

Summary

CEZARY WAS (University of Wrocław) / The Tannhäuser Gate. Architecture in science fiction films of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century as a component of utopian and dystopian projections of the future

The films of science fiction genre from the second half of the 20th and early 21st century contained many visions of the future, which were at the same time a reflection on the achievements and deficiencies of modern times. In 1960s, cinematographic works were dominated by optimism and faith in the possibility of never-ending progress. The disappearance of political divisions between the blocs of states and the joint exploration of the cosmos was foreseen. The designers undertook cooperation with scientists, which manifested itself in showing cosmic constructions far exceeding the real technical capabilities. Starting from the 1970s, pessimism and the belief that the future will bring, above all, the intensification of negative phenomena of the present began to grow in films. Fears of the future were connected with indicating various possible defects and insoluble contradictions between them. When, therefore, some dystopian visions illustrated the threat of increase in crime, others depicted the future as saturated with state control mechanisms and the prevalence of surveillance. The fears shown on the screens were also aroused by the growth of large corporations, especially by their gaining political influence or staying outside the system of democracy. The authors of the films also presented their suspicions related to the creation of new types of weapons by corporations, the use of which might breach the current legal norms. Particular objections concerned research on biological weapons and the possible spread of lethal viruses. The development of robotics and research into artificial intelligence, which must have resulted in the appearance of androids and inevitable tensions in their relations with humans, also triggered fear. Another problem for film-makers has become hybrids that are a combination of people and electronic parts. Scriptwriters and directors likewise considered the development of genetic engineering, which led to the creation of mutant human beings. A number of film dystopias contemplated the possibility of the collapse of democratic systems and the development of authoritarian regimes in their place, often based on broad public support. This kind of dystopia also includes films presenting the consequences of contemporary hedonism and consumerism. The problem is, however, that works critical of these phenomena were themselves advertisements for attractive products.