The Dystopian City in British and US Science Fiction, 1960-1975: Urban Chronotopes as Models of Historical Closure

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ABSTRACT

In much dystopian SF, the city models a society which represses the protagonist's sense of historical time, replacing it with a sense of "private" time affecting isolated individuals. This phenomenon appears in dystopian SF novels of 1960-75—including Thomas M. Disch's *334*, John Brunner's *The Jagged Orbit*, Philip K. Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*, J.G. Ballard's *High-Rise*, and Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren*—as well as some precursors—including Wells, Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In these novels the cities also reveal in their chronotopic arrangement the degree to which revolutionary forces can oppose the dystopian order. While the earlier dystopias see revolution crushed by despotic state power, those of 1960-75 see it thwarted by the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. The period from 1960-75 ends in resignation to an existence in which individual action can no longer effect political change, at best tempered by irony (Disch, Delany).

R.J.Z.

PRÉCIS

Dans beaucoup de SF dystopique, la ville est un modèle d'une société qui nie au protagoniste un sens de l'histoire, le remplaçant par une temporalité individuelle isolée. Ceci apparaît dans des romans dystopiques de 1960-75, tels *334* de Thomas M. Disch, *The Jagged Orbit* de John Brunner, *Martian Time-Slip* de Philip K. Dick, *High-Rise* de J.G. Ballard, et *Dhalgren* de Samuel R. Delany, et dans des précurseurs tels *We* de Zamyatine, *Brave New World* de Huxley, et *Nineteen Eighty-Four* d'Orwell. Leurs villes fictives révèlent aussi dans leurs aménagements chronotopiques le degré auquel des forces révolutionnaires peuvent opposer leurs sociétés. Tandis que les romans précurseurs voient la révolution écrasée par un état despotique, ceux de 1960-75 la voient défaite par les effets aliénants du capitalisme. La période 1960-75 finit donc par se résigner à une existence où l'individu ne peut plus rien changer, mais au mieux ironiser (Disch, Delany).

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Chapter 1: Definition of Terms and Horizons

1.1. The Chronotope, Dystopia, and Entropy of Thought

I propose to discuss one focus of a vast and complex subject: *the role of the city in recent dystopian science fiction* (further SF). Since the London of Shelley and Poe and the Paris of Baudelaire, the modern city has symbolized, in some of the most significant fiction, the individual's anxiety about the historical and economic forces of "progress." I shall examine a significant function of the city in dystopian SF, where "images of the future city often embody the specific aspects of Dystopian [sic] anxiety in a refined—sometimes almost symbolic—form" (Stableford, "Cities" 118). In the dystopian SF I shall be studying, the city provides *a spatial model of the arrest of historical time.*

It is characteristic of these narratives that they posit forms of sociopolitical organization which stop the movement of historical change. This phenomenon is accompanied by a fragmentation of the narrative agents' consciousness of historical time, of their sense of collective historical movement, into isolated, "private" forms of subjective time-perception. The development of this fragmentation in European fiction is discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin in his study of the *chronotope.* This concept he defines as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" ("Forms" 84). The chronotope is an area of fictional space whose topology is intrinsically linked to the prevailing order of time. I shall demonstrate how the chronotope of the dystopian city reproduces in space the arrest of—and rupture in—the perception of historical time, and sometimes also suggests possibilities for its reconstruction.

My discussion shall, first, be limited to novels. Although the short story plays an equally important role in 20th-Century SF, I have found the novel's

longer form to be more useful for the articulation of historical time. Also, I wish to avoid the distractions of translating my argument into different formal parameters. Many of my arguments might be fruitfully applied to the SF short story, but this subject must be relegated to another study. Second, I shall deal solely with the *dystopia*. For the purposes of this study, I shall define this term negatively, as the *antonym of "utopia."* Suvin defines utopia as "the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis" (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 49). The *dystopia* is the obverse of a utopia: a community where "sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships" are regulated by a principle which is significantly *less perfect* than that of the author's community. It arises from an "alternative historical hypothesis," which is often an intensification—implicit or explicit—of negative historical forces existing in the author's present. As in the utopia, human relationships are taken predominantly in their *sociopolitical* aspect (42).

This definition of the dystopia includes the anti-utopia. Many critics treat the terms "dystopia" and "anti-utopia" as synonyms (cf. Philmus). But this is, to my mind, uneconomical and confusing. I shall therefore give to texts that Philmus defines as a utopia "seen through the eyes of its discontents" (63) the name of *anti-utopia*, while the broader term *dystopia* will include those texts which present an undesirable order that does not necessarily claim a utopian perfection. Anti-utopia can thus be called a sub-section of the dystopia. Finally, the dystopia's sociopolitical focus links it to utopia within the *"sociopolitical subgenre"* of SF (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 61).[1]

The SF city is not inherently dystopian. I have chosen to exclude utopias which treat the city optimistically, as well as narratives which treat it as the neutral setting for an adventure story. At one level, this decision is almost a matter of course: Stableford notes that "our predominant image of the future has become Dystopian [sic]" ("Cities" 118). Amis also suggests throughout his *New Maps of Hell* that the SF written from the 30s to the late 50s is primarily dystopian. This in itself reveals something important about the genre's horizons. But the more immediate ideological reason for my decision lies in our own epoch's need for a sense of history. At our present historical juncture, which some call a "new world order," we are tempted to believe in "the end of history." Such a belief is an instance of what Yevgeny Zamyatin has called "the entropy of thought" (of which more later). I believe the dystopia to be a useful form of narrative in which to resist this temptation: its plot is a struggle—even if precarious or futile—for historical movement *away* from a static order. It stresses the importance of historical consciousness in the individual agent.

Finally, I have chosen the period from 1960 to 1975 as the focus of my discussion. I am interested in what Raymond Williams would call the "structure of feeling" which existed in that period. This term refers to experiences which are ongoing *processes* rather than finished, measurable events, and thus inaccessible to the more rigid, sociometric methods. While these fix present experiences within institutions and hierarchies inferred from past relations, the experiences are already being lived within emergent new relations, as incomplete processes that form structures more fluid and less abstract than social categories—comprised of holistic "feeling" rather than what such analysis delimits as strictly conceptual "thought." They are often first discerned in works of art and literature (cf. Williams, *Marxism* 128-35). Thus, it

is generally acknowledged that the horizons of our century's dystopian SF are first discernible in the work of H.G. Wells (cf. Hillegas), whose novel *When the Sleeper Wakes* already incorporates the class conflicts of 19th-Century England in an urban chronotope. This concretization of history in the dystopian city re-emerges with the historical upheavals of the Russian Revolution and the two World Wars, especially in the works of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell. I shall examine these works in my second chapter, giving special attention to the latter three as paradigmatic examples for the more recent SF of the period from 1960 to 1975, which then reveals a distinctly new structure of feeling. This can be seen in the formal innovations its works bring to the genre, whose significance I can only mention in passing. It appears more clearly in their new approach to sexuality and their uses of the drug experience (cf. Stableford, "Modern"); in my main novels, these two phenomena visibly influence the narrative agents' perception of historical time. As I shall note in 1.2, these developments belong to the sociohistorical context of the USA at this period. I believe them to be well situated for analysis: their structure of feeling is distant enough in time for a certain critical perspective, yet close enough to be called "recent."

I have chosen five texts as my main corpus: Thomas M. Disch's *334* (1972), John Brunner's *The Jagged Orbit* (1969), Philip K. Dick's *Martian Time-Slip* (1964), J.G. Ballard's *High-Rise* (1975), and Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren* (1975). My choice is based on a compromise between what I take to be the *consensus doctorum* as to the most significant authors of this period's SF, and the requirements of my own project. For instance, although *334* is written by an acknowledged master, it remains surprisingly underrated. I shall discuss Disch's (and Brunner's) significant use of New York as a chronotope in my third chapter. My fourth chapter will deal with an important urban sub-

chronotope, that of the high-rise or urban development project, as it appears in Dick and Ballard. Finally, my last chapter will discuss a shift in the use of the city in Delany's novel, already discernible in Ballard, towards an ontological dimension of historical arrest. I shall be engaging throughout this study in an implicit dialogue with the numerous critical texts which exist both on my main novels and on the greater subjects of the city and dystopia; I shall make frequent reference to these in parenthetical citations.

In my study, I shall use the central metaphor of *entropy*. It is formulated by Zamyatin in his essay "On Literature, Revolution, Entropy, and Other Matters," where it signifies the intellectual stagnation of dogmatism. Thus, "the law of revolution is not a social law, but an immeasurably greater one. It is a cosmic, universal law—like the laws of the conservation of energy and of the dissipation of energy (entropy)." (107-08) "Energy" is the principle of heresy, a renewal of thought through the shattering of political, ideological, and epistemological dogmas; "entropy" is then the conservative force which arrests change and solidifies dogma. Although my principal texts do not all share Zamyatin's revolutionary horizons, they fit within a structure that opposes revolution and historical change, the principle of "energy," to "the entropy of thought" (108).

This structure also dates back to Wells. Suvin argues that Wells's story *The Time Machine* is a basic model for "the structuring of subsequent SF" (*Metamorphoses* 222). This "Wellsian paradigm" informs the genre with its negative horizons. The story's model is devolutionary, a sequence of episodes in "natural history" which begins in Victorian England and ends with the dissolution of all life. Subsequent writers, "from Stapledon to Heinlein or Orwell, Pohl or Aldiss, Vonnegut or Ballard had to concentrate on filling in Wells's paradigm and varying its surface" (242). The dystopia transfers this

paradigm to political discourse. Rather than the ostensibly biological devolution of Wells's first model, the urgency of political experience and thought after 1914 led the dystopia to posit a sociopolitical devolution correlative to the "entropy of thought."

In a uniformly black dystopia, this would merely be a "filling in" of Wells's paradigm with sociohistorical variables. But the more complex narratives counter such unambiguous negativity with a potential for revolutionary energy. In fact, the degree to which these texts admit the possibility of "re-starting" history corresponds to their measure of optimism, and hence to their deviation from Wells's paradigm. This factor is discernible in their urban chronotopes. Since the city's topography models[2] the narrative agents' perception of time, an "open" chronotope includes different levels of temporal experience; such diversity can then include a new perception of historical time, the first step toward revolutionary thought or action.

1.2. Sociohistorical Context: The 60s

Before proceeding to the texts, I shall briefly describe some sociohistorical factors of my main period, what we now call "the 60s." As Fredric Jameson points out in his article on its periodization, it is arbitrary to limit "the 60s" to a decade (178-79). He places this period between the mid-50s, with the emergence of anti-colonial movements in the Third World, and the waning of the US antiwar movement in the period 1972-74 (180-83). In SI, however, a more developed structure of feeling becomes analyzable from the middle of this period on, and my major texts range from 1964 to 1975. In exploring this structure of feeling, I shall note throughout this study the correspondences

between elements in the main texts and the contextual phenomena examined in this chapter. Due to limitations of space, these correspondences can only be quickly sketched; they are not meant to imply anything so simple as a one-to-one correspondence of fiction to "reality."

The US city was a particularly important locus for events in the 60s. The most important social dramas of the period—the Blacks' struggle for civil rights, the emergence of the counterculture and the New Left, and the conflict over the Vietnam War—were played out against the landscapes of the ghetto, the park, and the convention hall. As O'Neill points out, the US city dweller lived in what was increasingly becoming an arena of armed confrontation (147). The "archetypical ghetto riot of the 1960s" took place in Watts, a core neighborhood in the slums of southeast Los Angeles, in the Summer of 1965 (Matusow 360). It was a fight between poor Blacks and White policemen defending the notion of "law and order" prized by the middle class, a situation which would recur throughout the decade. On July 23rd, 1967, the "worst American riot in a century" took place in Detroit, involving the intervention of federal troops (363). The beginning of the Civil Rights movement may be dated from a series of sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 (Jameson, "Periodizing" 180) which followed Martin Luther King's Christian ethic of nonviolence (O'Neill 159). But the ghetto riots of the later 60s were part of a greater shift among Blacks toward physical conflict, which led to the emergence of the "Black Power" slogan and the rise of the Black Panthers.

An entirely different kind of ghetto—both physical and metaphorical—belonged to the variety of groups which formed what was termed the "counterculture." The genealogy of these movements centering on "anti-establishment" dress and behaviour, sexual freedom, drugs, and rock music is significant. Matusow draws a line of descent from the "Beat" generation of

writers (Ginsberg, Kerouac, *et al.*) to the "hippies" of the 60s (287). The counterculture's ancestors are the literary bohème of the American 50s. This is especially relevant to Dick, Disch, and Delany; without discussing literary influences on them, it is interesting to note that they occupy the cultural geography of the Beats' descendants: Dick centers on the Bay Area, Delany and Disch on New York's East Village. Both in their literary interests and their socially marginal positions, these writers belonged to a new generation of American bohemians.

The hippies' capital was Haight-Ashbury, "a racially integrated community, forty square blocks, bordering magnificent Golden Gate Park" in San Francisco (Matusow 287). It housed a variety of communes and quasi-religious movements, most of them centering on the experience of drugs. This is crucial to the term "counterculture": in turning to drugs, US youths rejected the rationalism of Western culture and attempted to abandon post-industrial civilization, in a naively inconsistent way, for an imitation of American Aboriginal religions, a pre-technological Eden. They also espoused the vulgarizations of Taoism and Buddhism introduced by the Beats (Matusow 286-87). The hippies believed in an innate human kindness, as shown by their cult of free love. But this faith was proven wrong by events, both in violent micro-crime in Haight-Ashbury and the East Village and in political repression by the state (cf. O'Neill 252-64). And the darker side of hippiedom emerged with the crimes of the Manson commune (Timothy Leary had already stressed the dangers of drug experience without a proper setting—cf. Matusow 289).

The term "counterculture" replaced "youth culture" with the influx of adults into the movement (O'Neill 258). The New Left similarly began as a campus-based focus of youth dissent, later to join forces with adults at the peak of the antiwar movement. It arose in the early part of the decade as an attempt by

students to join the Black struggle for civil rights. With the creation in 1960 of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), youth radicalism also took on such issues as participatory democracy and Third World liberation (Matusow 309-21). It often espoused these causes with naive, Edenic romanticism: when the Blacks proclaimed themselves an "inner colony," fighting US imperialism at the same level as anti-colonialists in the Third World, the largely White middle-class SDS activists sought to join the struggle, embracing what Matusow calls a "guerrilla fantasy" (328). This fantasy was played out on the streets, with first the forces of "law and order," then some SDS splinter-groups showing increasing brutality.

The confrontations were often over US involvement in Vietnam. The first US combat troops went to Vietnam in 1965; this was followed by massive aerial bombing of North Vietnam. While adult peace activists protested the war with nonviolent tactics such as teach-ins (Jameson, "Chronology" 212), student radicals quickly took to the streets. The most pressing issue for young Americans was the draft: in 1967, a coalition of protest groups instituted Stop the Draft Week. This began as an attempt to close down an Army induction center in Oakland. A group favouring nonviolence shared the protest—on alternating days—with the SDS, who favored confrontation (Matusow 328). The latter, routed by police on their first attempt, returned "ten thousand strong" two days later for "the Bastille Day of the new left," a series of barricade fights in which the students gained wider sympathy for their cause (328).

Stop the Draft Week culminated in a march on the Pentagon, in which hippies, "yippies," and adult pacifists battled soldiers, often making incursions into forbidden areas of the Pentagon grounds. Although the protesters were ultimately defeated, their numbers (fifty thousand) and their willingness to meet troops in physical combat galvanized the New Left into a new ebullience

(Matusow 329-30). The new boldness would reach its climax in August 1968, at the Democratic Party National Convention in Chicago. By then, President Johnson had continued to commit new troops to the Saigon regime and had stepped up the bombings in North Vietnam (376-94). The frustrated antiwar movement, ten thousand of whose members gathered in Chicago, battled policemen and National Guardsmen for an entire week; the clashes spread from the city's hippie ghetto to the streets outside the convention headquarters at the Hilton Hotel, and finally to the convention floor itself, at the Chicago Amphitheatre, where police beat up journalists and members of the Democrats' pacifist wing (416). Thus, a decade which began with the optimism of Kennedy's new Liberal administration ended with the anger and despair of Chicago.

Poverty underlay much of the era's dissent. The majority of US Blacks lived in ghettos, so that the Civil Rights movement came to concern itself with poverty and unemployment (Matusow 120). There was an even greater number of poor Whites. The antiwar movement was aware of class prejudice in the politics of the draft board; one ironic retrospective on the war cites the simile of "Nam as Gulag for the lower classes in America, as re-education center for bad boys who did not make it to college or for former inmates" (Rapaport 140). And campus dissidents, mostly White and middle-class, dreamed of "dropping out to live amid the grassroots poor" (Matusow 314). A key text of the decade, Michael Harrington's *The Other America,* applies Disraeli's metaphor of the "two nations" of rich and poor to the US context. Harrington points to the paradoxical situation of the USA at the beginning of the 60s: it has reached an unprecedented level of prosperity, yet it "contains an underdeveloped nation, a culture of poverty" within its borders (96; cf. also Howard 36). The metaphor of a "nation" of poverty placed the "underdeveloped" US poor into the context

of Third World struggles throughout the world (including Vietnam) and rendered US technological supremacy problematic. The Johnson administration, which was familiar with Harrington's book, declared a "War on Poverty" in response to "the dangerous discontent festering in big-city slums" (Matusow 97), and sought to move towards a "welfare state" with a series of social programs which would help the poor, especially in employment, housing, and medical care (cf. Matusow 97-127).

Although the welfare state appealed—in principle—to the New Left and the Civil Rights movement, it failed to achieve any significant reduction of poverty. The most important cause of its failure was the government's unwillingness to change the sociopolitical structures which were responsible for the unequal distribution of wealth. Johnson mainly spread the benefits of Kennedy's economic policy of "corporate liberalism"—a surface reformism hiding complicity with big business (Matusow 32)—to a greater section of the ruling class. Thus, the Medicare program, intended to make health services more accessible to the poor and aged, ultimately profited the doctors more than the patients; the Community Action Programs, designed to give the poor a role in the distribution of relief funds, ultimately succumbed to the more powerful local institutions, which jealously guarded the funds for their own purposes (cf. Matusow 226-32, 243-71 and *passim*). Matusow thus characterizes the War on Poverty as "Declared but Never Fought" (270). With the election of Nixon in 1969, a new era of conservatism began.

Alan Sinfield describes a similar sequence in British history, with a postwar doctrine of "welfare-capitalism" giving way to conservatism and, finally, Thatcherism. Thatcher herself blamed Britain's problems on the "Sixties culture" (Sinfield 296). Though her attribution was misleading, Sinfield shows

that the period which Jameson calls "the 60s" was as turbulent in Britain as in the US. He refers throughout his book to a "postwar settlement," in which the working classes had been promised a more equitable distribution of wealth in exchange for their participation in World War II. He observes that, although this promise was only truly abandoned with the election of Thatcher, its "welfare-capitalist" social structure never really worked, as it was based on a contradiction: an accommodation between a collectivist ethos which demanded social benefits (welfare) and an individualist one based on economic competition (capitalism). When the latter prevailed in the 50s, the reaction was "the exuberance and disrespect for traditional authority of the 1960s" (279).

But leftist dissent arose earlier in Britain, provoked by the UK's attempts to develop an "independent" nuclear deterrent (Byrne 26). The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was formed in 1958, in response to Britain's rapid increase in nuclear testing; it grew out of smaller protest groups formed at the beginning of the 50s (cf. Minnion and Bolsover 10-14). Although its popular support waned in the early 60s, the Campaign never died (27-31). The CND drew members from a wide range of social backgrounds: its first president was Bertrand Russell, and it included MPs and members of the clergy (14). But it also included "radical" pacifists and students (118): the CND's young members "became the foundation for virtually all radical movements in the next ten to twenty years" (27). The SF writer John Brunner played an active role in the movement; he also composed the famous CND anthem, "The H-Bombs' Thunder" (45-47).

Another important development of British history at this period is decolonization, with the resulting arrival of non-White immigrants. I shall discuss an important effect of these two phenomena on British writing in my discussion of Ballard.

The 60s were thus, for large segments of the US and British populations, a time of frustration and despair. O'Neill remarks that, in the US, the decade was a "seemingly endless chain of assassinations" (372). Brunner's novels, aimed at a US audience, create an appropriate atmosphere. While Ballard's works acutely reflect the anxiety in the English structure of feeling, Brunner is chiefly concerned with the USA: the transatlantic resonances of US crises are present in the memorable conclusion of *The Sheep Look Up.*

Chapter 2: The Dystopian Paradigm: Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell

2.0. Introduction

I shall now discuss briefly what are usually taken to be the three most important dystopian texts of our century: Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. I wish to examine the methods with which their posited sociopolitical orders repress the historical consciousness of individual agents, and the relation of this repression to the urban chronotope. From these elements I shall postulate a relationship between the urban chronotope and a dystopian paradigm. My discussion of these texts is cursory, since they are already the subject of a large body of criticism; the limitations of this study also preclude an exhaustive interpretations of this criticism.

Before proceeding, however, I shall cite three precursors to these major dystopian texts, bearing in mind the relation between the dystopia and the city. Our structural model, Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), has been called the "first anti-utopia of the modern mechanical and scientific age" (Hillegas 30); given the importance of the paradigm which this story establishes (cf. 1.1), I shall start with it as the most significant precursor to the 20th-Century dystopia. Although it does not assign a significant role to the urban setting—beyond that of the Victorian drawing-room in which the adventure begins—this story accords an important role to class conflict as the determinant of humanity's future. The dark horizons of our Wellsian paradigm are first made apparent in the futuristic opposition of the effete, upper-class Eloi to the bestial Morlocks, who, as the evolutionary horizon of the labouring classes, dwell in subterranean darkness (cf. Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 222-42). The class

conflict returns in *When the Sleeper Wakes* (further *WSW*, 1899)[3] to animate the first significant dystopian city.

The city of Zamyatin's *We* is no doubt influenced by the London chronotope of *WSW* (cf. Aldridge 65), which can be called the most significant precursor to the dystopian cities of 20th-Century SF. Unlike Zamyatin, however, Wells's novel makes explicit the class disparity addressed earlier in *The Time Machine.* Both of Wells's stories spatialize hierarchy. In *WSW,* the upper class controls the gigantic buildings and the airways, while the proletarians of the Labour Company work underground. This concretization of class conflict in the city responds to Bellamy's functionalist and technocratic utopian society, epitomized by the Boston of *Looking Backward.* However, despite Wells's accurate prognosis of European Fascism in the figure of Ostrog, this novel lacks the ideological urgency of the three 20th-Century novels.

This urgency appears in Jack London's work *The Iron Heel* (1907), influenced by the Russian revolt of 1905. Here can be found another important model of the urban dystopia—that in which the city is recognizable to the author's contemporaries. Unlike the other texts mentioned in this chapter, in which the city is rendered unrecognizable by technological speculation, London sets his dystopian conflict between the Socialist labourers and the titular "Iron Heel" of state oppression largely in contemporary US cities—most notably Chicago. The novel gives these cities a dystopian pall by contrasting them with the more magnificent cities built by the proletariat of the utopian future Brotherhood of Man. Such ideological topicality becomes more pertinent with the onset of World War I and the Russian Revolution, both of which immediately precede Zamyatin's novel. Although Huxley's dystopia in many ways attempts to escape their implications through nostalgia, *Brave New World* nonetheless acknowledges the importance of historical movement, e.g.

in its satire of Henry Ford. With Orwell, the dystopia absorbs the shock of both World Wars. A considerable experiential gulf lies between the generation reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and that which had read Wells.

2.1. Yevgeny Zamyatin: *We*

We was written in 1920-21, and first published in English in 1924 (Shane 231 and 252). The principle which underlies this dystopia is the subsumption of politics by a rigidly limited system of mathematics. The novel's symbolic structure is thus dominated by mathematical imagery: the narrative agents have numbers rather than names, the protagonist identifies the facial features of others by analogy to geometric shapes, or to algebraic figures such as the "irritating X" of I-330 (*We* 6), and the One State's greatest achievement is a rocket ship called the *Integral* (cf. Aldridge 78).

Zamyatin expresses both the principles of entropy and energy in mathematical terms. An often-quoted passage is that in which I-330 asserts that "revolutions are infinite" just like numbers (*We* 174); this analogy reappears in his central essay mentioned in 1.1 ("On Literature" 107). The mathematical symbology is thus more than a series of clichés about "cold rationality"; the novel problematizes the One State's rigid mathematical model with the square root of minus one, which belongs to the system of imaginary numbers (Shane 141). But, in the narrative, the One State's rigid interpretation of mathematics prevails: as the rebellion is being contained, D-503's compatriot calculates that the universe is finite—"there is no infinity" (*We* 230). The entropic order creates a closed universe with a fixed number of human

behavioural possibilities. It eliminates the irrational unpredictability of politics and the complexity of human relations as experienced by D-503.

With the elimination of politics comes the end of history. The "Two Hundred Years' War... between the city and the village" has ended in the defeat of the "peasants" by the city (*We* 21). There is something here of what Bakhtin calls the "destruction of the idyll," in which an agrarian chronotope, where time is seasonal and collectively perceived, is superseded by "a great but abstract world" ("Forms" 233-34). Zamyatin's dystopia replaces collectivity with absorption into the "We" of the One State (*We* 2), and substitutes regulation by time-tables for the movement of history or the seasons. The Table of Hours is based on the system of Taylor, which appealed to early Soviet writers and was even praised by Lenin in 1918 (McCarthy 124). For D-503, "history" is over: it is either the quaint story of his "primitive, remote ancestors," or the disturbing atavism of his hairy hands (22-23).

The perception of historical time is replaced by two conflicting modes of time-perception within the protagonist: the regimented time of the Table, and what Bakhtin calls the "private" time-perception of the isolated individual ("Forms" 215). The two partly overlap: the Table allows for a "Personal Hour" (*We* 10) as well as hours of privacy for sexual intercourse. But the perception of time as something affecting the individual in his "interior aspect" ("Forms" 215) is centrally associated in the novel with "primitive" emotions, a potentially subversive frame of reference.

The novel's immediate examples of this connection are D-503's writing and his sexual relationship with I-330. The former begins as a service to the State, a mere recording of impressions by an instrument of the entropic "We," but quickly modulates into a private activity deeply bound up with the writer's increasingly subversive feelings. His sexual activity similarly moves from the

sanctioned behaviour of regulated intercourse to the "primitive" emotion of lust, copulation in transgression of the Table, and "possession" of (and by) another person. Many critics see the association of sexual desire with rebellion as characteristic of classic dystopias (e.g. Woodcock 91). Here it is also associated with subversive time: D-503 measures time in relation to his meetings with I-330 rather than to the Table. The One State's repression of passion and creativity, enforced through a denial of privacy, forces the individual to translate his "private" time-perception into the energy of rebellion.

The conflict between energy and entropy appears in the chronotopic polarity between the city and the wilderness, separated by the "Green Wall." The rival chronotopes concretize the struggle within D-503 between the temporal stasis of the One State and the budding consciousness of the agrarian past embodied in his "atavistic" traits. Thus, the city's transparent buildings not only serve to deny privacy through constant surveillance; their crystalline form also symbolizes entropy, "the condition where nothing *happens* any more" (24). The ancient seasonal time persists beyond the boundary. A last vestige of this cycle is the pollen borne by the wind over the Wall, which "interferes... with the flow of logical thought" (3). The focus of this conflict is the point of transition between the two chronotopes—the Ancient House.

The House is an historical relic, frozen in time by a casing of entropic glass. It stands at the boundary of the two chronotopes; elements of both the ancient cyclical time (such as the Earth Mother figure of the old woman caretaker) and the subversive "private" time of the city (such as D-503's sexual relations) inhabit it. Although the premise for the House's existence is the exposition of pre-State absurdities, Zamyatin conveniently uses it as the secret exit to the

wilderness beyond the Wall. It is thus the key into history, enabling the chief narrative agent to move from a chronotope in which technology enforces stasis to one in which time is cyclical in a pre-technological sense and perceived collectively, in a manner subversive to the One State. It offers him the chance to identify with his "irrational" side.

The inhabitants of the wilderness are the "remnants" of the defeated peasantry who refused to migrate to the city (164). They preserve the rural, seasonal temporality, and oppose the historical stasis of the One State with a far-future version of the urban-rural class conflict discussed by Williams (cf. *Country*). The break in the Wall might allow them to "reinstate history" (Aldridge 80). But the rebellion's outcome remains unclear; the city has been sealed off by "a temporary barrier of high-voltage waves" (*We* 232), a wall which is no longer solid; and the pregnant O-90, another Earth Mother figure, is now safe beyond the Wall (201). Yet D-503, rather than learning to integrate "irrationality" into his larger world-view, has had his imagination removed by the Great Operation and has betrayed I-330 and her comrades (232). It is significant that the novel ends with such uncertainty: while salvation is no longer possible for D-503, the city's glass barrier has been shattered, leaving no doubt that alternate—historical—forms of temporality exist. Of the texts discussed here, Zamyatin's leaves the most room for optimism, although it lies in the future—O-90's child (Suvin, *Positions* 82; cf. also *Metamorphoses* 256-59).

Zamyatin's closed city—a form of prison modelling an entrapping social order—becomes a significant dystopian chronotope in later 20th-Century SF. It returns in Arthur C. Clarke's *The City and the Stars* (1956), in which the city of Diaspar, rendered inescapable by the psychological conditioning of its inhabitants, serves as a dystopian contrast to the naive open-air utopia of Lys.

Here, the millennial closed city ultimately unites with its agrarian opponent to re-learn space travel, embracing a technocratic optimism through which the novel escapes dystopian horizons. Isaac Asimov's *The Caves of Steel* (1954) follows a similar chronotopic pattern, opposing an enclosed New York, whose inhabitants fear the open air beyond city limits, to the galactic-colonial perspective of the Spacers. The purpose of Spacetown is, once again, to convince the people of Earth that space travel and colonization are both good and necessary. Hence, the ideological optimism of the West after World War II translates into cosmic horizons: the Great Wall is shattered by a rocket ship, where Zamyatin was content merely to pierce it with rebellious "peasants." Significantly, the *Integral* is now in "good" hands.

2.2. Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*

Huxley's novel, written in 1931 (*BNWR* 11), is in some ways the polar opposite of *We*. As the author stresses throughout *Brave New World Revisited*, his dystopia is based on control through physical pleasure rather than through pain or the threat of punishment. Whereas Zamyatin's One State constricts sexual activity and forbids narcotics of any form, Huxley's World State uses both of these pleasures to enforce a regulation of human behaviour which is no less strict than that of its precursor. Whereas the latter demands conformity to a rigid "rationality," Huxley's dystopia regulates its inhabitants through a dependence on bodily pleasure based on leisure-time.

The entropic order posited in *Brave New World* is a capitalist hegemony built upon a radical regulation of genetics. This combination arrests historical movement; genetic manipulation allows only a few upper-class members to

even think heretical thoughts, while the hedonism of consumption neutralizes energy. Huxley's words recall Zamyatin's: "Impulse arrested spills over, and the flood is feeling, the flood is passion, the flood is even madness.... The unchecked stream flows smoothly down its appointed channels into a calm well-being." (*BNW* 50)

This particular "new world order" can thus glorify the famous words of its ironized messiah, Henry Ford: "History is bunk" (38). History is once again the quaint story of a "primitive" past. On the one hand, it has become indecent to mention the past; on the other, names of past giants are now mundane: Bernard Marx, Lenina Crowne, Polly Trotsky, Benito Hoover... With the entire world under its control and the classes held in place by genetic determination, the World State has achieved closure.

As in Zamyatin's novel, the void created by the absence of historical perception is filled by a fragmented "private," personal time. Privacy is again denied, although through the social pressure of scorn rather than physical violence: e.g. Lenina's reaction to Bernard's "not wanting to be a part of the social body," (106). But the "annihilation" of self which this "social body" demands is the bliss of orgasm rather than the asceticism of reason. The result is that, although privacy is taboo, a perception of time based upon a corrupt individuality—the desires of the ego—is enforced. The "time-table" guiding most of this novel's narrative agents is the organization of leisure hours. The paradox of conformity through personal pleasure generates the norm of "infantile decorum" (115): the focus upon egoistic desires prevents the agent from functioning as a thinking adult.

This enforced egoism suppresses the agent's ability to act upon the material universe. Huxley's most ingenious novum is the drug called *soma*. It is used most often to lighten one's personal mood or, in the case of the Deltas' riot, to

quell unrest (256). But, taken in large quantities, *soma* can offer "holidays... from the familiar annoyances of everyday life" (*BNWR* 114). In this case, it alters the subjective perception of time so that an eighteen-hour sleep can appear to be "lunar eternity" (*BNW* 167): Huxley describes the awakening from a *soma* "trip" as being back "in time" (167), or a return to "the miseries of space and time" (213). Bakhtin's "private" time-perception is here radicalized: the individual's mind is removed from the reality in which a consciousness of history could have an effect. This use of the narcotic will return in subtler form in Disch's *334*.

The novel's chronotopes oppose this segmented personal time, embodied in the city, to an agrarian collective, cyclical time appearing with the Savage Reservation. Although the contrast between London and the Reservation resembles that between Zamyatin's city and wilderness, Huxley denies the Reservation any revolutionary potential. Its boundaries are tightly controlled by the World State. And John "the Savage" conveys his dissent in a manner which is not appropriate to that chronotope: in his foreword to the novel's 1946 edition, Huxley acknowledges that "the Savage is often permitted to speak more rationally than his upbringing... would actually warrant" (viii). He speaks, in fact, through Shakespeare, a misplaced figure from a lost chronotope which reaches the Reservation accidentally. As a mouthpiece for a lost European humanism in the garb of a pre-technological "Savage," John binds two anachronisms into an ill-fitting figure. More important, the contained village community is also criticized, as its rejection of John as alien becomes increasingly cruel. But the village's ritual time, although ridiculed as the bastardized religion of "Pookong and Jesus" (137), is still visibly the communal agrarian time of Bakhtin, or that which Gurvitch associates with the peasant class: "the cyclical time of nature and enduring time" (91). It

embodies the natural cycle in the figure of the old man, whose marks of age would have been masked in the city (*BNW* 129), and reveals "enduring time" in its adherence to "traditional patterns and symbols" (Gurvitch 91). The Reservation thus serves partially to criticize the dystopian temporality, but, as Huxley himself admits in his foreword, it is not a realistic historical alternative to the World State: the novel only offers a choice "between insanity on the one hand and lunacy on the other" (*BNW* viii). Thus, while Zamyatin's D-503 could find in the wilderness the chronotopic embodiment of his own "atavistic" leanings, this novel's principal heretic, Bernard Marx, remains alienated from the Reservation, unable to find in it a revolutionary space.

The Reservation offers a critique of the city by providing a contrast between *quantitative* and *qualitative* time. This opposition belongs to a European capitalist structure of feeling emerging from the rationalization of time arising with industrialization. As Gurvitch explains, the industrial bourgeoisie quantifies time by limiting its perception and measurement to the demands of "economic activities"; hence, "[t]he bourgeois awareness of time is very well expressed in the saying, 'time is money'" (96). Marxists such as Lukács attribute this development to capitalism's general subsumption of use-value under exchange-value: time becomes a commodity, to be considered in relation to the profit motive. But with others, such as Bakhtin or the Benjamin of "The Storyteller," the critique of quantified time easily turns into a nostalgia for pre-industrial life. Huxley's critique, leaning toward nostalgia, takes the form of satire: "[t]he hands of all the four thousand electric clocks in all the Bloomsbury Centre's four thousand rooms marked twenty-seven minutes past two" (*BNW* 174). The novel opens with the monolithic image of this building, a sub-chronotope of London which exemplifies the city's concretization of rationalized, ahistorical time. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* begins with a

similar irony, with the clocks "striking thirteen"—a measurement of time which clashed with the idiom of Orwell's contemporaries.

However, Huxley's urban and agrarian chronotopes never meet. John's quaintness as a living relic soon leads to his outright rejection. As for Bernard and Helmholtz, the World State neutralizes their revolutionary potential by exiling them to remote islands. Such containment of energy is possible from a British imperial perspective, where the State has islands to spare. But John's suicide is a grim reminder that not all forms of dissent can be pacified. *Brave New World* is finally more pessimistic than *We*, though Huxley couches his pessimism in the irony of the "amused, Pyrrhonic aesthete" (*BNW* ix). The entropy of consumer capitalism, eroding the individual's will to rebel through hedonism, is perhaps more dangerous than that of outright despotism.

2.3. George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Orwell's novel, written in 1948, is by far the darkest of the three. It echoes the plot of *We*, which Orwell had reviewed in 1946 (cf. "Review"), and adds to it a greater pessimism expressed through dark irony.

The novel's entropic order is explained in Goldstein's book (which is in fact written by the Party itself); the Party's purpose is "to arrest progress and freeze history at a chosen moment" (204). And the final horizons of the entropy of thought appear in the objectives of Newspeak. Philmus uses the concept to illustrate dystopia's mutilation of language. He cites Syme's boast: "the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought... In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it." (75, *Nineteen* 53). It is no longer a matter merely of

solidifying dogma, but also of eliminating all cognition. Although not stated in the body of the novel, this latter objective appears in the Appendix: "[u]ltimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centers at all" (*Nineteen* 311; cf. Philmus 76). This transfers the final dissolution at the horizon of Wells's paradigm to the sociopolitics of language.

What gives this universe the quality of a nightmare is not merely the impossibility of heretical thought, but also the ability of enforced Doublethink to equate truth—"the freedom to say that two plus two make four" (81)—with insanity: the condition of being "a lunatic, a minority of one," when one refuses to practice "the act of submission which is the price of sanity" (252). Doublethink is "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them"; it is also the Party member's ability to know "in which direction his memories must be altered" (215). The alteration of memory renders impossible a consciousness of history. The refusal—or inability—to alter one's memories is thoughtcrime; this is ultimately punished by death, but the more immediate consequence of historical consciousness is the despair of being "*alone* in the possession of a memory" (59).

Solitude is precisely the last refuge. In this universe, the consciousness of the past—hence, of historical continuity—is necessarily a "private" perception of time, which must be hidden from the Party. As Winston realizes: "[n]othing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull" (28). The Party's ultimate victory is O'Brien's invasion of those last cubic centimetres, but in the narrative they allow Winston to be alone with his memory. His rebellion is deeply involved with this private time-perception. As with D-503, his two principal avenues of rebellion are writing and sexuality. As he begins

to write, the free flow of his thoughts leads him to fill a page with the words "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" (19). His writing also gives him the power to concretize his memories, something which the Party cannot allow. Finally, memory is central to his relationship with Julia. This latter is in part a refuge into the past—the history contained in Mr. Charrington's apartment and the remnant of nature in the isolated grove. Although it is primarily an affirmation of sexual energy, the relationship is also a form of intimacy allowing the sharing of memories.

The chronotope of London resembles Zamyatin's city in its denial of privacy. The telescreens allow Orwell to achieve this while preserving a landscape of decaying wood and concrete buildings which reflects this universe's spiritual penury. But Zamyatin's opposition of city and wilderness is here only a blurry dream: the "Golden Country" in which Winston and Julia first make love holds the threat of hidden microphones (124-25), and there is no longer a communal society. The novel stresses inner revolt, an idea whose resonance in later English fiction is manifest in Ballard's (and the New Wave's) emphasis on "inner space" (cf. Greenland); in this case the revolt is an historical consciousness hidden within the renegade Party member. Correspondingly, the only potential for a revolutionary temporality resides in a sub-chronotope contained within the Party-dominated city—that of the prole district, which is free from the strict regulation of greater London. Winston compares its inhabitants to animals, "cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina" (71); his use of animal imagery is diametrically opposite to Zamyatin's, connoting stupidity and subservience rather than bodily energy. The proles preserve a link with the past, but their possible re-starting of history is prevented by a vicious circle: "Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious"

(70). As in Huxley's world, the Party successfully contains the potential for revolt.

The apartment over Mr. Charrington's shop is analogous to Zamyatin's Ancient House; once again a relic from history—as the glass paperweight found in it—it is the point of entry for the protagonist into the subversive sub-chronotope. It is also the spatial focus of Winston's "private" rebellion: he has bought his diary in the shop, and he uses the upper apartment for his sexual relationship and the reading of "Goldstein's" book. However, this transition-point turns out to be a Party trap, just as the entire London chronotope is an instrument of Party rule. The Party substitutes the mass frenzy of war hysteria and the Two Minutes Hate for a collective historical consciousness, and replaces cyclical time with the dark cycle of the Chestnut Tree Café. This specific place is set aside for thought-criminals who are marked for execution. It is introduced with Winston's memory of three Party members who have fallen out of favour (75-77); at the novel's end, it is Winston's turn to sit in the café, and weep as his predecessors did at a refrain which Orwell repeats to emphasize the parallel (296). Like the prole district, Orwell's dystopia contains all energy within an unbreakable cycle of controlled growth and inevitable dissolution: the Party permits individual consciousness for a designated length of time, but never fails to punish it with death. The chronotopic reproduction of this containment is the dominance of the "pyramidal" buildings of the four Ministries over the "grimy landscape" of London (5).

2.4. Conclusion

I shall now construct a dystopian paradigm from the three overviews. In each of these seminal texts, one finds a form of political organization which "entropically" arrests the individual agents' perception of historical time. This is achieved through the absorption of their perception into the temporality of a bad collective and a corresponding fragmentation into "private" time. The exceptional protagonist then engages in "energetic" heretical thought or behaviour which leads potentially to a perception of historical cause-and-effect and continuity, admitting the possibility of revolutionary change. In a paradigmatic dystopia, this potential is not immediately fulfilled: the shattering of the bad order is either made impossible (Huxley, Orwell), or deferred to a future struggle (Zamyatin).

The dystopian novel's general structure is thus the following: the individual (either a single protagonist or several narrative agents taken individually) struggles to assert the principle of energy, through heretical thought or forbidden behaviour, against the fixed ideological universe of an entropic political order. That entropic order can falsely proclaim itself to be utopian (Zamyatin, Huxley) or can, in Orwell's extreme example, exult in its amorality. The individual is ultimately frustrated, or even mutilated or destroyed, by the entropic order. As with the originary Wellsian paradigm, the final horizon is non-existence, though the immediate horizon is political submission. Although there is always room (as in Orwell) for novelistic psychological characterization, the dystopia's function as a sociopolitical fiction requires it to adopt the form of a social "anatomy" (cf. Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 49), a critical exposition of its posited sociopolitical order. The most stringent anatomy among our examples is that of Zamyatin.

Finally, it is possible to posit a role in this paradigm for the urban chronotope, with the qualification that one can write a dystopia which does not include cities. For those dystopias which are centered on an urban chronotope, our model texts indicate a common tendency: *the chronotope of the city concretizes the bad, entropic order of time.* The extreme case is *We*, whose glass city is a signifier for entropy itself: "the crystallization of life" (*We* 24). The city's reproduction of entropy arises from its function as a *metonymy for civilization.* The city is "the heart of the body politic" (Dean 64): as *polis*, it models in its spatial organization whatever principles rule its civilization (cf. also Fiedler 113, Mumford, *City*, Ch.2). An entropic political order will necessarily manifest itself in an entropic space: either a trap permitting no revolutionary action or a decaying environment rendering such action futile.

The revolutionary temporality is therefore situated either *outside* the city in a counter-chronotope, such as Zamyatin's wilderness, or in a *subversive sub-chronotope*, such as the urban slum. Bakhtin in fact characterizes the slum as the "social exotic" ("Forms" 245), a term which emphasizes the association, in much fiction, of the lower classes with an "alien" space. But the slum still remains within the city; it is a temptingly apt symbol for a "tolerated" deviation which is contained by the greater hegemony. This is true of Orwell's prole district, whose containment resembles that of the "exotic" islands at the outskirts of Huxley's empire.

I shall use these structural relationships in my analysis of the main corpus. As shall be seen, these SF texts are not paradigmatic dystopias. The 60s' narratives present complex variations upon the paradigm which are suggestive of that period's British and US urban structures of feeling.

Chapter 3: New York, the Capital of the 21st Century

3.0. Introduction

This chapter borrows Benjamin's chronotopic conceit, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (cf. *Baudelaire*). In the latter half of the 20th Century, New York's position is analogous to that of Paris in 19th-Century Europe: it is the political and economic center of the capitalist West. Its importance is reflected in much postwar SF. An apt example is the spaceborne New York of James Blish's *Cities in Flight*, which dominates whole worlds and even plays a role in the formation of a new universe. In Disch's *334* and Brunner's *Jagged Orbit*, the focus shifts to the dystopia, with New York as the central chronotope of an entropic 21st Century.

3.1. Thomas M. Disch: *334*

Disch first wrote this novel's six stories separately, then assembled them as *334* in 1972. The first story, "The Death of Socrates," appeared in an earlier version as "Problems of Creativeness" in 1967; the fourth story, "Emancipation," was the second written, appearing in 1971; Disch then wrote "Angouleme" and "Bodies," which appeared in 1971. "Everyday Life in the Later Roman Empire" first appeared in this novel, but was written before the final novella, "334," which appeared in magazine form in 1972 (Delany, *American* 181 and 223-29). I shall give special attention to "Everyday Life," as its overt concern with history is most germane to my topic.

The entropic order of *334* is a welfare state organized under a bureaucratic institution called MODICUM. It is a capitalist society dominated by large corporations such as Ford and Pfizer. Swirski compares Disch's dystopian order

to that of Orwell (62-63), but it is closer to Huxley's model: it pacifies its population through a culture of consumption, substituting meaningless physical and emotional pleasures for personal and social improvement. These pursuits also provide an escape from the world's crises: overpopulation, pollution, and scarcity of resources.

As Delany observes throughout his study of "Angouleme," Disch's society has forgotten its history. This loss is at the core of the first story, "The Death of Socrates." Its protagonist, Birdie Ludd, is a Black high-school student who is situated at the lower end of MODICUM's meritocratic scale, a computer-run evaluative system based on genetics and I.Q. Disch's system of intellectual stratification avoids the predetermination of Huxley's model and incorporates into it the habits of US politics. Hence, although Birdie's low score deprives him of the right to father children, the "so-called Jim Crow compromise" of the "Revised Genetics Testing Act" of 2011 allows him to regain lost points for "being a Negro" (*334* 21). As a result of this gain, Birdie can win back his right to parenthood by getting a college education, now available to any New York City resident (23).

The story of Birdie's educational experiences is an ironic exploration of this society's loss of historical and cultural consciousness. As the title suggests, the central signifier for this consciousness is Plato. As Birdie reads the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*, he struggles to articulate an incipient awareness of the text's meanings:

> He'd never understood before about beauty—that it was more than a breeze coming in through the window or the curve of Milly's breasts. It wasn't a matter of how he, Birdie Ludd, felt or what he wanted. It was there inside of things, glowing. Even the dumb vending machines. Even the blind faces....
>
> Beauty? The idea seemed too slight now. Something beyond beauty was involved in all of this. Something that chilled him in ways he couldn't explain. And yet he was exhilarated, too. His newly-awakened soul battled against letting this feeling, this

> principle, slip away from him unnamed. Each time, just as he thought he had it, it eluded him. Finally, towards dawn, he went home, temporarily defeated. (31-32)

Birdie fails to find the Platonic Ideal of Beauty on the surface of the urban chronotope: "the dumb vending machines... the blind faces." The point is not that the city cannot contain beauty, although the surface of Disch's New York presents a generalized mediocrity; rather, the passage shows how the horizons of Birdie's understanding, determined by his meaningless life within the city, are too narrow for him to articulate an aesthetic experience. His defeat is, ultimately, permanent. He tries to gain points by composing an essay bearing the story's old title, "Problems of Creativeness" (33-34). In it, he gropes for a mixture of concepts and names from history, art, and philosophy which remain mysterious to him. When he fails to reach an understanding of his history and culture, Birdie becomes a pawn in his country's political machinations—a soldier in a Vietnam-type war in Burma. His failure to grasp the past leaves him powerless in the novel's present.

"Everyday Life in the Later Roman Empire" shows us the dystopian order from the opposite end of its social and intellectual axis. Its protagonist, Alexa Miller, not only possesses intelligence and an extra-ordinary understanding of history, but is also a MODICUM bureaucrat. Ironically, it is through Alexa's understanding of history that the novel explores the greater historical entropy of its world. Not only is the USA trapped in a sociopolitical stasis, but even a consciousness of that situation cannot lead to change.

The story introduces one of the central novums, the hallucinogen Morbihanine. This substance, a by-product of late 20th-Century oceanic pollution, is the source of all the legalized narcotics which keep the population happy (103-04). This is a variation upon our central theme—a connection between physical and social entropy. Disch also links it to historiography: in

its pure form, Morbihanine offers a controlled hallucination which can take the form of a desired historical period. As the narrator explains:

> It had often been debated, among analysands, whether Historical Analysis was the best way to work out one's problems or the best way to escape them. The elements of psychotherapy and of vicarious entertainment were inextricably knotted. The past became a kind of vast moral gymnasium in which some preferred a hard workout in the weight room of the French Revolution or the Conquest of Peru while others jiggle ' about lickerishly on the trampoline of Casanova's Venice or Delmonico's New York.
> (104-05)

The image of the "moral gymnasium" ironically trivializes the study of history. It is no longer a matter of understanding continuities with the past and possibilities for the future; for the members of Alexa's élite, Historical Analysis is a 21st-Century opium den in which one escapes from the dreariness of the present. One "lives" history as the less educated watch "the afternoon sex features" (104).

The decadent listlessness of such an approach to history renders Alexa, for all her awareness of her world's decline, as powerless to change it as was Birdie Ludd. She remains no more than a passive subject reflecting upon the condition of her civilization. Hence, the period she chooses as an hallucinatory escape is the "Later Roman Empire" of the title; the narrative draws ironic parallels between Alexa's personal problems and those of her fantasy self living between 334 A.D. (an allusion to the novel's titular building) and 410, the year Rome is sacked (105).

Disch reinforces the parallel between Fourth-Century Rome and 21st-Century New York as epochs of decaying empire by a series of historical and historiographical citations. The first of these, a passage from Marcus Aurelius (97), suggests that history is an endless sequence of recurrences. The decline of empire is thus commencing the latest of its repetitions. This is followed by a paragraph from Spengler's *Decline of the West,* in which it is claimed that the

West has entered a "winter existence," a phase of civilization in which philosophy and the arts are no longer possible, and a new generation must devote itself "to engineering instead of poetry, to the sea instead of the paintbrush, to politics instead of epistemology" (*334* 99). This reference connects with Alexa's contemporary dilemma: whether to send her son Tancred to a public high-school for an education as a technologist, or to a private school for training in the arts and humanities.

Swirski suggests that Disch, as a former student of history, was aware of "the scandalous methodology and factual errors which mar Spengler's theses" (55). He concludes that Disch uses Spengler symbolically, for social analysis, rather than authoritatively. In fact, Spengler's authority in the text remains ambiguous. On the one hand, the story seems to support his thesis on the uselessness of the arts and humanities. As Alexa observes to an old friend: "[t]he humanities! What good has it done for either of us, practically? I'm a caseworker and you're teaching kids the same things we learned so that they can grow up to do what? At best, they'll be caseworkers and teachers." (*334* 96) The purpose of the humanities is to perpetuate the entropic bureaucracy. But if the text were meant to support Spengler's contention, that Alexa is witnessing the West in the Winter of its existence, then it would at least point us in the direction of a final dissolution. Yet it is precisely the finality of decline which the text renders problematic. As Alexa experiences "dichronatism" (108)—a mixing of one's historical dream with waking reality caused by a misuse of Morbihanine—she dreams of herself leading a ritual procession to the Metropolitan Museum, which becomes a Roman temple; she enters it to perform the sacrifices of a religion in which she has no faith, in order to quell the fears of the masses before a barbarian invasion. The contemporary equivalent of this invasion is a bomber flown by nameless

"radicals" which ultimately destroys the museum (112-13). Here we have the possibility of a vindication of Spengler's thesis: the crowds of leftist "radicals" battling police in the US streets of the 60s can become a cyclical recurrence of a barbarian invasion. But Disch treats the entire premise of imminent collapse with irony. Thus, Alexa climbs to the rooftop of 334 to meet the end of civilization:

> The airplane approached, audibly.
> She wanted it to see her. She wanted the boys inside to know that she knew, that she agreed.
> It appeared quite suddenly, and near, like Minerva sprung full-grown from the brow of Jupiter. It was shaped like a cross.
> "Come then," she said with conscious dignity. "Lay waste."
> But the plane—a Rolls Rapide—passed overhead and returned to the haze from which it had materialized.
> She .. had offered herself to History and History had refused....
> She felt in her pockets for a pack of hankies but she'd run out at the office. She had her cry anyhow.
>
> (114)

Disch once more trivializes the historical object. The plane, first a combination of a Roman goddess and a Christian symbol, turns out to be no more than a brand name, "a Rolls Rapide." Rather than the morbid satisfaction of finally witnessing the collapse of civilization, Alexa is left with nothing but a cathartic experience. Spengler's thesis is rejected for an unbearable alternative: the world does not end, but rather continues on indefinitely in its present mediocrity. Rupprecht observes that this condition is characteristic of Disch's fiction: "[Disch] rejects both the melioristic and apocalyptic tendencies of science fiction.... In Disch's fiction the real horror resides in the fact that the future is always distressingly like our own present." (149) The mediocrity of the 60s US continues into the 21st Century, with no sign of either improving or worsening to the point of collapse. Hence, Alexa's decision to send her son to the Lowen School for an education in the arts is not only an appeasement of

her conscience, but also a resignation to the purposelessness of Spengler's technological imperative.

The historical stasis of *334*'s universe manifests itself both on the surface and in the deeper workings of its chronotope. One echo of Orwell's dystopia is the mediocrity of its buildings—especially, but not exclusively, the central sub-chronotope of 334 East Eleventh Street—and many of its commodities, such as ersatz meat. This is the superficial model of deeper material conditions: the overpopulation and paucity of resources mentioned above, as well as the inadequacy of a bureaucratic system applied to a swelling city. That system's statistical rationalization can only create the "private" time of Bakhtin, into which one escapes, as Chapel does in "Bodies," through television, or, as most of the agents do, through legalized drugs which are descendants of Huxley's *soma:* Oralines, Fun, Fadeout, Synthamon... These pleasures provide an escape from consciousness of the desperate material conditions; they also isolate individuals as effectively as the chronotope of the apartment block.

Similarly, the chronotope's surface reveals what Delany calls "a society saturated with death" (*American* 229). In "Angouleme," death dominates a landscape of old and decaying people. And the children's obsession with murder arises out of their educator Loretta Couplard's morbid scripts, which Disch synopsizes as "Loretta's murders" (*334* 150-51). The surface presence of murder is thus attributable to an entropic socialization. A more concise image is that of necrophilia in "Bodies," where the frozen corpse can also symbolize social decay held indefinitely in stasis at a specific point. Frances Shaap, a victim of Lupus, humanity's "auto-intoxication" through pollution (64), remains frozen indefinitely, never "officially" dead.

Just as Disch's novel is more complicated than a paradigmatic dystopia, so is its New York a more complicated urban chronotope. The novel eschews the

dystopian city of the paradigmatic text, strewn with technological novums. This universe's proximity to its author's present, on which all critics agree, is achieved in large part through the novel's emphasis on the mundane materiality of "everyday life." Disch's New York is more recognizable than that of a typical SF "extrapolation," such as Asimov's *Caves of Steel.* The result is subtle irony: the mundane details of the US reader's reality—television shows, the A&P, Hunt's Tomato Catsup—become elements in a dystopia where the trivial, embodied in brand names, is enlarged to an oppressive size. This is no doubt related to Disch's belief that cities are "huge systems of inertia" (McCaffery, "Disch" 128).

Against this paralyzing mediocrity, Disch offers no hopeful counter- or sub-chronotopes. Foreign countries are merely commodities for tourism, and the rural counter-chronotope appears only as the naive "utopian gush" of a Midwest commune to which Alexa's sister belongs (*334* 86-87). The only possibility for revolutionary change would reside in an urban sub-chronotope; Disch denies this as well.

One such sub-chronotope is the black-market district in "Bodies," in which usual commercial rules do not apply. As Ab muses: "[w]here else could you buy something without the purchase being fed into the federal income-and-purchase computers?" (48) This marketplace, situated on "four playgrounds" (48), resembles at first a modern mutation of Bakhtin's carnival, in which hierarchies are reversed and parodied within a limited time and space (cf. *Rabelais*). Thus, Ab can barter with the old, unofficial currency, and escape the scrutiny of computers. But Disch immediately denies this area any truly revolutionary potential. It is a merely commercial space, reverting to an older, even more exploitative capitalism. More important, it is complicit with corrupt authorities: "[i]n the facs and on TV they used euphemisms like 'flea market' or

'street fair,' since to come right out and call it a black market was equivalent to saying the place was an annex of the police department and the courts, which it was" (48). Rabelaisian echoes are here no more than "euphemisms."

A more important sub-chronotope is Battery Park, the scene of the Lowen school children's plotted murder in "Angouleme." As Delany points out, the park is strewn with signifiers of New York's lost history. Here, surrounded by monuments to World War II, the immigrant influx, and Verrazzano's discovery of New York, as well as by subtler tributes to the city's artistic population such as the battleship "USS Melville" (159; cf. Kazin), the children—symbols of this dystopian order's future—might finally achieve an historical perspective which could admit positive change. But this perspective is buried in oppressive triviality: as the protagonist Bill Harper contemplates a monument of a killer eagle holding a hand-grenade in its talons, he confuses the latter object with an artichoke (152). Delany notes here that "[w]ar—or part of its current technology—can be secreted behind the detoxified signifier: artichoke" (79). He refers, throughout his study, to the monuments in the Park as signifiers for a sense of history which is inaccessible even to the most gifted of students. Thus, Bill Harper's murder plot is an attempt to replicate the experiences suggested to him by his reading of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (61). His failure to commit the crime, caused by a complex loss of conviction in its significance, returns Battery Park to its entropic function—that of a beggar's "work-space" (Delany, *American* 201).

Finally, Disch uses a sub-chronotope to trivialize the unnamed "radicals" of "Everyday Life." They reappear briefly in the final novella, "334," as a typified New Left revolutionary cell. In the segment entitled "January (2021)," we are shown a meeting of the cell:

> Now they were free to go on to basics—quotas and drops and the reasons why the Revolution, though so long delayed, was the next inevitable step. Then they left the benches and for an hour just enjoyed themselves. You would never have thought, to look at them, that they were any different from any other five people on the roller rink.
>
> (176)

The Revolution, of course, is delayed indefinitely. Like this group, any form of energy is ultimately absorbed and accommodated by the meaningless pleasure-rounds of the roller-rink (cf. Harrison x). The revolutionary January ultimately opts out of this civilization by joining a Sodality with her lesbian lover Shrimp (*334* 253), just as Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson were exiled to marginal communities. And, in another possible echo of Huxley, the novel ends with a suicide. After her eviction from 334—a fate brought about by bureaucractic heartlessness—Mrs. Hanson subverts that bureaucracy in order to be permitted to die (267-69). But this gesture does not have the finality of Huxley's anti-utopia: Mrs. Hanson's death is painless, and occurs in a hospital. And it is finally meaningless. As her daughter Lottie observes: "anyhow the world *doesn't* end" (265; cf. Hassan 105).

3.2. John Brunner: *The Jagged Orbit*

This novel, published in 1969, turns New York into the chronotopic model of another form of bureaucratic, computer-run dystopia: that of the asylum. The Ginsberg hospital is a "model" for the USA at large (Stern 123); the New York of this novel reproduces a madness afflicting the entire nation. The institutions which perpetuate this condition use methods of statistical rationalization and economic individuation similar to Disch's MODICUM, but with far different aims and results.

The historical entropy of Brunner's universe is a social stasis which is, paradoxically, characterized by ceaseless conflict between individuals and races. The dystopian order takes capitalist competitiveness to the extreme of paranoia, with its "twin elements of isolation and hostility": the Ginsberg, practicing the individualist psychology of Elias Mogshack, encourages isolation, while the Gottschalk arms cartel fuels hostility for profit (Rasulis 123). Through his intellectual hero, Xavier Conroy, Brunner explains how this paranoia prevents a consciousness both of history and of present crises: "the archetype of the perfectly defended man" is "the catatonic" (Brunner, *Jagged* 107). The characteristic chronotope thus becomes the asylum.

The Ginsberg, like MODICUM, exists ostensibly to provide care. But, like the latter, it becomes a focus for relationships of power. Thus, Elias Mogshack, its director, wishes to use the institution to satisfy a "personal ambition": "[t]o find at least the population of New York State, and preferably the entire United States, committed to his care" (116). The "care" which he administers is as coldly statistical as the MODICUM welfare system: "his therapeutic model is to have computers develop an ideal personality profile for someone well-integrated into society and then have patients attempt to live up to its predictions of behavior—making the patient fit the straight jacket instead of vice-versa..." (Stern 123).

This rationalization of behaviour—a capitalist variant of Zamyatin's Table of Hours—extends to politics. For instance, Matthew Flamen's job involves predicting the possibilities of the truthfulness of rumours, as well as probabilities in national and world politics. It blends the quantification of time with that of political action. In another expository passage, Conroy explains how this complex statistical environment leaves the individual with a sense of powerlessness:

> Our society is no longer run by individuals, but by holders of offices; its complexity is such that the average person's predicament compares with that of a savage tribesman, his horizons bounded by a single valley, for whom knowledge of the cycle of the seasons is a hard-won intellectual prize and whose only possible reaction when confronted with drought, or flood, or blighted crops, is to hypothesize evil spirits which he must placate by sacrifice and self-denial. There are no economic counterparts of weather forecasts available to the public....
>
> (118)

The concretization of the agrarian seasonal time into myth produces "evil forces" with whom the "savage" can communicate; some form of community, with shared rules, is thus possible. In the "great but abstract world" (Bakhtin, "Forms" 234) of 21st-Century capitalism, no such community exists. The economic weather is impersonal and implacable. Political power rests in the hands of those with the best computers, capable of making the most accurate predictions (cf. Lamie and De Bolt 168). The myth of an inalterable politico-economic order perpetuates entropy.

Stern argues that the novel's optimistic ending derives from its agents' ability to transcend this myth and achieve a consciousness of possible action: Flamen and his Black counterpart Pedro Diablo "learn... that the future their computers 'predict' is not immutable but probabilistic, open to change through their own efforts as Conroy insists" (125). This consciousness of possible change is achieved through the acquisition of an historical perspective.

Throughout the novel, Conroy is the only character who shows any understanding of his civilization's past, although Rasulis believes that even he "falls short of Brunner's imaginative grasp of events" (124). The other characters, like Disch's New Yorkers, remain self-preoccupied. This novel's "private" time is not only that of Mogshackian individualism. As in *334*, Brunner's society keeps its people quiescent through the consumption of legalized drugs and, more importantly, through the mass-media. Pfeiffer sees

the media fulfilling a crucial role in this universe: "the masses participate in a dream-myth, a pervasive televised pabulum strained and assembled by computers..." ("Posterity" 76). This "dream-myth," a form of popular culture resembling the television culture in Disch, also promotes a vision of the future relating to this society's perceived economic immutability: the "masses" fail to grasp any continuity with the past because the media continually impel them toward an immediate future, based on predictions about inalterable economic forces, upon which their financial and physical survival depends. This is not a revolutionary future of radical betterment through historical progress, but rather a "weather forecast"—which may or may not be correct—of immediate profit or loss. Time becomes money; Brunner extends this competitive market-analysis mentality to the more urgent struggle of armed combat.

Ironically, a salutary historical perspective finally reaches the protagonists through the novel's most powerful computer, Robot ("Robert") Gottschalk. The cartel builds it in order to design the deadliest of their commodities: "System C Integrated Weaponry," with which a single "skilled operator" can destroy 25 apartment blocks within "3.3 minutes" (*Jagged* 300). Through an SF narrative device which Goldman justly calls a "deus ex machina" ("John Brunner," *New Encyclopedia* 70), Robot Gottschalk inhabits Madison's mind to conduct the novel's most thoroughgoing historiography—a survey of methods and motivations of human violence from pre-technological epochs until the 22nd Century. Through an implausible time-travel ability, he identifies the deadly historical continuum of which this dystopia's inhabitants have been kept unaware. His diagnosis is a concise statement of the novel's premise: "[t]he maximization of arms sales implied the maximization of inter-human hostility" (*Jagged* 309). Flamen, Diablo, and the others learn that political action can effect a switch to a better continuum.

Robot Gottschalk notes that the logical end of the problem he diagnoses is "the disintegration of human civilization" (307). This would have been the final horizon of Brunner's dystopia, were it not for his implausible device (cf. Clute, "Jagged" 1095). But Brunner's ending does allow for irony; the robot's economic imperative—insuring the continued marketability of Gottschalk products—leads him to alter a time-continuum in which the cartel's customers are extinct. The result is the implosion of the Gottschalk hegemony through internal feuding and the exposure of its dealings by Flamen's show. As Stern puts it: "the Gottschalk conspiracy unintentionally subverts its own ends for the benefit of all" (120).

The novel ends optimistically: the last two chapters, spelling the pun "You-nification" (342-43), respond to the "I-solationism" (1-2) of the opening. Zamyatin's bad "We" here becomes a positive "You and I" of friendship (Flamen and Diablo, Conroy and Lyla), and an optimistic "we" formed by the novel's readership invited to put itself in the author's place (342). But there is reason to be suspicious of this optimism. Although Mogshack is discredited and goes insane (another forced conclusion), there is no significant change to the capitalist system which allowed his individualist psychology to flourish (cf. Rasulis 124). Brunner's ending shows us a few good people momentarily subverting a bad system for good purposes. The focus on "good" individuals is characteristic of Brunner's fiction (cf. Goldman, "John Brunner's Dystopias"); yet there is little reason to suppose that the protagonists have actually reversed the dystopian continuum, for all their awareness of that possibility.

This becomes clearer with a closer look at the novel's chronotopes. The central chronotope of New York is built on the same principle as its most significant sub-chronotope, the Ginsberg asylum. The latter is "[f]ortresslike" (*Jagged* 15); its interior is divided into compartments in which single

occupants remain out of physical contact with each other. The city at large replicates this condition: homes and apartments are sealed off from intruders by complicated defense systems and "even husbands and wives in adjacent rooms of their own ho se talk to each other via closed-circuit TV rather than in person" (Stern 118). New York, like the Ginsberg, is the chronotopic model of Mogshackian individualism. The novel's semi-optimistic ending leaves it intact.

The Black "enclaves" are more of the same—dictatorial towns and cities whose leaders foolishly expel members as valuable as Pedro Diablo. Finally, only the counter-chronotope of Canada offers hope for change, and thus moves this text away from the paradigmatic dystopia. Murphy reads Canada as a kind of wilderness, a frontier to which Conroy initially escapes (26). But the passage he cites merits closer attention: "[t]his was a crummy run-down poverty-stricken sort of a college, but living far enough in the past not to mind that his reputation was a horse-drawn hearse for his career" (*Jagged* 45). Although the pre-industrial metaphor of the "horse-drawn hearse" suggests the US frontier myth, in which an unexploited wilderness is a spatial equivalent of the future, Canada is said to live "in the past," as something of a humble town not yet corrupted by Gottschalkian capitalism. Setting aside the naiveté of this nostalgic trope, it is significant that Lyla Clay ends the novel by becoming one of Conroy's students. Her unique perspective, which Stern characterizes as a capacity for empathy taken to an extreme opposite to that of her society's paranoia (125), is given the chance to go back to such a past, perhaps to start history anew, better prepared.

Lyla's talents as a "pythoness" also belong to another chronotope. As Diablo points out, her powers have African origins: "[w]e kneeblanks were used to tapping the same kind of mental forces long before they got around to

synthesizing the drugs you use in a clean modern laboratory" (*Jagged* 274). The novum of the "sibyl-pills" brings the non-technological prophetic time of the Third World to the urban chronotope in the form of a commodity, while Lyla's status as a stage act commodifies her added value as an embodiment of Woman as Nature. Her emigration to Canada offers hope that her temporality can be put to better use. As Suvin observes, her union with Conroy is a "seed of rebirth" ("SF Novel" 201). And the existence of a hopeful counter-chronotope, no matter how naive, saves the novel from the pessimism of the mono-chromatic dystopia.

Brunner's model of New York as the center of an entropic political order—and thus of its attendant media machine—can be found in another novel of the same year, Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron* (1969). This novel's dystopian order closely resembles Brunner's: the powerful capitalist Benedict Howards, the equivalent of the Gottschalk cartel, keeps the US government in his pay, while the last hope of the "good guys" resides in a Flamen-like media muckraker whose role as justice-seeker is tainted by his cynical world-view. As Suvin observes ("SF Novel" 202), Spinrad's ending, with an immortal hero given a fair chance of becoming President of the United States, is as implausible as Brunner's; in both cases, the author takes desperate measures to escape his own dystopian horizons. But Spinrad manages to look more deeply into the theme of mortality, taking the individualist ethos of capitalism to another psychopathological extreme—the quest for personal immortality. Howards's manic fear of death, extended to the entire society, perpetuates the entropic order—in the end, even our hero can be bought with the promise of immortality.

Brunner's other major novels, *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968) and *The Sheep Look Up* (1972), which most critics treat as contiguous with *The Jagged Orbit*, deal with a similar hyper-capitalist 21st Century. In *Stand on Zanzibar*, New York is still visibly the capital of this entropic order, with the Fuller Dome over Manhattan lending the chronotope a hint of Zamyatin's closed city. Although the novel's action reaches Africa and the Pacific Rim, the world's destiny is still in the hands of a supercomputer residing in a New York skyscraper. Its posited abilities are more plausibly limited to economic forecasting. But Brunner once again subverts his economic order with an implausible ending, baffling the computer's calculations with the mystery of Third World magic in the pacifying powers of an African ethnic group's pheromones. Only in *The Sheep Look Up* does Brunner follow his dystopian inclinations to their logical conclusion: the poisoning of the environment by the US corporate hegemony leads to the full ecological collapse of its civilization, the foul winds of which reach the coast of Britain.

This pessimism, addressed from that British coast to a US liberal audience in the age of Nixon, marks the transition in the Western structure of feeling from the optimism of most pre-60s SF. The latter is still visible in another New York-based dystopia, Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants* (1952). The novel, one of Amis's favoured "New Maps of Hell," is a satire on capitalist competitiveness. Thus, the protagonist must suffer attempts on his life both by rival corporations and fellow executives before finally settling in as head of the Venus project. But here there is still room for Clarke and Asimov's optimism. Our hero can still exemplify the goodness of the democratic spirit, turning from corporate polluter to environmentalist good guy in a final crisis of conscience. And that essential goodness still has all of space in which to begin anew. Such a sanguine, even comical view of corporate hegemony,

interpersonal violence, and depletion of material resources is no longer available to Brunner. *The Sheep Look Up* constitutes a final resignation to a dystopian structure of feeling.

Chapter 4: Two Views of the Urbmon Model: Schizophrenia and the Savage Within

4.0. Introduction

In *334*, the sub-chronotope of the gigantic apartment building, although functioning as exemplum, is still treated as integral to the overall chronotope of New York. In the following novels, Dick's *Martian Time-Slip* and Ballard's *High-Rise*, the gigantic building—more precisely, the urban development project whose central feature is the building—is set apart from the rest of the city and given a distinct chronotopic value. The narratives isolate it that it may signify a dystopian *telos*—a level of technological and sociopolitical organization towards which the rest of the posited society is headed. Rather than exemplifying a single chronotope—New York as capital—the isolated building comes to represent a more generalized urbanism, an emerging standardized city whose objective is omnipresence; it cannot, therefore, belong to any particular city.[4]

A future polity built upon the gigantic apartment building appears in archetypal form in Robert Silverberg's novel *The World Inside* (1971). This collection of stories invents the useful term "Urban Monad" (Urbmon) to denote a building containing the population of an entire city, divided vertically according to class hierarchy. But the novel's usefulness does not extend beyond a first, simplistic registering of the Urbmon phenomenon. The emergent Urbmons of Dick and Ballard are perhaps less thoroughly described, but they serve a socio-psychological purpose which is only sketchily present in Silverberg's book. More important, although both Dick and Ballard's emergent futures are entropic, the role of entropy and energy in the two dystopias is radically different. With Ballard's novel comes an important shift

in their use from the political to the ontological sphere, accompanied by a form of resigned pessimism, both of which significantly reappear in Delany's contemporary *Dhalgren*.

4.1. Philip K. Dick: *Martian Time-Slip*

Dick's novel, published in 1964, was first sketched as a shorter magazine novella ("All We Marsmen") in 1963. It is the only novel in my main corpus to place its significant chronotope on an alien world, although Suvin rightly notes that Dick's other-worlds are "analogies for reality changes immanent in the author's here-and-now" (*Positions* 124). As an ironized frontier setting, Dick's Martian chronotope functions as "a run-down future," substituting "the more general physical category of entropy for its political particular case" (124). But it also contains the particular forms of energy which offer salvation.

The political entropy of Dick's novel is a hegemonic struggle between four variants of capitalism: the "classical" competition of big speculators represented by Leo Bohlen, the big trade unions represented by Arnie Kott, the giant co-operative movement, and the state capitalism of the UN. The co-operative generates the principal sub-chronotope of AM-WEB. But this projected new housing development, as the pun in its name suggests, is indicative of the general capitalist hegemony: "the *American Web* of big business, corrupt labour aristocracy and big state that turns the difficult everyday life of the little man into a future nightmare" (Suvin, *Positions* 121-122).

The arrest of historical time which this hegemony brings about is described in psychological terms. It is, under different names, the catatonia of Brunner's paranoid individual in macrocosmic form. The colonists have before them a planet which is radically different from Earth, offering new potentialities for personal and social life. But, seeking to preserve the Terran capitalist structures which benefit their leaders, they draw back from those potentialities. Hence, Arnie Kott, representative of the Terran hegemony, cannot understand his own Martian-born children: "[t]he children had a large-eyed, haunted look, as if they were starved for something as yet invisible. They tended to become reclusive, if given half a chance, wandering off to poke about in the wastelands..." (*MTS* 24).

The children are "starved" for a way of life or a world they have never known. They seek refuge in spatial distance, suggesting the chronotopic correlative of temporal distance: the relics of the ancient Martian civilization, and perhaps a better future, "as yet invisible," which could adapt their culture to the Martian landscape. Their reclusiveness suggests the catatonia of the old order, exemplified, as Jack Bohlen observes, by the roboticized Public School:

> ...the school was there not to inform or educate, but to mold, and along severely limited lines. It was the link to their inherited culture, and it peddled that culture, in its entirety, to the young. It bent its pupils to it; perpetuation of the culture was the goal, and any special quirks in the children which might lead them in another direction had to be ironed out....
>
> The Public School, he had long ago decided, was neurotic. It wanted a world in which nothing new came about, in which there were no surprises. And that was the world of the compulsive-obsessive neurotic; it was not a healthy world at all.
>
> (63-65)

In Dick's symbology, the android represents the degeneration of "authentic" human creativity into the mechanized, uncritical behaviour demanded by institutions (Pierce, "Political" 108; cf. Dick, "Android"). This descendant of Zamyatin's machine metaphor appears in the androids of the Public School.

Pierce sees in them a double entropy: they are arrested models of history, clichés such as "the ideal 'Abraham Lincoln'," whose android form further propagates a machine-like condition in the children ("Political" 120). The "compulsive-obsessive neurotic" is thus a product of this arrested society's education; the passage equates this individual condition with the Public School and thus the society at large. Through this image, Dick "diagnoses" the particular pathology of the dystopian order seen in Orwell, whose compulsion is to "freeze history at a chosen moment" (*Nineteen* 204). In order to preserve its power, the hegemonic order eradicates in its children any sense that "the values of a society were in ceaseless flux," and seeks rather "to stabilize those values, to jell them at a fixed point"; for the individual, as Silvia Bohlen observes, "[t]here are things so much worse than neurosis": she is referring to schizophrenia, from which the individual recoils into neurosis as to a "reference point" (*MTS* 65). But for the societal macrocosm, neurosis is an historical recoil from revolutionary changes necessitated by, and correlative to, the Martian landscape to which the children escape.

Schizophrenia is the other form of madness which pervades this universe; it is "a sign of the times," caused by overcrowding, afflicting "[o]ne out of every three" people (107-08). Thus, Jack's first schizophrenic breakdown occurred on Earth, while he inhabited the most technologically and sociopolitically "advanced" urban sub-chronotope, a co-operative apartment building: "an enormous structure partly underground, with thousands of units, its own supermarket, laundries, child-care center, clinic, even its own psychiatrist..." (67). Jack's reactive breakdown was a withdrawal from the pressures of this overcrowded society—a phase of capitalism embodied in the sub-chronotope of the co-op high-rise, with its thousands of isolated units crammed together—into a privately-perceived reality, an extreme form of the

Bakhtinian "private" time-perception. The schizophrenic vision caused by this android-like society was, significantly, one of men becoming machines (69). Beyond schizophrenia lies psychosis, "the stopping of time... Once the person becomes psychotic, nothing ever happens to him again" (143). On an individual level, this is the crystalline entropy of Zamyatin, "the condition where nothing *happens* any more" (*We* 24). Similarly, the other alternative to schizophrenia, the aforementioned "recoil" into neurosis, mirrors exactly the arrested culture of the Public School—it is an attempt to preserve one's present existence intact. The result is the same in both cases: Dick's entropic order replicates its own stasis at the individual agential level.

Jack escapes the entropic sociopathology of co-op life by emigrating to Mars, a colony which Robinson correctly equates with "an American suburb" (Robinson 55). But the relentlessness of urbanized "progress" invades Jack's suburban retreat with the inevitability of AM-WEB, whose buildings he recognizes as replicas of the one he once inhabited (*MTS* 117). The F.D.R. Range, in which these tracts are to be built, is isolated from the greater stretch of colonies alongside the Martian canals. Once again, distance in space corresponds to distance in time: AM-WEB is not only a thing of the future, but the first appearance of a future way of life, the consummation of this "American Web" of neurotic capitalism, in which the overcrowded society of the co-op is to become the dominant mode of existence.

The revolutionary energy which counters this coming order derives from the Martian chronotope (and, by analogy, from Dick's own California counter-culture). Dick, like Brunner, appeals to New Left sympathies for the Third World. AM-WEB falls through the magic of the Bleekmen, whom Dick explicitly identifies with the African Bushmen (121). In a perceived future, the Bleekmen put a curse on the development, built on their last refuge; as a

result, the gigantic building deteriorates and symbolically "becomes a home for the aged, for the poor, the senile and infirm" (180). This is an example of what Suvin calls the substitution of physical for political entropy (*Positions* 124). But, while the "run-down" colonial landscape is a variant of the drabness signifying spiritual lack in Orwell and Disch, here the two categories of entropy are opposed: the political entropy of Terran colonialism is overcome by the physical entropy which is caused, paradoxically, by the magical energetic potential of the Martian chronotope. The tract of land to be appropriated by AM-WEB has its own temporality, embodied in Dirty Knobby, where "time is weakest" and can be manipulated through religious ritual (*MTS* 187). Thus, the historical entropy of capitalist urbanism is ultimately overcome by a chronotope whose very physical nature will not admit it. Here the New Left's structure of feeling emerges in the very devices of SF: the "alien" landscape whose new potentialities are averse to the city is a transposition of the New Left's idealized Third World.

Dick's solution is also immanent in his dystopia's very madness. The novel's most important novum—an SF element parallelling the magical nature of the Martian chronotope—is the time-perception which it ascribes to autism, a "childhood form" of schizophrenia (64). The autistic child perceives time as a rapid movement back and forth along the continuum of his life. This gives Manfred Steiner the ability to see his grim future in the decaying AM-WEB building. This latter bears the same chronotopic relation to the boy which the co-op on Earth had borne for Jack; it models in its isolation and technologized environment Manfred's vision of himself as an isolated creature which is half-machine, a vision stemming in turn from an isolating madness. While Arnie tries to use Manfred's autism as a tool for speculation, its alliance with the magic of Dirty Knobby permits a revolutionary break from the entropic

historical continuum: Dirty Knobby's "time-slips" eventually kill Arnie, and the Bleekmen save Manfred from AM-WEB. The novel thus departs from the dystopian paradigm by positing that its society creates a madness which can contribute to its own undoing.

There is also hope among the colonists. Suvin identifies Jack with the positive figures in Dick's characterology, the creative "artificers" who belong to the class of "little people" (*Positions* 125-28). Although his abilities as a repairman serve Arnie's purposes, Jack's desire to help Manfred remains sincere. Like Brunner's "good" protagonist, he ends the novel in a reconciliation with his wife; similarly, he will continue to fight the entropic order "step by laborious step" (*Positions* 127).

4.2. J.G. Ballard: *High-Rise*

The central chronotope of Ballard's novel, published in 1975, resembles the one in Dick. The high-rise of its title is one of five belonging to a new urban development which is a sub-chronotope of London. Like AM-WEB, it is set apart in space and time from the greater city. And that city, once the high-rise becomes the center of the novel's universe, is frequently compared to "an alien planet" (*High-Rise* 102). But this novel effects a radical ideological shift in the role it ascribes to revolutionary energy: what could have been, in the earlier novels, a struggle for revolutionary change, here becomes a devolutionary regression—another form of entropy. The cause of this predicament is a displacement of this new form of entropy from the political to the ontological sphere.

According to Pringle (*Earth* 18), Ballard's works repeatedly use the elemental symbol of water to signify the past. The high-rise's location is thus significant: "[t]he massive scale of the glass and concrete architecture, and its striking situation on a bend of the river, sharply separated the development project from the run-down areas around it, decaying nineteenth-century terraced houses and empty factories already zoned for reclamation" (*High-Rise* 8). Both the London of the 19th Century and that of Ballard's present (the story takes place in the late 20th Century [102]), are on the other side of a temporal rupture: "the office buildings of central London belonged to a different world, in time as well as space. Their glass curtain-walling and telecommunication aerials were obscured by the traffic smog, blurring Laing's memories of the past." (8) Not even the technology of communication can bridge this spatio-temporal gap. This chronotopic arrangement concretizes the high-rise's role in the novel's entropic order.

That entropic order is a variant of post-World-War-II capitalism. Ballard describes its technological manifestations. As in Dick, the dehumanized dystopian being is a machine, adapted to the capitalist machinery of the future:

> The dominant tenants of the high-rise, Laing reflected, those who had adapted most successfully to life there, were not the unruly airline pilots and film technicians from the lower floors, nor the bad-tempered and aggressive wives of the well-to-do tax specialists on the upper levels. Although at first sight these people appeared to provoke all the tension and hostility, those really responsible were the quiet and self-contained residents... A new social type was being created by the apartment building, a cool, unemotional personality impervious to the psychological pressures of high-rise life, with minimal needs for privacy, who thrived like an advanced species of machine in the neutral atmosphere.
>
> (35)

This new machine-man, a cruder version of Zamyatin's man-striving-to-become-machine, is still "being created." As in Zamyatin and Dick, the

consummation of the entropic order is deferred. But this description leaves no hope that any Dickian "little people" might come to the rescue: the building is occupied strictly by the middle class, stratified from the "unruly airline pilots," the new proletariat, to the architect Anthony Royal, the novel's anti-Utopus and creator of the high-rise. The "unruly" inhabitants are then the last refuge of energy. As Wilder observes: "[e]very torn-out piece of telephone equipment, every handle wrenched off a fire safety door, every kicked-in electricity meter represented a stand against decerebration" (52). The word "decerebration" also recalls Zamyatin; the creation of this "new species of machine" requires the mutilation of the brain.

But the machine-breaking of the high-rise dwellers is the opposite of a revolutionary act committed for the purpose of historical change. Rather than transcend their alienation to acquire a sense of historical potentiality, the residents ultimately collude with their technologized environment:

> By its very efficiency, the high-rise took over the task of maintaining the social structure that supported them all. For the first time it removed the need to repress every kind of anti-social behaviour, and left them free to explore any deviant or wayward impulses.... In many ways, the high-rise was a model of all that technology had done to make possible the expression of a truly "free" psychopathology.
>
> (36)

The high-rise environment is a variation upon Huxley's model: the freedom it allows deviates "wayward" impulses which could drive individual agents to revolt. Here, they are channelled into a "psychopathology" which is ego-centered and thus another version of "private" time. But energy returns in a perverted form: what was meant to be a "new species of machine" heads in the opposite direction, its rebellion becoming a "renascent barbarism" (79). The bulk of the narrative describes the high-rise society's slide toward a "primordial" state. As in Dick, the dystopian order creates a form of madness

which it does not foresee. But here the madness has no revolutionary potential: its result is "the abolition of time as history" (Marroni 86). Through an ideological shift, Ballard turns the energy of revolt into a new kind of entropy.

Dowling claims that the novel's use of barbarism is meant to suggest an "alternative logic motivating our most basic actions"; the author is conducting an epistemological experiment which "reveals the fragility of existing notions of our humanity" (10). The high-rise provides an environment governed by a logic which questions our notions of civilization—a "paraspace" such as Delany's Bellona (cf. Tatsumi). But the ideological implications of Ballard's "alternative logic" are significant. The return to barbarism outlined in this novel connects with an important theme in postwar British fiction, that of the "savage within."

Sinfield describes this theme as a result both of decolonization and of the shock occasioned by the atrocities of World War II. As the British are forced to accept the brutalities committed by White people both in Europe and in the ex-colonies, the natives of the latter can no longer be dismissed as "savages." The concept of savagery then becomes universal, ascribed to "human nature." As Sinfield explains: "[t]he myth of universal savagery is the final, desperate throw of a humiliated and exhausted European humanism.... It works like this: when it was just the natives who were brutal, the British were enlightened and necessary rulers. But if the British are (have been) brutal, that's human nature." (141) This ideological shift, while saving British dignity, also permanently stacks the deck in favour of entropy: no matter what potentialities a thinking person might see in political action, any attempt at improvement will be thwarted by his or her innate savagery. Here Ballard shifts his gears from the *sociopolitical* focus of his initial critique of technocratic psychopathology to the *ontological* focus of a biological premise.

Significantly, the very impulses which lead to heresy, to an energetic revolt against sociopolitical entropy, are ideologically transplanted into the biological seat of entropy: the savage within. In this despairing conservative view, the cruelty of an entropic Imperialism and the savagery of anti-colonialist revolt are both manifestations of humanity's ultimately entropic nature. If the Empire goes, then no better way is possible. The fate of the high-rise—the chronotopic model of an emergent order—is that of humanity.

Ballard's novel thus reaffirms the Wellsian paradigm, coupling the sociopolitical devolution of the human species with a biological devolution resembling that in *The Time Machine*. Franklin's article draws a parallel between Ballard's fiction and the structure of feeling of post-Imperial British conservatism. Just as the comfortable living space of the British professional class is invaded by barbarism, so are the streets of London "invaded" by dissident non-White immigrants and CND "radicals" (cf. Sinfield 125-28). In Disch, the equation of the 60s' radicalism with barbarism is the subject of satire; in Ballard, it is the brooding realization that the savage is fated to win. With the end of the Empire comes the end of the world—the completion of entropy. Such resignation and ontologizing takes on a very different ideological tonality in Delany's *Dhalgren*, which appears in the same year as *High-Rise*.

Chapter 5: The City of Edges: Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren*

The composition of *Dhalgren* (1975) began in 1969, at "the moment in history following the assassination of Martin Luther King when blacks switched from non-violent to violent protest" (Weedman, *Delany* 61); it ended in 1973 (cf. *Dhalgren* 879), when the period Jameson calls the 60s draws to a close. It is tempting to treat this novel as a closing comment on the period. With its central concerns of racial conflict, epistemological and moral relativism, and the marginality of countercultural groups[5], as well as its setting in an estranged but recognizable version of the author's own time-space, the novel aspires to the status of a *magnum opus* of the 60s—the translation into literature of its bohemian structure of feeling. With this culminating work, however, comes another break with the sociopolitical model of the earlier texts. Like Ballard's novel, *Dhalgren*'s presentation of entropy moves to the ontological level. Although Delany's novel, unlike Ballard's, allows for an allegorical sociopolitical reading of its ontological elements, there remains a level of interpretation at which entropy is inescapably ontologized. At the end of the 60s, a new era seems to emerge in which energy is denied any possibility of effecting political change. Yet *Dhalgren* greets this era with a resignation which is self-ironic—a reaction which seems healthier than Ballard's.

By its size, as well as its complexity, *Dhalgren* defies exhaustive treatment. Bearing in mind the limitations of my project, I must forego discussion of the novel's important stylistic and formal innovations, as well as its equally fruitful discourse on the development of the artist. I shall concentrate solely on the novel's concern with history, as it appears in the city of Bellona, one of the most interesting urban chronotopes in all SF. As I shall presently argue,

the dystopian order which ultimately entraps historical movement in the Bellonean cycle is an intensification of the author's present, based on the discourses of perception and madness.

The complexity of Bellona as a chronotope derives in part from its blending of two types of SF city: the dystopian and adventure cities. The adventure city, as aforementioned (cf. 1.1), is axiologically neutral, a spatial focus of the protagonist's actions; its existence is not based upon a morally negative social order. Bellona functions as such a locus in part: as many critics observe, the protagonist Kid is an avatar of Delany's favourite hero, the questing young "knight" (cf. Bray, Slusser, *Delany*, Barbour, *Worlds*). Bellona is thus a spatial focus for Kid's particular adventure. But, as Barbour observes, *Dhalgren* rejects the traditional quest pattern of physical adventure for a more complex *cognitive* adventure, a form of "questioning" whose more obvious manifestation is Kid's "on-again off-again search for his name" (*Worlds* 92). As Kid's quest is largely within his own mind, so is the city—in part—a spatial projection of his own mental disorientation; as such it cannot lay claim to neutrality. In fact, Bellona's attraction to the adventurous is a function of its role as a model of the dystopian elements in the middle-class culture of the empirical USA. The curious enter Bellona because it has been cut off from the greater USA by a cataclysm, whose explanation locates those dystopian elements in racial conflict.

Weedman asserts that the cataclysm which destroys Bellona is precipitated by the assassination of a Black man (*Delany* 61). Although its actual cause is not certain, there is no doubt of its connection with Black discontent. The first description of the conflagration is given by a man ironically named Faust:

> "The niggers... When all that lightning was going on. They went wild. Swarmed all over. Broke up a whole lot of stuff around here—Jackson's just down there...."

> "They was burning. And they had ladders up, and breaking in the windows. This guy told me there was a picture of them climbing up on the church. And breaking off the clock hands. Tearing each other up, too. There's supposed to be one set of pictures; of this *big* buck, getting after this little white girl... a whole *lot* of stink about them pictures. 'Rape' is the nasty word they didn't use in the paper but rape is what it was..."
>
> "What started it? The riot I mean...."
>
> "Some people say a house collapsed. Some others say a plane crashed right there in the middle of Jackson. Somebody else was talking about some kid who got on the roof of the Second City bank building and gunned somebody down....
>
> "It was supposed to be a white kid on the roof and a nigger that got shot. So they started a riot."
>
> (*Dhalgren* 78-79; third ellipsis Delany's).

A race riot is for Faust no different from a plane crash or the collapse of a building: all are "disasters" without sociopolitical significance. But Delany undercuts this assumption with the image of rioters tearing off the clock hands, which recalls an allusion in Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In the latter, Benjamin identifies a similar gesture by participants in France's July revolution with their "awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode" ("Theses" 261). The Blacks are potential revolutionaries who might break open the entropic continuum which created the ghetto of Jackson. But the new temporality which prevails in Bellona is entropic rather than revolutionary. It is an entrapping cycle of repeated cataclysms based on the White middle-class nightmare mentioned here—that of a Black man raping a White girl. As Bray observes, the sub-plot of George Harrison's "rape" of June Richards problematizes the whole notion of rape: it inverts the stereotype of "the black man—white woman rape plot" so that "George is the knowledgeable, sensitive individual and June is driven by her lusts, perhaps even to murdering her brother" (Bray 61). But the photograph in Calkins's newspaper merges with the new temporality to ontologize the bourgeois cliché. When Lanya asks George what will happen when June finally couples with him again, he responds as follows:

> "Well, she gonna get closer, and closer, just circling—" one hand traced its spiral while the other waited for it at the spiral's center—"and circling, and closer and closer, till—" George's cupped palms smashed... "Blam! And the sky gonna go dark and the lightning gonna go roll over the night, wide as a river and slow as the sea, and buildings gonna come toppling and fire and water both gonna shoot in the air, and people gonna be running and screaming in the streets!" George winked, nodded. "Gonna be just like last time."
>
> (*Dhalgren* 237)

Gawron notes that Bellona's apocalypse is "a composite anxiety projection," based on "fictional reductions" such as the notion that "the coupling of a black man and a white woman brings destruction" (xxiii). In this passage, George mocks White anxieties about his transgression of racial boundaries, completing the nightmare scenario with a wink. But the special function of SF, for Delany, is the literalization of metaphor (cf. Alterman, "Surreal"): what is for White bourgeois fiction a metaphorical "anxiety projection" is in *Dhalgren* a literal fact, embodied in a new temporality. When George and June meet again in the final chapter, the cataclysm of fire and lightning returns: as Gawron observes, "in Bellona it really does bring down death and destruction for a black man to have sex with a white woman" (xxvi); the cataclysm is the city's "peculiar retribution" (xxiii). Such animism might explain why, as Bray reminds us, Bellona derives its name from a minor Roman war goddess (61).

The mythological allusion points to the novel's flirtation with mythological fantasy, a genre which Suvin separates from SF because of its use of *metaphysical* causation (cf. *Metamorphoses* ch.2). *Dhalgren* comes close to metaphysics: George's rise to quasi-godhood among Bellona's Blacks after the "rape" translates into the appearance of a second Moon over the Bellonean sky, which is named after him in the city's folk consciousness. And the giant sun is consequently given the name "June." George's ironic planetary metaphor of "circling" here receives a metaphysical sanction: while George and June are mythologized as astral bodies, the cycle of "rape" and destruction which they

represent really is as inexorable as a planetary orbit. The cosmic portents have their ontological referent. The cyclicality of time in Bellona is the result of similar metaphysical forces. In the first section, Kid receives a notebook filled with writings which, it is later revealed, are probably his own, while the return of conflagration coincides with the assassination of a second Black man, Paul Fenster, in the same circumstances as the incident which Faust described. Among the many formal and stylistic resonances of this cyclicality in the novel, the most conspicuous of which is the completion of its last sentence fragment by its first, I must mention one which recalls Ballard's novel: like the high-rise, Bellona is separated from the rest of the sociohistorical space-time by both a river and smog. This cyclicality is the ultimate manifestation of historical entropy: any energetic thought or action within the Bellonean chronotope, such as, perhaps, Kid's book of poems, is ultimately incapable of breaking the apocalyptic time-loop. "An entire culture is caught in a trap... All growth and movement merely bring one back to the starting point...." (Berger 537). And Delany carefully avoids conventional SF explanations for any of these phenomena (Gawron xiii-xiv). The entropic temporality of Bellona seems based on a mythical ontology.

What redeems the novel as dystopian SF is its sociopolitical focus, centering on the discourses of madness and perception. Gawron echoes many critics when noting the correspondence in *Dhalgren* between city and mind: on at least one plane, Kid's disorientation and that of the city "reflect one another indistinguishably, neither signifying the other, joined at the juncture of mirror and mirrored into a single whole" (xxvi). This description unites the novel's central metaphor of optics—the play between prism, mirror, and lens—with a satire on the White bourgeoisie's perceptual selectivity. Bellona is a "city of edges"—socially marginal people, perceptible by those who, like Kid,

are driven by madness to perceive the "edges of the mind *itself*" (Gawron xxv, *Dhalgren* 54). The marginality of Bellona allegorizes the bourgeoisie's banishment of marginal groups—gays, hippies, street gangs, Blacks--to the unperceived edges of the collective consciousness:

> Very few suspect the existence of this city. It is as if not only the media but the laws of perception themselves have redesigned knowledge and perception to pass it.... Neither television cameras nor on-the-spot broadcasts function: that such a catastrophe as this should be opaque, and therefore dull, to the electric nation! It is a city of inner discordances and retinal distortions.
>
> (*Dhalgren* 15-16)

Once again, the urban chronotope is the spatial manifestation of a rupture in the perception of historical time. The White bourgeoisie's marginalization of Blacks and countercultural groups is intensified to the degree of a dystopian principle, a contemporary form of doublethink, which rearranges the laws of perception to overlook the race riots and street fights that seek to reverse an entropic historical continuum. With this added sociopolitical perspective, Delany creates a tension between two levels of interpretation: a literal one, in which Bellona is as ontologically inescapable as Ballard's high-rise, and an allegorical one, in which the city's very inescapability is an element of social satire. At the borderline between dystopian critique and surreal adventure, the ideological entropy of selective perception creates a chronotope in which the forgotten and marginalized energy can take the form of cosmological portents, can even change the significance of words ("Sun," "Moon," "Sky"), but is nevertheless left without any revolutionary power: "a dreamlike apocalypse, always in progress but never progressing" (Gawron xxv).

The ontological level of interpretation separates *Dhalgren* from other texts which use the connection between city and mind. Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971), for instance, involves a metaphysical power of mind over reality which can nonetheless by harnessed by technology. As in

Dick (and later Delany), mental phenomena—George Orr's dreams—reshape the city according to the inner tensions of an individual psyche; the result is a city which shifts constantly to different historical continua, all of which fall ironically short of technocratic expectations. But Le Guin's protagonist, like Dick's Manfred, has a freedom of action which is inaccessible to Delany's Kid; the latter, trapped in an inescapable circle, cannot switch Bellona from one time-line to another. And her technological premise bases the transformative power of mind on an individualist ethos, asserted in the power struggle between Orr and Haber. This is made ambiguous in Delany, where Bellona, while at one level embodying Kid's individual dislocations, is still the product of a *collective* failure of perception.

Joanna Russ's novel *The Female Man* (1975) also presents a technological novum permitting shifts between historical time-lines. Russ's device, unlike Le Guin's, is not dependent on the mind of the protagonist: the heroines travel between time-lines as earlier SF heroes teleported through space. But the relationship between city and mind appears at a meta-level, in the feminist sociopolitical critique formulated through the juxtaposition of the chronotopes: the novel associates the city with a state of mind conducive to the abasement of women by men. The novel's four alternate Earths form an axiological scale whose positive pole is the feminist utopia of Whileaway and whose negative pole is a world where the sexes are literally at war. The city is a useful axiological index: Whileaway "doesn't have true cities" (*Female* 14), while the sexist societies of Jeannine and Joanna, closer to the reader's reality, are presented trough the chronotope of New York; Jael's society carries the city-as-sexism analogy to its extreme with Wells's hierarchical metaphor of underground cities. Like *Dhalgren*, *The Female Man* associates the city with a

collective failure of perception—here the marginalization of women (cf. also Piercy).

Delany's perceptual rupture also results in the fragmentation of temporality into "private" time. At one level, this entire novel is about privately perceived time: Kid's nightmare of forgotten days and dyslexic loss of sequence (cf. Weedman, *Delany*) is more terrifying—because less treatable—than Jack Bohlen's schizophrenia. Kid himself articulates a metaphorical connection between the urban chronotope and private time-perception: "I live in one city.... Maybe you live in another. In mine, time... leaks; sloshes backwards and forwards, turns up and shows what's on its...underside. Things shift.... In your city, you're sane and I'm crazy. But in mine, *you're* the one who's nuts!" (*Dhalgren* 462; second and third ellipses Delany's). This radical relativity translates on the sociopolitical level into the temporalities of the various groups living in Bellona's sub-chronotopes. As Bray observes, the city contains "four different types of social order": the hippie-like commune which occupies the sub-chronotope of the park; the middle class, distributed among places as typical of its mundane life as an apartment house and a department store; the upper-class Calkins circle, which occupies the more luxurious part of town; and finally, the gang called the Scorpions, whose potentially energetic spontaneity allows them freedom of movement through all the above-mentioned sub-chronotopes (Bray 58). Another significant sub-chronotope which, however, does *not* contain a separate social order is the Black ghetto around Jackson Avenue and Cumberland Park, whence the cycle of racial rioting begins. Delany often parodies the different forms of time-perception experienced by these different groups, from the light mockery of the commune's forward-looking but unrealized plans to the dark satire of the

Richards' pretense of continued bourgeois "normalcy," a form of privately perceived time which approaches catatonia.

But even the relativity of time-perception experienced in Bellona ultimately reveals that it is a chronotope of containment. This comes through most clearly in the political power which is given to the Calkins circle. Gawron places Calkins's aristocracy, like the rest of Bellona's inhabitants, at the "edges" of society, albeit an upper edge antipodal to the Black ghetto (xxiii). Gawron claims that Calkins, although "the nearest thing Bellona has to a central government" (xviii), has no more power over the city's life than either Kid or George. This apportionment of power seems more reasonable than Barr's contention that, with the absence of an economy, Bellona's entire population lives at the same level, all "niggers" in a city-wide Harlem (Barr 61). But I would claim that the inequality of power is more significant, that the Calkins circle, comprised of mostly White and *upper-class* marginals, holds the greater share of power in the city. The middle-class Belloneans share the US bourgeoisie's selective blindness, either denying the chronotopic transformation entirely or, like the snipers at the Emboriky store, seeking vainly to meet it with armed resistance like any other racial riot. But Calkins's aristocracy is socially capable of treating the entire cataclysm as a perverse entertainment rather than an assault on "law and order." As Gawron observes, Calkins's "central government" co-opts the Scorpions into occupying the role of Bellona's police (xx); this co-optation goes further when Kid's entire nest is invited to Calkins' party to entertain his guests (*Dhalgren* 661-716). More important is the role Calkins plays as the single master of Bellona's communications media. In the absence of a reliable measure of time, Calkins's newspaper arbitrarily sets the dates; it also certifies the naming of the second Moon after George, as well as publishing the photograph which initiates his

rise to folk-godhood. Finally, Calkins's printing press enables Kid to publish his poems, a relationship of dependence despite the former's desire not to interfere in aesthetic matters. While George's power is mythological, visible in the sky and on billboards displaying his nude photograph, Calkins's rule is meticulously material, conducted from the obscurity of a monastery— perhaps a parody of mythology. When Kid refers to Calkins as "a pillar of the community," the male dancer Bunny points out cynically that the latter owns Teddy's, the gay bar in which the protagonists gather, for his circle's entertainment (363). Thus, the freedom which Bellona allows the socially marginal is contained by Calkins's control of what little is left of the city's economy. In a letter to Kid, Calkins admits that he would like to be "the nation's president," but dismisses the thought with a quip about his own marginality: "one cannot be president with a Jewish grandmother" (731). But the sociopolitical containment of the countercultural groups by the Calkins circle parallels the ontological containment of the city at the literal level, leaving at least that aspect of the chronotope unambiguous.

Delany has claimed that the critical rejection of *Dhalgren* by many SF reviewers was due in part to "the lack of hard-edged explanation for the basic non-normal situation" (McCaffery, "Delany" 84). The scientistic optimism behind "hard" SF's emphasis on explanation is also manifest in its protagonists' ability to influence a knowable universe through action. *Dhalgren* obviously disappoints such expectations. Although there is vitality in Delany's description of these new classes of bohemians, the only tenable position which the novel offers in the face of its unknowable, intractable universe is resignation. As in Disch, entropy continues indefinitely, leading neither to improvement, nor to dissolution. If Delany raises this predicament to the ontological level, it is only to emphasize its finality. The New York of Calkins's

upper crust is, finally, the capital of this new epoch. Marginal groups might find a niche for themselves in the frenzy of postmodern hypercapitalism, but their revolutionary energy is contained indefinitely by the new entropic condition (cf. Jameson, "Periodizing").

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Towards an Entropic Structure of Feeling

At this point, I shall briefly sketch the new structure of feeling discernible in the texts of the main corpus, as it relates to my central concern - the modelling in urban chronotopes of a crisis in historical consciousness. We have seen that this crisis, the arrest of historical time caused in and around the protagonist by the entropic order, is "mapped out" in the spatial outlay of these various New Yorks, Urbmon complexes, and achronal cities. The design of these chronotopes models the particular forms of entropy affecting their dystopian societies, as well as the fragmentation of historical time into "private" time, either in the confinement of the asylum or the lonely apartment house, or-- in Delany's case, at least—in the privately perceived city of a mind suffering from temporal disorientation

I believe the particular forms which entropy assumes in these novels can be explained, at a meta-textual level, by the pervasiveness of commodity capitalism in the authors' societies. This appears clearly in Disch and Brunner's models of New York. In Disch, the oppressive nature of the New York chronotope results in large part from its enlargement of meaningless objects which are usually identified by brand names, while in Brunner weapons become commodities, with advertising serving to encourage mass paranoia. In both cases, the city models the particular form of commodity consumption: the New York of Disch drives its inhabitants to the private heavens of mass-marketed drugs or afternoon television, while that of Brunner is a gigantic madhouse where the patients are afraid of human contact. In Dick, commodification appears in its psycho-social effects: a society oriented toward the consumption of objects finally turns people into objects, the machine-men of Jack Bohlen's visions. The AM-WEB of the boy Manfred's

precognition is the chronotopic model of this alienated society—a building in which the aging Manfred, himself become half-machine (cf. Warrick, *Mind* 71), is forced to live a meaningless and solitary life. This same alienation appears in Ballard: the new middle-class chronotope of the high-rise turns people into an "advanced species of machine" (*High-Rise* 35). Finally, in Delany, the various countercultural groups find their isolated niche in Bellona by plundering the vast stock of commodities left behind by the fleeing bourgeoisie, from the free beer at Teddys to the abandoned warehouse of optical chains and projectors. The city replenishes these stocks almost magically.

In all of these examples, the entropic order hides behind a wall of objects, stifling creative energy in the individual either by focusing his or her attention on the consumption of those objects (Disch, Brunner), or by twisting his or her sensibility into a pathological identification with, or fear of, them (Dick, Ballard). Delany comes closest to a clear formulation of the role of the city as a chronotope of containment: in this entropic order, energy is kept at a distance in its own consumer niche. It would thus appear that, of our three initial paradigmatic texts, Huxley's model has the deepest resonance with the 60s' capitalist structure of feeling. In the period of revolutionary fervour at the turn of the century, the entropic order appeared as a single avatar, who could be opposed and (perhaps) overthrown: the Benefactor, Big Brother, even Wells's Ostrog or London's monolithic Iron Heel. In the affluent society of the 60s, revolutionary consciousness has no focus; it is buried by commercials and neon signs. Individual malefactors (Anthony Gottschalk, Arnie Kott) can be defeated, but you can't buck the system.

This powerlessness in the world of commodities leads to the omnipresence of *madness*. In Delany, Kid's mental afflictions parallel the structure of feeling

emerging around a contained energy: he has lost his link with the past, and the chaos of the "real world" leaves him confused and unable to act. Such despair is already emergent in the earlier texts' use of insanity. In all of these, madness is identified with political powerlessness as a "condition" with which one must learn to live. Jack Bohlen is never "cured," finding only a last refuge from the cruel economic world in his family circle (cf. Astle 1361); although Celia Flamen is released from the Ginsberg hospital, Brunner offers no concrete evidence that the conditions behind Mogshackian catatonia or Gottschalkian paranoia have changed. In Disch, Historical Analysis is an escape from, rather than a cure for, the pervasive malaise. Finally, Ballard, like Delany, gives madness an ontological dimension, turning it into a biological characteristic of fallen human nature. Unlike the paradigmatic early dystopias, in which the hegemonic vocabulary identifies the very thought of rebellion with insanity, madness appears in these later dystopias as an inevitable recoil from a universe on which one's actions have little or no effect. Once again, the Huxleyan premise of accommodation prevails: the city remains intractable to the individual's efforts, and provides clinics and hospitals to keep the him or her in peaceful isolation.

Of a piece with this characteristic is the aforementioned shift from strictly political to (at least partly) ontological causation for the forms of entropy presented—not coincidentally—by the last two novels of the main corpus. Suvin faults Dick with a similar shift in his career, moving from a concern with agential relations and human community in his "middle period" (which includes *Martian Time-Slip*) to the "ontological horizons" of his later period (*Positions* 129). I would argue that Ballard's and Delany's texts effect this shift to the ontological plane while partly maintaining the sociopolitical focus of the dystopia. Ballard's novel preserves it in its initial critique of technocracy,

although the author shifts his gears to a biological determinism when bringing in the premise of innate savagery. Delany's novel, despite its ontologizing, still allegorizes the process of social marginalization. That the emergence of the ontological dimension in these two novels signifies the *victory of entropy* only further marks the final resignation of the 60s' structure of feeling.

Interestingly, this resignation can be found among displaced British imperial subjects (affecting what Williams might call a "residual" structure of feeling) and US New Leftists alike. For Ballard, the resigned acceptance of innate human savagery is a fatalistic recoil from the White Man's expulsion from the colonies. It then seems natural to equate the victory of "radicals" with the end of the world. For Delany, conversely, it is the White bourgeois who have won. The bohemian structure of feeling emerging around the 60s' counterculture grows into its literary form only to find itself entrapped in a gigantic ghetto at the edges of the White bourgeois mind. This latter knows only one Moon, and its cities constitute an impregnable "electric nation" (*Dhalgren* 16). The admission of defeat by the social groups these two authors represent means a loss of conviction that action against the political and economic forces in place could be useful. Those forces, running out of any single group's control, now become an ontological condition, a fact of the universe which may at best (in Delany) be explored through irony but cannot be changed. Sociopolitical entropy becomes as literal as the physical kind: the vehicle is confused with the tenor. Faced with turbulent times and forces beyond their grasp, both extremes of the ideological divide—bohemians as well as nostalgic ex-imperialists—lose heart. It remains to be seen whether future SF can break out of this most dangerous form of the entropy of thought.

Notes

1) For a dissenting opinion, cf. Swirski 6-30, where I must disagree with the author's view of the dystopia as "metaphysical."

2) Throughout this study, I have found myself tempted by the language of monotheism, with the Christian metaphor of incarnation or the "embodiment" of a particular abstraction in the urban chronotope. The city does not "embody" a dystopian principle as a tangible object imperfectly embodying a Platonic Ideal; the urban chronotope is rather one focus of such a principle, an index of its particular methods of organizing interpersonal relations. I have found the word "model" most convenient to describe this function. The resemblances in this study to the language of "embodiment" is an unfortunate consequence of the verbal shorthand which I must use for want of space.

3) *WSW* was later revised as *The Sleeper Wakes* (1910), but I am dealing here with the original version.

4) In *The City in History*, Mumford describes such a pan-urban environment—which he sees as a possibility in humanity's near future—as the home of "Post-historic Man" (*passim*). He believes such a future would be dominated by a standardized, dehumanizing commodity capitalism. His prediction bears a disturbing resemblance to the predicament I describe in Chapter 6.

5) Delany observes that the majority of appreciative fan mail about *Dhalgren* has come from readers who identified with the novel's socially marginal protagonists, "people nobody else writes of" (McCaffery 84).

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