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# Architecture of Control: Identity and Surveillance in Gattaca through the Marin County Civic Center

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**Abstract:** This article critically examines the relationship between Andrew Niccol's film Gattaca (1997) and architecture's role in identity production and surveillance systems. The study argues that the architectural spaces in Gattaca function not merely as a backdrop accompanying the narrative, but as an active control mechanism that overshadows the appearance of a social order based on genetic determinism and influences bodies. This claim is reinforced by a spatial and cinematographic analysis of the Marin County Civic Center, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, which is central to the film. Through the study of architectural devices —spatial arrangement, circulation, size, visual range, symmetry, illumination, and framing— in combination with cinematic techniques, it discloses the means by which architecture materializes biopolitics of control. This study follows an analytical method that combines Juhani Pallasmaa's understanding of bodily and experiential space with Michel Foucault's concepts of surveillance, discipline, and biopolitics. The article examines how a public structure conceived with democratic ideals transforms into a space that legitimizes institutional control and genetic discrimination in the context of film, revealing the ethical responsibility of architecture. In this respect, the study examines cinema's contribution to architectural theory as a critical tool that exposes architectural ideologies.

**Keywords:** Cinematic architecture, Gattaca, identity, Marin County Civic Center, surveillance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cinema and architecture are involved in a dynamic interplay through the common language of space, movement, perception, and temporality. While architecture creates the real spaces that envelop and define everyday life, cinema dissects and reshapes these spaces through framing, editing, camera movements, and the manipulation of light. Thus, it can be argued that cinema is not only an instrument that portrays the space of architecture but an ideological, experiential, and political space that uncovers these aspects within architectural space itself (Colomina, 1993).

In contemporary architectural theory, cinema is a “laboratory” where space is interrogated as a critical instrument. Pallasmaa (2001) states that one can examine architectural space within films from two points of view, one being visual and the other more tactile and physical. Similarly, Colomina (1993) suggests that modern architecture functions as a media system, which is defined by its ability to represent, surveil, and exercise power. Based on

this line of thought, this paper aims to prove that architectural space in Gattaca is not simply represented, but built using filmic techniques.

Science fiction cinema, in particular, offers a rich site for exploring the connection between architecture and power. Speculative future narratives expose present anxieties around technology, body politics, and forms of governance in thematized and spatialized concerns. In science fiction cinema, dystopian spatial configurations are often used to illustrate how architecture operates not only as a framework shaping bodies and visual culture, but also as a mechanism that produces social order and reinforces hierarchical structures.

Gattaca provides a powerful illustration of how a social order grounded in genetic determinism is spatially manifested. In the film, people are divided into "genetically valid" and "invalid" groups, with access to education, work, and social mobility determined by biological information. This discrimination is not only enacted and perpetuated on the level of law or discourse but also through direct spatial organisation. In this sense, architectural space can be seen as a tool of regulation that conceals the genetic ideology while making it a natural fact.

This spatialization has much to do with the discipline/surveillant/biopolitical thematics in the thought of Michel Foucault. Foucault argues that contemporary power manages individuals' bodies not by means of direct violence, but through spatial organization, surveillance, and means of permanent observation (Foucault, 1977a; Foucault, 1977b). In Gattaca, institutional interiors – lobby, hallway, and public areas – serve as architectural tools that facilitate measurement, classification and surveillance of bodies. In this way, architecture is implicated in the spatialization of bodily, organic difference.

This paper studies the use made of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Marin County Civic Center in the film as Gattaca Aerospace Corporation. It was designed to be an interpretation of civil architecture with the common-folk's needs in mind, with the democratic ideals of accessibility, openness, and public transparency. But Gattaca is a place where these modernist principles are flipped on their heads and the building is more a reminder of continuous, unblinking corporate surveillance. This suggests that the meaning of architectural significance is not a non-subjectively determined idea but can be reformulated according to ideological domain.

This study explores the role of architectural space in the movie Gattaca as a device for controlling identity and surveillance. Based on a qualitative analysis framework that combines aspects of spatial and cinematic analysis, the study examines how spaces are designed, represented, and perceived in the movie Gattaca. This study is based on theories by Michel Foucault, who explains how spatial organization functions as a means of exercising disciplinary power, as well as by Juhani Pallasmaa, who explains embodied perceptions of architecture in relation to spatial organization. This study will argue that architecture plays an important role in organizing society and establishing control mechanisms through spatial design and representation. Through its function as a medium for analyzing architecture, the study will emphasize the role of cinema in exposing architectural ideology.

While there is a substantial body of literature on cinema–architecture relations and on Foucauldian theories of surveillance, these strands largely remain analytically separate, and the role of real architectural settings in mediating biopolitical control through filmic representation remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by combining spatial and cinematic analytical perspectives and applying them to Gattaca through the case of the Marin County Civic Center. This way, it illustrates that architecture is a double operation that works not only physically but also as a representation of control mechanisms, thus making an important addition to architectural theory through placing cinema as an analytical tool rather than as an example.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1.Genetic determinism and socio-political context

Gattaca was released in 1997; at this time, genetic science became an area attracting attention in terms of politics, ethics, and culture. Social aspects of genetics became especially important to debate during that era (Rose, 2007). In the movie, genetics becomes the main tool for classifying individuals in society based on genetic characteristics rather than meritocracy. The situation presented is analogous to the ethical issues concerning genetic modification and enhancement, as discussed by Habermas (2003).

The social organization in the film defines people into "valid" and "invalid" categories based on their genes (Niccol, 1997). In the film, this division extends beyond biological difference and becomes embedded in social institutions such as education, employment, and social mobility. This reflects Foucault's (1978) argument that biological characteristics can become mechanisms through which power operates within society. Social mobility is therefore governed by a system in which biological data replaces traditional forms of social evaluation. This logic is embedded spatially, as built environments organize bodies according to genetic status.

### 2.2.Architecture as an ideological apparatus

In Gattaca, architecture is an active ideological apparatus, not simply a setting. The constructed world mirrors and supports the principles of genetic determinism through repetition, order, and predictability. In the film, architectural order is associated with ideals of biological perfection, while deviation appears as a threat to institutional stability. This interpretation can be related to Foucault's discussion of normalization and disciplinary order (Foucault, 1977a).

The relations that define the location of work and other public buildings shape bodily behavior and action. This takes the form of long corridors that limit the ambiguity that lies within space and eliminate any chances for disruptive behavior. Thus, space becomes vital for defining control over individuals and therefore forms self-regulating individuals in accordance with the commands that space gives. Control is not exerted through internal force but through space as a control tool (Foucault, 1977a).

This is a logic of space that corresponds to the wider literature concerned with ideology in architecture, in which form represents the power of ideology itself in the creation of these power structures (Althusser, 1971). The film Gattaca presents architecture as an invisible but ever-present force, turning the ideology of genetics into reality through space.

### 2.3.Modernist aesthetics and spatial rationality

The architectural language in Gattaca is largely associated with the modernist architectural style, which is symmetrical, minimalistic, and geometrical in nature (Vidler, 2000).

Indeed, architectural qualities have long been associated with notions of progress, rationality, and universality in architectural history (Colomina, 1996). The movie therefore establishes a designed, highly technological future setting using examples from modernist architectural styles.

In Gattaca, the way in which open spaces are represented in modernist architecture become instruments of oppression rather than freedom. Such a subversion can be seen through the use of Beatriz Colomina's explanation about architectural space as being a mode of control and representation and Michel Foucault's idea of "disciplinary" or "disciplined" space (Foucault, 1977b). In this regard, the monumental nature of spaces portrayed in the movie, which is not flexible enough for use, lacks any kind of humanity in terms of human sensory or emotional experience, an idea emphasized by Juhani Pallasmaa (2005). They convey equality, not uniqueness. The significance of a human-scale architectural approach has often been underrated, and the marginalization of the human form within the grand scheme is brought to the fore. Through this representation, the film questions the

assumption that modernist architectural principles inherently promote democracy, openness, and freedom. This interpretation resonates with critical discussions of modern architecture as a medium closely connected to systems of observation and power (Colomina, 1996).

Conversely, the theme of universality in modernism is demonstrated as having the potential for exclusivity (Vidler, 1992). In the film, architectural standardization is paralleled by genetic standardization, reducing identity to measurable biological information. This condition can be interpreted through theoretical discussions of classification, normalization, and disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977b). Therefore, this film offers a critique of architectural modernism and how it can be easily overtaken by an authoritarian and technological framework.

**2.4.Marin County Civic Center, surveillance, and spatial power**

One such architectural point of reference in Gattaca is Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin County Civic Center, which houses the Gattaca Aerospace Corporation in the movie. The building was originally intended to symbolize democracy as a civic center complex whose ideals include frankness, openness, and democratized accessibility, reflecting Wright's ideals in this regard (Wright, 1957).

The building's horizontal character, repetitive arched lines, and broad corridors symbolized Wright's aim to eliminate dividing boundaries between citizens and institutions (Frampton, 1992).

However, within the film itself, the Civic Center re-emerges as an area central to surveillance and institutional control. The open architecture that was once an embodiment of democracy and freedom becomes an expression of constant visibility. Long sightlines and corridors that do not allow for concealment within space ensure that bodies are always visible. This observation has serious connotations with regard to Michel Foucault's notion of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977a).

The reuse of the Marin County Civic Center demonstrates how architectural meaning can be transformed through changing ideological contexts. This interpretation suggests that architectural significance is not fixed but can be continuously redefined through cultural and political frameworks (Vidler, 1992). The building, which can be understood as reflecting ideals of civic virtue in its original design, is reconfigured in Gattaca as a spatial framework that can be interpreted through Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitical control, particularly through mechanisms of surveillance and spatial discipline. In addition, architecture becomes a mediator of genetic surveillance within Gattaca, serving as an extension of the film's broader commentary on technological determinism (Lyon, 2007).



***Figure 1.*** *Marin County Civic Center, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. (Niccol, 1997, [00:03:40])*

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes an architecture-spatial cinema interpretation strategy in its qualitative methodology for the purpose of examining how spaces function as a means of control in the film Gattaca. This methodology is specifically designed to maintain clarity, coherence, and consistency throughout the process, which will take place within the three-stage framework of scene selection, spatial-cinematic analysis, and interpretive model.

The combination of spatial and cinematic analysis carries important methodological significance due to the fact that architectural space in film is a phenomenon of dual nature, consisting on the one hand of an actual physical reality and on the other of a represented visual reality. Spatial analysis can be used to analyze physical relations and configurations of circulation, visibility, and scale (Pallasmaa, 2005), while cinematic analysis uncovers ways of constructing, emphasizing, and giving ideological connotations to these configurations using various visual means (Bruno, 2002). Thus, combining these methodologies provides a holistic approach to the study of power, as it is not only a spatial reality but also a perceptual one.

In summary, through the use of spatial and cinematic approaches, one is able to understand space in architecture can be understood simultaneously as a physical spatial configuration and as a cinematic representation. Such an analysis highlights the fact that power is embedded in spatial design as well as in its cinematographic interpretation. Through a linkage of the two elements, there is increased understanding on how architectural power is created and absorbed.

### 3.1. Scene Selection

For selecting particular scenes for studying the role of architecture in the movie, a purposive sampling technique was adopted. In this research, only those architectural scenes that receive conscious attention will be studied; hence, instead of considering the entire movie, only those scenes in the movie where architecture is emphasized will be considered. These will mainly include architectural scenes from the Marin County Civic Center since it offers a consistent spatial environment where the issue of control can be studied.

Three key criteria governed the selection of scenes to study:
(1) Architectural elements must be clearly visible;
(2) There must be interaction between humans and the environment, allowing for the observation of how people relate to/and move through space;
(3) Chosen scenes must also relate to surveillance, regulation, or institutional order.

The chosen scenes were analyzed to allow for an in-depth examination of spatial conditions without disrupting the analytical framework.

### 3.2. Spatial and Cinematic Analysis

The chosen scenes were analyzed in a dual framework of architectural and cinematic parameters, and the goal of this phase is not to provide an interpretive commentary but rather a systematic identification of spatial qualities and visual structures.

The parameters used in the architectural analysis were:

-Spatial organization (layout, geometrical organization and hierarchical structuring of the space);

-Circulation pattern (movement corridors/ routes, access to the space and direction of movements through the space);

-Visibility conditions (lines of sight within the space, openness to see into the space, level of visual exposure within the space);

-Scale relationships (spatial proportions in relation to the human body to the constructed environment);

-Material characteristics (surface qualities of materials and atmospheres created via use of materials).

***Table 1.*** *Analytical Framework of the Study (Source:Author)*

| Stage | Focus Area | Parameters/ Criteria | Theoretical Basis | Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scene Selection** | Film scenes | Visibility of architectural elements; human–space interaction; relevance to surveillance and control themes. | Yin (2018) | To identify representative scenes for analysis. |
| **Spatial Analysis** | Architectural space | Spatial organization; circulation patterns; visibility conditions; scale relationships; material characteristics. | Pallasmaa (2005) | To examine spatial configurations and bodily relations. |
| **Cinematic Analysis** | Film representation | Framing and composition; camera angle; depth of field; lighting; shot duration. | Bruno (2002) | To analyze how space is visually constructed. |
| **Interpretive Framework** | Theoretical reading | Mechanisms of control; surveillance; embodied spatial experience . | Foucault (1977a) | To interpret findings within a conceptual framework. |

***Note.*** *This table summarizes the methodological structure of the study.*

In parallel, cinematic analysis focused on how these spatial conditions are represented and emphasized through filmic techniques, including:

- framing and composition,
- camera positioning and angle,
- depth of field,
- lighting conditions,
- shot duration and sequencing.

These parameters were used as analytical tools to systematically describe how space is constructed and perceived within the film.

### 3.3. Interpretive Framework

The findings of this study are interpreted within a pre-established theoretical framework that utilizes concepts of control, surveillance and physicality to provide insight into the spatial characteristics observed in the visual analysis of filmic representations of architecture as they relate to questions of power and identity.

The study separates itself from a direct integration of theoretical perspectives with the analytical process by maintaining an organized distinction between analysis of observation and analysis of interpretation. First, the spatial/cinematic characteristics of the visual analysis are derived through an organized and systematic analytical process. After that point, the identified characteristics are considered through a theoretical framework that provides a means to contextualize the identified spatial characteristics with power and identity related conceptual framework.

Through establishment of clearly defined selection criteria, analytical parameters and interpretive structure, this methodology has created a defined, reproducible approach for the examination of the relationship between architectural and cinematic representation.

### 3.4 Limitations

The current research has certain limitations, which need to be considered. First of all, this investigation is based on the interpretative and qualitative approach to the analysis of spatiality and cinematography, which is highly subjective. Although this research method allows for more profound consideration of the subject matter, the conclusions drawn in the course of research are biased due to the specific perspective taken into account by the researcher.

Additionally, there is a possibility that generalizability can be hindered since the research will be conducted on selected sequences in a single movie. Since the research will be carried out using an approach which is specific to the individual case, the conclusion arrived at can only apply to this particular film, Gattaca.

In conclusion, the investigation mainly emphasizes the visual and spatial dimensions of architecture in movies, without focusing much on other dimensions, including the aspect of the audience or production context. It is expected that future research will consider comparative studies using several movies or other research methodologies.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Below is the analysis of the scenes chosen divided into two parts. Firstly, observations regarding space and cinema made based on the selected scenes will be discussed. Secondly, these observations will be analyzed using the theoretical approach proposed in the previous section.

### 4.1.Cinematic Construction of Architectural Power

This study argues that architectural power in Gattaca is not only embedded in physical space, but is actively constructed and intensified through cinematic representation. In Gattaca, the idea of architectural authority is created not just by the architecture itself but is also built upon continuously through the use of various cinematic techniques that define how one perceives and experiences space.

Techniques including the use of framing, camera angles, lighting, and temporal rhythms continually reinforce architectural order within the chosen scenes. Using such techniques, architecture comes out as a process by which behavior and perception are regulated. This notion is consistent with what Foucault describes in terms of his theory of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977a). Therefore, film does not simply depict architecture; it actively contributes to the production of spatial authority through visual representation. This interpretation can be related to Bruno's understanding of cinematic space as an active producer of spatial meaning (Bruno, 2002).

This reveals that architecture functions not only as a physical environment but as a mediated system of power that is continuously constructed through visual representation.

By using a carefully controlled visual language, Gattaca utilizes the power of surveillance as a form of aesthetic and embeds power in the sensory experience of space (Lyon, 2007). Architectural power becomes not only visible but also affective, shaping how spatial environments are experienced by both the characters and the viewer. This emphasis on sensory and embodied experience aligns with phenomenological approaches to architecture that foreground perception and bodily engagement with space (Pallasmaa, 2005).

From an architectural perspective, this indicates that power is not solely embedded in built form, but is amplified and internalized through cinematic techniques that shape spatial perception.

### 4.2 Spatial Construction of Control: Framing, Scale, and Atmosphere

The portrayal of architectural control in Gattaca is achieved through visual and spatial elements such as framing, scale, and atmosphere.

Symmetry and axiality are two of the prominent visual tools used in Gattaca. The application of these visual tools creates a rigid spatial environment where architectural spaces impose

constraints on people's actions. Any act that deviates from the established social order will be considered a form of chaos and disorder.

In the selected scenes, symmetrical framing repeatedly positions characters within rigid architectural boundaries (Figure 2). Figure 3 illustrates how Vincent is positioned within a highly ordered architectural composition. This visual strategy reduces the perceptual autonomy of the individual and reinforces institutional order. Such observations can be interpreted through Bruno's discussion of cinematic space as a constructed visual experience (Bruno, 2002).

From an architectural perspective, this indicates that visual composition becomes an extension of spatial control, reinforcing the alignment between bodies and institutional order.

This paper asserts that built environments exemplify an authority over the bodies of humans; thus the human figure is dwarfed by the grandeur of the architecture that surrounds it. Low-angle shots of the corporation Gattaca, as seen in Figure 4, create an implicit comparison between the human figures in these images to the permanence of the corporation's structure.

In contrast, high-angle shots create a view of the human body as an object to be observed, reinforcing the notion that the individual is constantly under surveillance from the built environment. The interchange between high and low angle shots reveals how built forms create a structure of power to control and contain the existence of every individual. Architecture is experienced through an environmental system, which may not be considered as being dominated by a political



***Figure 2.*** *Symmetrical framing that reinforces architectural order and interdependence. (Niccol, 1997, [01:26:55])*



***Figure 3.*** *Symmetrical frames with Vincent in the foreground. (Niccol, 1997, [00:04:20])*

In the selected scenes, camera angles construct a hierarchical relationship between bodies and architecture. This observation can be interpreted through Bruno's discussion of cinematic spatial representation (Bruno, 2002). When low-angle shots of buildings are utilized in Gattaca, they create a sense of visual hierarchy, where the authority of the structure subordinates the power held by individuals. ruler, but instead be viewed as a system of dominance (Vidler, 1992).

Architectural scale demonstrates a hierarchical relationship between the human body and the built environment placing the individual in a subordinate status with regard to the power of space.



***Figure 4.*** *The relationship between people and architecture in Gattaca. (Niccol, 1997, [00:23:43])*

The regulation of movement is accomplished through expansive spaces coupled with long corridors, as these create a limitation on the alternative routes of movement that result in consistent body movements that are conditioned by space. In establishing these social hierarchies through visibility through film, the viewer gains an understanding of the power of architecture (Bruno, 2002). This further implies that the magnitude of the space is an instrument of power in that the architectural space establishes a psychological distance and reinforces the social hierarchy. As shown in Figure 5, institutional checkpoints reinforce surveillance through architectural design. Sterile, expansive interiors serve as a visual metaphor for the loss of personal history as a result of the emphasis placed on biological data.

Beyond composition and perspective, Gattaca employs lighting, materiality, and temporal rhythm to construct an atmosphere in which control appears naturalized for both the characters and the viewer. The sensory qualities of these spatial experiences can be examined through phenomenological approaches to architecture (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Controlled lighting ensures that everything is fully lit such that there are no shadows. Uniform illumination produces a clinical environment in which both bodies and space are subjected to continuous visual inspection. Controlled lighting and materiality produce a highly visible environment. This analysis suggests that visibility is transformed into a mechanism of surveillance, where the absence of shadow eliminates the possibility of concealment. The creation of visibility, which usually represents transparency and openness, serves to further establish a condition of continuous exposure to both the human body and the architecture (Lyon, 2007).

From an architectural perspective, this indicates that visibility is not a passive condition, but an actively constructed mechanism of surveillance that regulates both perception and behavior. Figure 6 demonstrates that surveillance extends beyond the corporation into the urban environment.

The choice of materials also support the establishment of this type of atmosphere. The dominance of stone, concrete, and metal constructs an atmosphere of permanence and rigidity, reinforcing the perception of architecture as an impersonal and controlling system. Many times, there is extended duration when the camera remains focused on these materials; therefore they are emphasized as being dominant over human beings. The resulting atmosphere presents architecture as impersonal, permanent, and authoritative. The emotional distance produced by these material choices can be interpreted through Pallasmaa's phenomenological approach, which emphasizes the role of materiality in shaping embodied spatial experience (Pallasmaa, 2005).

This reveals that material choices are not merely aesthetic, but contribute to the production of emotional detachment and reinforce the perception of architecture as an autonomous system of control.

Temporality plays a complementary role. Rhythm is achieved through the slow and careful pacing of the film. The pace of the story allows the physical (architectural) environment to interact with the "narrative action" (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010). When moving through architectural spaces, the character's movements



***Figure 5.*** *Checkpoints in Gattaca. (Niccol, 1997, [00:04:10])*



***Figure 6.*** *Checkpoints in the city. (Niccol, 1997, [00:59:33])*

appear to be slow, controlled, and predictable. Therefore, the character's body is in rhythm with the environment of order present by the institution. The regulation of rhythm and duration contributes to a perception of inevitability and determinism within the filmic environment. This relationship between temporality and perception has been widely discussed in cinematic theory (Deleuze, 1992). This suggests that control extends beyond spatial organization into temporal experience, where rhythm and duration discipline the body's movement within space.

Through the integration of composition, atmosphere, and temporal rhythm, the film Gattaca illustrates the extent to which film techniques can intensify the architectural ideology (Bruno, 2002). Control is not suddenly imposed, but rather normalized, through consistent application of aesthetic principles, thereby converting to the viewer's perception of architecture: An absolute sub-space with a holistic approach to the control of perception; the regulation of behavior; and the internalization of power (Foucault, 1977a; Vidler, 1992).

### 4.3 Identity, Body, and Spatial Resistance

While architecture functions as a mechanism of control throughout Gattaca, the film also presents moments in which individuals negotiate and challenge these spatial constraints. Such tensions reflect broader discussions concerning agency and the governance of biological life (Rose, 2007).

In the film, resistance does not emerge primarily through open rebellion but through subtle spatial practices that enable individuals to negotiate institutional constraints. Such forms of everyday resistance have been widely discussed in spatial theory (De Certeau, 1984).

Through his interaction with both his own body and the architectural environment, Vincent

demonstrates how spatial systems can be appropriated and reinterpreted through lived experience (De Certeau, 1984; Pallasmaa, 2005). This observation can also be related to Bruno's discussion of movement and spatial experience in cinematic environments (Bruno, 2002).

Vincent's body functions as a site of resistance within the spatial regime depicted in the film. The location of Vincent within the institutional setting highlights the conflict that exists between biological taxonomy and spatial involvement. This conflict can be analyzed through Foucault's idea of discipline, which is based on surveillance, taxonomy, and spatial control (Foucault, 1977a). Due to being conceived as genetically 'invalid', his body is defined by the various institutions as being incompatible to any of these environments; this creates tension between the institution and the biological makeup of the Vincent's character (Rose, 2007). Vincent adapts his body to the spatial constraints of the environment. This analysis reveals that resistance emerges not through opposition to the system, but through the strategic performance of compliance within it.

In doing so, the body becomes an architectural interface for Vincent (Pallasmaa, 2005). When navigating through architectural interfaces, Vincent learns to navigate these spaces by carefully adhering to established circulation routes, workspaces, and spatial thresholds. This reflects the role of spatial organization in structuring movement and access within architectural environments (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). Through disciplined bodily movements, Vincent reproduces the spatial logic of the system while simultaneously exposing its fragility. From an architectural perspective, this indicates that the body operates as an interface through which spatial systems are both reproduced and contested. In doing so, the compliance is also subversive — as he performs the role of a 'valid' individual, Vincent illustrates how fragile an architecture that has a claim of biological correctness actually is (Butler, 1990; Vidler, 1992).

Thus, it is the architectural performance that distracts an architecture from recognising the differences in an occupant's body (De Certeau, 1984). The details of floors that may retain genetic traces, desks associated with biological verification, and circulation routes that regulate movement are temporarily neutralized by Vincent's ability to navigate and appropriate space. In this context, resistance emerges through the strategic use of space rather than through the disruption of spatial order, an interpretation that is consistent with Lefebvre's understanding of space as a socially produced and negotiated condition (Lefebvre, 1991).

In Gattaca, identity is portrayed as extending beyond biological inheritance. The film suggests that social recognition, performance, and individual action contribute to the construction of identity, an interpretation that aligns with Butler's understanding of identity as a continuously produced and performative process (Butler, 1990).Identity is produced through the performance of one's identity repeatedly over time by way of movement within an architectural environment, where a person's position in a given space will create a physical representation of that individual's identity (Goffman, 1959). From this, we understand that one's sense of identity is not permanent or unchanging; it is created and recreated through the actions of individuals interacting with their physical surroundings. The act of occupying space contributes to the continuous formation and reinterpretation of identity through lived experience. This observation aligns with Pallasmaa's argument that architectural space is understood through embodied and sensory engagement rather than through visual perception alone (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Therefore, the way in which a person successfully performs their identity in relation to their environment illustrates how much greater an impact a given building has on the identity of its occupants than does merely functioning as the basis for the identity of its occupants (Bruno, 2002).

***Table 2**. Architectural mechanisms of control in Gattaca. (Source:Author)*

| Spatial Strategy | Architectural Reference | Cinematic Representation | Theoretical Framework | Effect on Identity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Axiality and Symmetry | Modernist planning And repetitive structural elements | Static,centered Framing that Highlights spatial rigidity | Colomina (1993)-architecture as a system of representation | Normalization Of bodily behavior and movement |
| Visibility and Transparency | Open corridors, Absence of visual Barriers. | Constant exposure using long takes and intense focus | Surveillance theory / Panopticism (Koskela,2000) | Internalization of surveillance and self-regulation |
| Regulated Circulation | Predefined routes, checkpoints and, thresholds | Movement through entry points and corridors | Biopolitics (Foucault,1977b) | Spatial regulation of genetically "valid" and "invalid" bodies |
| Atmosphere and Materiality | Stone, concrete and modern materials | Pastel color palette and cool lighting | Pallasmaa (2001)– phenomenology of space | Emotional distancing and bodily alienation |

***Note.** The table summarizes the spatial and cinematic mechanisms of control identified through the analysis of selected scenes.*

There is a contradiction between Vincent's success in Gattaca and architectural systems that were designed to provide total control of bodies. Architectural systems are built on assumptions about the bodies of individuals. If a body fits the assumptions built into architectural systems, the system may not recognize any deviation from the assumption (Vidler, 1992).

Vincent's presence within the Gattaca complex represents a continuous act of spatial transgression. This finding suggests that architectural boundaries remain permeable despite mechanisms of control (Lefebvre, 1991). Control, while ubiquitous, is never absolute. Architecture demands perpetual reaffirmation in order for its dominance to be maintained (Foucault, 1977a).

The violations of the code are discreet and imperceptible acts. They don't change the architecture of the building but redefine its meaning (Bruno, 2002). The corridors take on the function of protest, the offices those of disguise, and the doorways become areas of negotiation. This is because architecture is always an ongoing struggle between power and resistance.

The conclusion of the film highlights this dynamic. Vincent's ultimate success is not achieved through spatial destruction but through endurance within architectural order. His journey suggests that resistance in highly regulated environments may emerge not from opposition but from persistence, discipline, and reappropriation (Foucault, 1977a). As much as anthropogenic nature is being used as a mechanism for control and surveillance, it does not remove the use of human agency (Rose,

2007). This indicates that even in a highly controlled environment, identity is both variable and subject to interpretation (Butler, 1990). Therefore, while architecture provides a medium of power, authority is generated through consistent interpretation and recognition by individuals who use that architecture (Lefebvre, 1991). This demonstrates that architecture is not a totalizing system of control, but a dynamic field in which power and resistance coexist, requiring constant reinforcement to sustain its authority.

## 5.CONCLUSION

This research looks at how space in architecture can be a means of control in Gattaca by looking closely at some of the scenes that take place in the Marin County Civic Center; it shows that the architecture of the film is more than just a backdrop and is instead an active system that organizes what can be seen, where people can go and how people experience their bodies.

This analysis finds that the organization of space is an essential part of regulating people in the cinematic space through the use of linear circulation routes, controlled entrances and exits and long sight lines to create a spatial environment where people continuously see themselves and are directed in their movement throughout. Visibility becomes a tool for controlling an individual's behaviour and movement is not wholly determined by the individual but rather shaped by the architectural order of the environment. Thus, control of an individual is built into the everyday experience of space rather than being externally imposed on individuals.

Moreover, the interplay between scale and the human body provides an observable classified spatial hierarchy. By juxtaposing the massive scale of a building's interior and its human occupants, the building creates an uneven distribution of authority. Therefore, human beings would be located outside of their place of power; they would exist within subservient roles to that of the building's framework. In addition to influencing how people move physically, this also determines how they create a sense of self (i.e., their identity and how it is created through regulatory means, notably supervision or observation, and spatial reference).

The results also suggest that filmic devices have an important influence on enhancing the spatial relationships that have been created through the architecture. In terms of accomplishing order, repetition, and limitation within the built-form, the film utilizes framing, composition, and visually tedious sequencing as a device. Therefore, the two media work cooperatively to create a consistent environment within which to control visual and experiential perception whilst creating something infinite and similar in terms of experience.

Ultimately, the research helps understand how architectural space in the film Gattaca works actively within control systems that extend beyond the mere physicality of architectural spaces, including self-perception and perception of other people. It helps realize the connection between the way in which the spatial design of the film is performed and how it is visually articulated on screen. Thus, it enables one to appreciate more fully the role played by architectural space as a means by which the interactions among groups take place and through which relations between the body and the space are extended.

The significance of this research lies not only in the insights it provides regarding architecture and control in Gattaca, but also in demonstrating how spatial and cinematic analysis can be used together to examine architectural representation. In particular, the findings from this research may help develop a framework for students in the field of architectural design to discuss and analyze in studio practice. Namely, one may use filmic shots to identify and analyze circulation, threshold conditions, and visual axes in order to rearticulate such criteria in one's own designs.
Other possible areas of research that may be explored include extending the methodology applied in the same way to other contexts in film or researching the relationship between the portrayal of fictional surveillance and reality in

relation to spaces that have become increasingly surveilled.

The current research highlights how representation in film can be effectively employed as a form of analysis to reveal ideologies of control that are hidden within space, thus contributing to the discourse of architectural theory. The research further suggests an analytical method combining both cinema and architecture that can be adopted by future researchers in exploring the relationship between these disciplines. From a pedagogical perspective, insights can be drawn on the use of film within architectural design studios for critical explorations of space.

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