

`blade runner` and  
`mad max: beyond  
thunderdome` essay  
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`Blade runner' is a film directed by Ridley Scott who has subsequently directed such films as `Gladiator' and all the `Alien' films. He has won many awards in his work as a director. `Blade runner' is an adaptation of a book called ' Do androids dream of electric sheep? ' written by Philip K. Dick. He was a famous novelist, renowned for his classic sci-fi books. The movie `Blade-runner' stars Harrison Ford with Rutger Hauer and Sean Young.

It was originally released in 1982 but is set in a futuristic Los Angeles, 2019, where ex-blade-runner, Deckard, is rehired by the police to ' retire` some replicants that have escaped from the off-world colonies. `Mad Max 3' is directed by George Miller and George Ogilvie and is the second sequel to the original Mad Max film. It is set on a post-apocalyptic Australia where the deadly threat of nuclear radiation lies everywhere and clean water is hard to find. The film stars Tina Turner and Mel Gibson.

`Mad Max', played by Mel Gibson, is looking to reclaim his possessions and to o this he goes to Bartertown where he bargains for his possessions with a powerful figure in the town called Auntie, Tina Turner's character in the film. The classic sci-fi film has become popular in society since the 1960`s. sci-fi films have many similarities. They are a genre renowned for featuring new technology and something scientifically improved in comparison to today`s world. For example the setting of the film could feature advanced technology or something scientifically unusual within the film, They have been used to show concerns over war and pollution and how these problems could evolve and the possible outcomes to each one.

Androids and alien life can be and usually are included in the story line of the film. Class distinction is also something that is sometimes used in sci-fi films. The contrast between good and evil is something that is made clear in a narrative. Nevertheless there are always various scientific differences to be made between a sci-fi film and the reality of the world today. We can class `Blade runner` as a sci-fi film because of numerous aspects featured in the film. It begins with a prologue and tells the audience that it is set in the future whilst telling of the events on the `off-world` colonies.

The prologue also gives us with the date stating; Los Angeles 2019. The opening shot of the film is a high angle shot of futuristic Los Angeles. This futuristic setting is one of the characteristics what tell the audience the film is sci-fi. The pyrotechnics in the opening scene also shows the audience how the setting is no longer the Los Angeles we would know and recognise today. The prologue in the opening scene describes how the science in robotics and computer technology has rapidly developed, this theme of science tells the audience how Earth has become a computer dominated planet.

On the other hand `Mad Max 3` is also considered sci-fi but for different reasons. `Mad Max 3` is set in a post apocalyptic world after a catastrophic disaster, which is not explained in the film. The society of Bartertown, seems very primitive whilst having some advanced technology. The structures of the buildings in Mad Max also seem very basic. Money has no value in the world of Mad Max and in order to own certain items goods have to be exchanged. There is also a bricolage of lots of items from pre-apocalyptic times, but all these are used in different ways.

For example, at the beginning of the film we see a man on a bicycle. This bicycle isn't just used to travel with, his personal possessions hang from his bike, like the bird cage and mirrors. The bike could possibly be used as a mobile stall for traders alike. Ridley Scott, director of `Blade Runner` used to be a set designer for the BBC and used his experience from his previous job to achieve the effects and visual imagery he wanted in `Blade Runner`. Ridley Scott's overall set design of Los Angeles 2019 gives the world of Blade runner a very dystopian look for the viewer.

The overview of Los Angeles 2019 there is a feeling of high visual density where the viewer wants to explore the alleyways and buildings around the city. Los Angeles seems overcrowded with urban scenery, ugly machinery and lots of derelict overrun buildings. There is also another element that adds to the high visual density of the city, and that is the social distinction in the looks of the buildings. When we see the upper class people in the film like professor Tyrell.

He lives in a skyscraper which sits on top of the clouds and has access to sunlight when he wants it, by contrast people in the middle classes, like Tyrell's employee, have to live at ground level in a polluted environment where there is a mass of toxic fumes, no sunlight and lots of old run-down places. Presumably it would seem that the upper class people are overshadowing the lower class. The technology in the film features a retrofitting, meaning it has current technology with additional fittings. In fact the look of Los Angeles has a retrofitting, for example the big screened advertisements from New York's `Times square` are used all over the city in an attempt to give Los Angeles a more commercial look.

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When we compare the set design of `Mad Max 3` with `Blade runner`, the differences between them are easy to identify. `Mad Max 3` is set in what seems to be a desert but in actual fact it is post-apocalyptic Australia. The buildings are built with very raw materials like wood and stone. The buildings stay low to the ground. Although Aunties building towers above the rest, it is minute compared to the skyscrapers of Blade runner, on the whole Mad Max 3 is very primitive and its structures are basic. Costumes play a big part in directors idea of a futuristic city, each outfit worn by a character in the film can tell the audience various things like, the characters role, perhaps their personality or their social status.

The introduction to Deckard in Blade runner is in what seems to be Chinatown, however there are many people from different cultures there. In Chinatown the Chinese are wearing authentic costumes from Chinese culture, which is something the audience would recognise. There are also some businessmen who are dressed in suits and ties. Deckard is dressed in a trenchcoat, stereotypically associated with a American `film-noir` detective.

Overall how the characters are dressed in `Blade runner` is very similar to the people of today. Unlike `Blade runner`, `Mad Max 3` has an element of survival giving the cast in Mad Max a savage look, only looking to survive. The cast are dressed in what looks like Arabic clothing, wearing head-dresses, scarfs, and tunics. Even so, there is less of a mixture of clothing in Mad Max than there is in Blade runner. When we see Auntie, a powerful figure in Bartertown, she is wearing very elaborate and metallic material in comparison to the other people in the ilm. Although the materials she has

used to make her dress look very scrappy, her dress is considered expensive as the materials are hard to find in the world they live in.

Some of Aunties assistants are wearing very primitive and tribal outfits. In most films, lighting and sound contribute to the overall atmosphere. When we look at Blade runner, the visual effects used to create the scenery are used to perfection, Scott has used special effects to make the skyscrapers gigantic and has even used the visual effects to create more of a cramped city, The set esigner also used effects to also make artificial advertisements and flying cars. By contrast, when we look at `Mad Max 3` there are barely any special effects used. Lighting plays a major role in `Blade runner`, as there cannot be any natural light because of how Scott wanted to portray Los Angeles 2019. All lighting in the film is artificial, all the lighting comes from either neon street lighting, signs or advertisements. However, the lighting in `Mad Max 3` is mostly natural and often can be very bright.

At night in `Mad Max 3` the only light either comes from torches or man made fires, this is because the directors perhaps intended to show that technology is not used for leisure in the world of `Mad Max 3`. Music in `Blade runner` has a futuristic sound rather than an industrial sound. The music was composed by Vangelis and to create this futuristic feel to the film, Vangelis. used synthesisers. If we compare the sound of Blade runner to Mad Max 3, the sound of Mad Max 3 is more authentic. Aboriginal instruments are used, maybe to reflect how the story is set in Australia and how after the apocalypse Australia would return to its origins.

The overall atmosphere in the films are the most intriguing aspects of both `Blade runner` and `Mad Max 3`. `Blade runner` has the most surreal atmosphere out of the two films. The feeling that the audience receives from the film is very eerie. The fact that Blade runner is set in the future, gives the audience a view of how the director possibly perceived the future and how he believed the world could become a dystopia, with mass industrial pollution and the lawless subculture that is almost overtaken by robotic technology.

There is also a feeling of claustrophobic tension due to how hybrid and cramped the city is, with its derelict buildings and aristocratic palaces bundled together. On the whole I believe Ridley Scott was trying to convey a look that represented what he believed Los Angeles may look like in 2019 whilst retaining the world problems we have today. This made the film more believable and warned people of the future. `Mad Max 3` is based on the aftermath of a world disaster. This type of setting is completely different, to `Blade runner`.

As the audience can tell by the scenery, the country of Australia has been reduced to basics, due to the nuclear disaster. The scenery of `Mad Max 3` is mostly in the outback, there are no skyscrapers or tall buildings, the majority of the setting in Mad Max is either rural or very primitive. The atmosphere is almost equal to being alone in an Arabian desert, with barely any sign of life apart from some minute colonies. The only place that seems to be a settlement crowded with people is Bartertown.

However just like Los Angeles 2019, Bartertown is quite anti-social, but unlike Los Angeles 2019 it is less sophisticated. I think the director of the film is trying to create an atmosphere full of intensity and savage danger. The bricolage of objects also gives the audience the feeling of a previous society fallen into disrepair. The atmosphere is much more primitive than in `Blade runner`. All in all both films uses various techniques to create a futuristic city. In `Blade runner`, Scott uses claustrophobic settings so the viewer feels suffocated and cramped.

The advances in science and technology gives sophistication and emphasises that the story is set in the future. The mixture of cultures shows that racism and war is non-existent in the world and all humans are united. The synthesisers used in the music gives the viewer a futuristic feeling when watching the screen-shots of the city. This draws comparison to `Mad Max 3` as Ogilvie and Miller use different techniques to make their settings feel futuristic. The location used to film `Mad Max 3`, was a desert, the need for survival is used continuously to show that the desert was savage and waiting to take lives.

The use of natural colours represents the loss of most luxury technology as streetlights are replaced with torches and bomb fires. The materials used in costumes show that survival, instead of fashion is all that matters. Of the two films I preferred `Blade runner` because of its overall `look`. I enjoyed watching the movie and understanding the way that Scott created a visual density. I was intrigued with the dystopian effect caused by the congestion of the city. I also believe that `Blade runner` was the more realistic of the two, therefore I think `Blade runner` is the most successful.

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