphasizes that there is an ontological difference between physical spaces and cinematic spaces. Real-world spaces have fundamentally different layouts than those seen in movies. The spectators may temporarily inhabit the cinematic space in his/her mindset. Yet, these spaces obviously serve different material, social, and economic purposes than the spaces made possible by actual architecture and cities. While cities and buildings mainly serve as our homes and places to live, spaces depicted in moving images typically serve a narrative purpose. Cinematic spaces are brought to life on screen through the portrayal and representation of the perceived, conceived and lived spaces. Some of the terminology utilized regarding the cinematic spaces can be labeled as cinematic landscapes, cinematic cityspaces, cinematic seascapes and the like (Çam, 2016: 11). The coexistence of these spaces in the cinematic realm of constant reproduction can be paralleled to Lefebvre's notion that space is fluid and dynamic. Spatial editing in cinema which is now quite vibrant makes different kinds of spaces such as "absolute space, abstract space, contradictory space, differentiated space, appropriated space, social space, natural space, leisure space, counterspace, and so forth" intermingle (Zhang, 2010: 2). Developing this idea further, Rosário and Álvarez (2019: 1) makes a distinction between two types of cinematic spaces including those that use historical settings to depict actual locations and those that produce imagined or alternate locations in conceivable worlds. Dystopian films which depict "an imagined world or society in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.c) can be associated with imagined locations, because dystopian themes require an unreal setting with a possibility of becoming real. Along with the exterior spaces, domestic spaces can also reflect a dystopian theme. One of these cinematic spaces is the home. The home image can be deprived of its positive connotations and display a fearful and uncanny meaning. In his essay, "The Uncanny", Freud (1955) explores the sensation of discomfort or unease that arises when the familiar becomes eerie or unsettling. The uncanny, in essence, represents the opposite of the comfort typically associated with familiar spaces like home. To elaborate, the uncanny hints at a ghostly presence and explores the strange, spooky, and mysterious. It evokes the feeling of doubt, particularly regarding one's identity and perceptions. There comes a point at which one feels strangely uncertain about oneself. In other words, it refers to something that is considered to be abnormal or disruptive of the status quo, questioning the concept of private or individual ownership. This ownership is not only about the physical properties one has, but it is about every possession from one's home to one's identity (Royle, 2003: 1). Avery (2014: 3) relates the concept of the uncanny with the home image in cinema and states that home may turn to an "unhomely" figure when it fails to sustain its main functions. In other words, the unhomely, like the Freudian uncanny, refers to the unsettling way that homey familiarity can turn into something strange, unstable, and ominous very quickly.

Home, when portrayed as a cinematic space, becomes a multi-functional concept deliberately constructed for the audience's engagement with the narrative. In numerous films, the depiction of the home serves to enhance the narrative in diverse ways. At times, the house is depicted as an extension of the character, while in other instances, it assumes a role as a character in its own right. Furthermore, home is a representation of a space that serves to advance the plot and reveal details about the personalities of the characters. These private spaces

function as canvases where crucial concepts are highlighted and interior design reflects the psychology of the characters. The domestic setting provides a dynamic background against which character growth and plot are closely intertwined, frequently signifying important narrative turns (Barnwell, 2022: 1). Particularly within dystopian narratives, it is noteworthy that the portrayal of home often veers away from being a vessel for individual expression. This theme can be associated with Freud's concept of the uncanny.

METHOD

For the analysis of space as a social construct in the film *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015) Ryan and Lenos' two-phased method of film analysis is followed. The first stage consists of a quantitative formal analysis and the other stage merely encompasses a qualitative contextual analysis. While the formal stage requires the film to be divided into shots of space plans in order to obtain quantitative data, the contextual stage enables the researcher to examine "the meanings that permeate the movie and reflect elements of our related historical, social, political, cultural, gendered, and economic contexts" (Ryan & Lenos, 2012, as cited in Çam, 2016: 26). In the light of this two-phased method, a formal analysis was first conducted to break down the spatial components of the film and acquire quantitative data. Utilizing the Adobe Premiere Pro software, a meticulous analysis was conducted on the image sequence, with scenes being segmented each time there was a change in spatial context. The analysis involved examining the quantity of filmic spaces, the duration of each spatial element, and the frequency of their utilization, which were then charted for further evaluation. As a result of this analysis, it is observed that 5 main spaces take place in the film which are homes, shared amenities, top floor, exterior and the workplace of the protagonist as they are ranked by the duration they occupy in the image strip. With this formal analysis, the aim is to present the skeleton of the spatial elements harnessed in the film in a numerical fashion. In the second stage, the contextual analysis was carried out to reveal the social implications created by the use of space in the film. As the main objective of this research is based on the idea that space is a social construct, the analysis follows a sociological context. For the purpose of deciphering the architectural language of the filmic space, the analysis is based on spatial literature especially Lefebvre's context of *the spatial triad* and Freud's term *the uncanny*.

FINDINGS

High-Rise is a 2015 dystopian drama film based on the novel of the same name by J.G. Ballard. The film was directed by Ben Wheatley. The story takes place in a high-rise apartment complex. The storyline starts when Dr. Laing, the protagonist, moves into the apartment. The plot revolves around the inhabitants of this high-rise apartment complex witnessing the collapse of the modern social order and then finding themselves in a fierce struggle for power. As tensions between the social classes in the apartment complex grow, conflicts and violence between the residents escalate. This results in the high-tech and luxurious environment they live in quickly turning into chaos. While the film deals with the degradation of society and the unleashing of human instincts, it also presents a thought-provoking story about class differences and the darker aspects of human nature. *High-Rise* (Wheatley, 2015) stands out as a psychological thriller set in a dystopian atmosphere, making viewers question the effects of social collapse on human behavior. To analyze the spatial content of the film, a formal analysis and a contextual analysis are conducted.

Formal Analysis of the Spatial Elements in *High-Rise*

The sample film was processed in Adobe Premiere Pro video editing software and the image content was divided into pieces each of which presents different filmic spaces. The linear image sequence was cut every time the filmic space changed and a new spatial setting began. The numbers of these sequences were calculated and their durations were determined. By doing so, it has been aimed to define the spaces reproduced in the film. As a result of this quantitative formal analysis, it was observed that a total of 5 different types of spaces were utilized in the film. These spaces can be named as home spaces (where the residents dwell), shared spaces (corridors, elevators, stairs, sports centers, spa, pool, etc.), top floor (where the architect lives), the exterior (the outlook of the building) and the protagonist's workspace. All the spaces in the film excluding the work space take place in the apartment complex which constitutes the main setting of the film. Home spaces can be

observed in 45 sequences and the total duration of these sequences is 46.3 minutes which equals to approximately 44.7% of all the image content. Therefore, it wouldn't be incorrect to state that home spaces cover the majority of the overall duration and visual content of the film. The second filmic space is the shared spaces including all the common areas in the apartment complex. There are 40 sequences depicting the shared spaces and they take up 28% of the overall duration of the film. The next space that covers the most amount of time is the top floor where the architect of the building lives with his family. This space is named the *top floor* in this study because it is comprised of a house and a garden and all this space is detached from the rest of the building. The 13 sequences including the top floor cover 21.7% of the whole duration of the image content. The exterior shots of the apartment complex take up the least amount of time in the movie. 16 exterior sequences occupy 1.7% of the image time. Lastly, the protagonist's workspace can be observed in 5 sequences covering 3.8% of the image band. Based on the formal analysis conducted in this research, it is observed that the majority of the filmic time takes place in the apartment complex which consists of the protagonist's and his neighbors' homes, shared spaces, top floor and the exterior look.

Table 1. Quantitative results of the formal analysis of the film *High Rise*

	Home Spaces	Shared Spaces	Top Floor	Exterior	Work Space
Number of Scenes	45	40	13	16	5
Duration of Scenes (Minutes)	46.3	29	22.5	1.8	4

Contextual Analysis of the Spatial Elements in *High-Rise*

In the movie, the use of space has an important contribution to the narrative. In fact, the space functions almost as a character. Moreover, the spatial use of the film reveals plenty of indicators in terms of the social production of space. All the spaces including home spaces, shared spaces, top floor, exterior and workspace are depicted as the containers of social interactions. Hence, in this part of the study, the cinematic spaces are analyzed within the scope of Lefebvre's concept of the spatial triad highlighting the social aspect of the space. In this way, it is aimed to reveal the ideological functions of space as well as the class and power struggles that transpire in the space. In addition to the social aftermath of the space design, Freud's term *The Uncanny* also provides a useful basis to reveal the tension in the film regarding the use of space.

The architectural style of the high-rise apartment complex and its creation process can be examined through Lefebvre's concept of conceived space or representation of space in that it is a produced space meticulously designed by a higher intelligence. The apartment complex in the movie is built with Brutalist architecture, one of the social manifestations of modernity. Brutalism is an architectural style that emerged in the 1950s and continued to increase its influence across Europe for the next 20 years. However, the conceptual origin of this architectural style dates back to the Industrial Revolution (Clement, 2011: 8-9). At this point, it is useful to mention some of the characteristics of brutalist architecture in order to further the resemblances between the architectural style and the cinematic representation of home in *High-Rise*. The first feature of the brutalist style is the use of bare concrete as the main building material both on the exterior and in the interior of the building. The concrete is typically left unfinished, giving the building a simple and solid appearance. Another characteristic is the application of geometric forms. Brutalist buildings often feature bold, geometric shapes, including massive, block-like structures, sharp angles and repetitive patterns. Moreover, brutalist architecture exalts functionality over aesthetics. Buildings are often characterized by efficient use of space and a focus on the needs of the occupants which creates a minimalist aesthetics without excessive ornamentation. Last but not least, brutalist architecture tends to be on a monumental scale. Many brutalist buildings are quite large and imposing, often used for public or institutional purposes (Banham, 1966). The image of the home produced in *High-Rise* bears all the aesthetic characteristics of brutalist architecture. The exterior seems unfinished because no coating material is used leaving the building with the look of plain concrete. Moreover, the building has a substantial size which gives the impression that it is built to contain a large community. The interior spaces also possess the characteristics of brutalist architecture. The walls and columns are all sharp-edged and positioned in a geometrical shape. It is hard to talk about a tasteful decoration in the homes. Functionality is rather more prioritized.

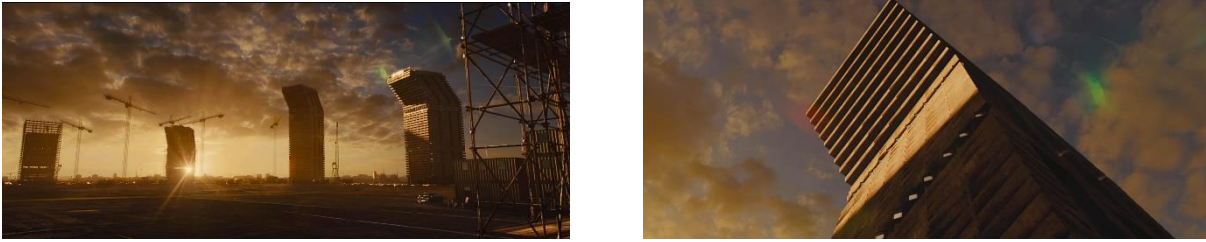


Figure 1. The exterior look of the apartment complex in High-Rise

As mentioned before, brutalism has its roots in the Industrial Revolution and it has a certain parallelism with modern ideals. The economic and cultural shifts of modernity brought with it the rise of nation-states which is a system that prioritizes community over individual. Modernity puts forward the image of a rigid human being striving for progressive ideals. In order to fulfill the needs of these modern progressive ideals, members of the society should work together and form a mechanism that enables a sustainable governing system. Remembering Lefebvre's idea that all societies build spaces of their own, it can be claimed that one of the products of modern society is the brutalist architecture. In this case, the image of home including both the exterior of the apartment complex and the interior spaces in *High-Rise* becomes a metaphor for the modern society residing as a community. The apartment offers a micro reflection of the modern world. The people living there act as a community and can fulfill all their needs within the building without ever going outside. Public spaces such as sports centers and supermarkets have been built within the building, providing the social spaces necessary for people to form a community. Even the balconies of the apartments face each other. Therefore, it can be argued that the building was built in accordance with the modern nation-state point of view. In parallel, the homes, especially the middle-class ones, are far from reflecting personal style. The bare concrete walls and the simple and featureless decoration with sharp lines do not reflect any personal characteristics of the resident. The minimalist decoration looks depersonalized and reflects social functionality, not individual expression.

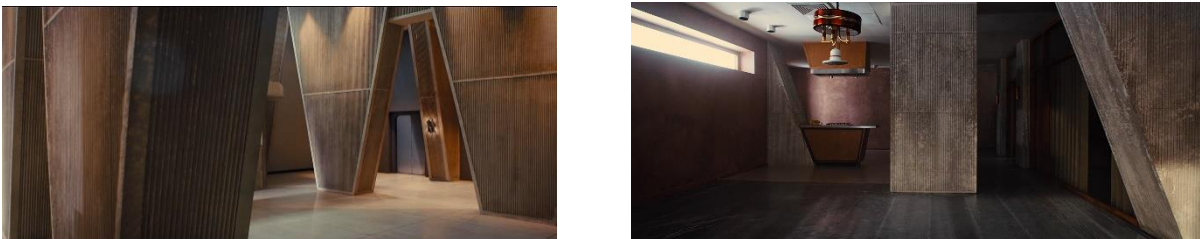


Figure 2. The interior look of the apartment complex in High-Rise

The creator of the complex lives on the top floor and the residents are scattered through the other floors according to their social status. This order of placement shows that there is a solid social hierarchy in the building and; hence in the community. While the upper class lives in tastefully decorated homes, the middle class inhabits minimalist ones. There are clear indicators that the ones who have economic power look down on the others. However, both the bourgeoisie and the working class live in the same social sphere as is the case in modern cities during and after the Industrial Revolution. Explained in Lefebvre's terms, the whole apartment complex stands for a conceived space. It is intricately designed with the intention of sustaining the power relations inherent in modern society, thus rendering it a social construct designed by a superior intellect. The presence of the character of the architect residing above all others evidently shows that the creator of the space functions as a mediator of the social agents. As the revolt from the lower floors escalates, the architect tries to ensure his superior place in the community; however, he fails to do so. The individualism crisis festers into a significant social revolt against all the norms that the modern ideals have built. The decay in the societal order results in a shift in all the values, and the power relations overturn. Suddenly, the members of the community seem to lose all their senses and act impulsively turning to violent acts. The collapse of a society based on rigid values and the transformation of the image of home from being a haven to a menace coincide with Freud's concept of *the uncanny*. The house, which is expected to be a safe place where the individual can keep his/her life under control, turns into an uncanny and dangerous place. The strict order of the building is destroyed and

replaced by a circle of chaos. Houses are looted and people violate their neighbors' spaces, disregarding the seclusion that private spaces require. The distinction between private and public space disappears and the rules of the modern society are broken. In this case, the transformation of the characters and the transformation of the house are handled in parallel. Further to the above analysis, the traces of Lefebvre's perceived space or the spatial practice and lived space or the representational space can be found in the residents' routines in using the spaces and the shift experienced in practicing these routines. At the beginning of the movie, Dr. Laing moves in the apartment and he enjoys the home and the facilities of the building. He sunbathes on the balcony, does sports in the sports center, shops for groceries in the supermarket, meets the neighbors and goes to a party. He makes use of the facilities the architect designed for the residents. Dr. Laing's use of space without really articulating the social hierarchy that the space itself creates can be correlated with the concept of perceived space. He acts like he is not aware of the economical reductionism that the designer imposes on the space. He just experiences the best out of what is presented to him. In other words, he perceives the space according his terms excluding the real designated purposes. Likewise, the other residents of the building seem to establish a similar way of living in this complex. They organize parties and socialize. They have even developed a certain way of collective behaviors. They are seen in the corridors, elevators and the hallways commuting to work. In other words, they take advantage of the space as they can. However, they seem unconscious of the socially discriminatory circumstances that the design of the space has created. This shows how the community perceives the space and how the members act on it.

As the story unfolds, a power struggle bursts between the two economic classes. The members of the community start to rebel against the authority when they realize that they do not get as much service as the residents on the upper floors. The first act of rebel the middle class opts for is to take their children to the pool when they are not supposed to. This act initiates a series of events that forcefully confront the two classes with each other. The members of the middle class gradually increase the dosage of their movement so that they can be more visible to the eyes of the upper class. This act turns to extreme violence shortly and the whole system collapses when the rebellions take over all the space in the apartment complex. The clear distinction between the private and public spaces disappears as well as the boundaries between the social classes. All the values the modern system has built vanish. This shift can be interpreted as the fall of collectivity and the rise of individualism, because in the resolution the building undergoes a creative transformation. Dr. Laing begins to personalize his home by painting the walls. The collapse of modern society and the rise of a new social order is shown through the customization of the house. This change in the space along with the social order can be elucidated as a conversion from perceived space to lived space. While people act according to the social norms in the first phase, they start to take action and own the space by attributing meaning to it in the second. They eradicate the rules of the system and experience the space on their own terms. Human agency makes the home a lived space and the personal meaning that is attributed by the resident himself/herself indicates that the space has transformed from being perceived to lived.

CONCLUSION

Cinema has a certain power to reproduce and represent what is hidden and what is not clearly noticed in life. Therefore, it has a strong correlation with reality. Even when it depicts a hypothetical world, it may constitute a relation with reality. Dystopian films serve a similar function; they create an imaginary world that may come true. In this research, the use of space -particularly the image of home- that dystopian narratives in film generate is intended to raise questions about the relationship between architectural design and cinematic imagery. Taking the film *High-Rise* as a sample where the home space takes on social meanings, we interpreted the complex composition of cinematic space in dystopian narratives. Through a thorough examination of the film utilizing Lefebvre's concept of the spatial triad and Freud's concept of the uncanny, several significant insights emerged. Firstly, it was observed that the space in the sample film is socially constructed. The apartment complex created as the main setting has direct control over the characters. It leads the characters to follow the rules of modern social norms. The residents in the apartment complex form a community and all their behaviors are determined by the authority which practices its power through the space. The designed nature of the space aligns with Lefebvre's conception of conceived space because it serves as a framework to sustain the existence of a higher-intelligence. Secondly, the shift in the narrative with the revolt of the middle class against the

authority can be regarded as a transformation of space from perceived to lived in Lefebvre's terms. While the characters initially utilize the space within the confines of societal norms, they subsequently begin to engage with it on their own terms. This shift is also interpreted as the fall of community-based modernity and the rise of individualism. On the other hand, this shift leads to extreme violence and creates an uncanny situation that the privacy of the homes comes to an end and they all turn to dangerous public spaces.

All in all, this research highlights the importance of cinematic space as a creator and mediator of meaning. Taking this work as a stepping stone in the intersection of cinema and spatial studies, film and urban researchers may further explore the meaning of space in the context of urban transformation process in social realist cinema or independent cinema.

Authors' Contributions

The author confirms that he is the sole contributor to this manuscript. Therefore, the author contributed 100% to the study.

Competing Interests

There is no potential conflict of interest.

Ethics Committee Declaration

Ethics committee approval is not required.

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Figure References

Figure 1-2: Wheatley, B. (Director). (2015). *High-Rise* [Motion Picture].

Author's Biography

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