

Moulding Minds:
Media, Mass Manipulation and
Subjectivity in Dystopian Science Fiction

by

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Thanks very much Mum and Dad.

David, your help has been much appreciated as well.

Everyone else, you just got in the way :-P

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| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| The Classic Dystopias: Two Forms of Totalitarian Media..... | 15 |
| W(h)ither Literacy: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and the Loss of Literature..... | 46 |
| The Rise of the Ad-Men..... | 71 |
| Philip K. Dick's Dystopian Media..... | 91 |
| John Brunner's Networks and Systems of Domination..... | 129 |
| Conclusion..... | 164 |
| Bibliography..... | 167 |

Introduction

This thesis will examine how science fiction depicts the media as a form of social control. I intend to explore how the media, in the diegetic worlds of science fiction, are used to determine how subjects behave within their social context. This sort of determination of behaviour requires, as a preliminary stage, that the formation of the subject should be modified so as to produce the behaviours desired. The subject and its actions are inseparable. Therefore, to affect one it is necessary to affect the other. My main concern here then is the relation between the media and the subject, which is defined by the process of manipulation. Mass manipulation simply describes the process which is set into play when the two come into contact. That this manipulation is inherent in this relationship has made it necessary for me to focus my study on dystopian texts. Indeed, this theme has been at the heart of dystopian fiction since its inception, in the classic, seminal dystopias of Huxley and Orwell. It was in these two texts that this relationship, between the media and the subject finds its first full exploration despite the fact that they were both written in times where the media played a much smaller role in the constitution of the social than they do today. For this reason, these texts provide my point of departure, as this thesis will examine how the expression of this theme within science fiction has changed, along with the media environment within which authors write and work. This is not, however, a comprehensive study. I have instead attempted to trace the theme through a close analysis of a selection of novels, by certain key authors within the genre. I begin by looking at the use of the media in Huxley and Orwell's early classics of the dystopian genre, and close with an examination of John Brunner's great dystopias of the 70s. These limits are themselves determined by the development of the media. My point of departure in Huxley and Orwell sees these two formative figures exploring the possibilities opened up by the new broadcast media and the cinema, and the thesis closes with Brunner attempting to come to terms with the new upheavals brought about by the creation of digitally networked media. The new media environments made possible by the computer mark another important change our media context, and so seem an appropriate point to close this examination. Also, the '80s marked the creation of Cyberpunk SF, which broadly speaking takes a quite different attitude to the media than the texts I discuss. It sees the spaces opened up by these new digital media as a new frontier, a new space for action and conflict, and issues of social control and mass manipulation fade into the background.

Both the mass media and science fiction itself are fundamentally inventions of the twentieth century. Admittedly the roots of both precede the twentieth century, but it was only within this period that they came into their own. It is hard to pin down a date for the creation of science fiction, as there is some disagreement on this subject. However, most commentators would probably be happy to accept that the scientific romances of H. G Wells as the first examples of the genre. The media are easier to date. Marconi is credited with inventing the radio in 1895. While moving pictures had been possible as early as the 1880s, it was not until 1905 that the first movie theatre opened. Before these innovations, the mass media meant in practice the press, but since the start of the twentieth century the number of media has expanded rapidly, as radio and the cinema were joined by television after World

War Two. These new media have brought change in their wake. It is this that most strongly connects the media to science fiction. Science fiction is fundamentally about change, as Darko Suvin identifies when he locates the 'novum' at the heart of the genre. The function of the novum is to generate change, to explain the changes which the author explores and resolves over the course of the narrative. And although science fiction projects this change into the future, it does so through extrapolations of perceived tendencies in the present. It is therefore only to be expected that the genre should come to deal with the changes produced by the media, in how information is produced and distributed.

Relatively little critical attention has been given to the use of the media as a manipulative tool within dystopian fiction. The study of dystopias, as an offshoot of utopian and science fiction studies, seems largely to be concerned with the construction of a classificatory scheme. This tendency can be clearly seen in Lyman Tower Sargent's work on utopias, particularly "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" (1994). As Sargent observes in the introduction to the essay, it is primarily concerned with how we can "best understand the phenomenon of utopianism and its varied manifestations"¹. The essay presents taxonomies of literary utopias, intentional societies, etc. The function of his lists and the broader function of the essay are indicated by Sargent's statement that "I am forced to conclude that without boundaries, we do not have a subject."² This essay serves to establish the boundaries of the subject. Sargent's essay has been useful in identifying the classificatory basis of this thesis.

A significantly more useful and interesting piece of work within the field is Tom Moylan's *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* (2000). In this work, Moylan provides an outline of prior theories of utopia and dystopia, which inform his analysis of various key dystopian texts. This then leads into an examination of the theorisation of the more recent term 'critical dystopia'. Moylan identifies the critical dystopia as a reaction to the political, economic and cultural dominance of the Right in the eighties, and the book culminates in the close analysis of three of these critical dystopias. This book is undoubtedly a valuable resource, particularly for its comprehensive summary of the development of the field of utopian and dystopian studies. However, intrinsic to this is the concern with the delineation of subsets within this broader subject. This is unavoidable, given the history of the field which Moylan provides. He must therefore examine how the term dystopia grew out of the earlier concept of the anti-utopia, that is, the refusal of the historical project of utopia, the refusal of its very possibility, even as aspiration. Moylan's work does clarify the necessity of this focus upon category definitions, which is made clear when he states that "the critical analysis of these shadowy variants of utopian writing ... was often frustrated by a tendency to reduce dystopian and anti-utopian texts to a single 'anti-utopian' category, and the conflation of textual expressions with the social processes of the utopian impulse (or its historical opposition) further clouded the analytical waters."³ Krishan Kumar's *Utopia & Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1987) serves as a fine example of this problem. Kumar opens his chapter on anti-utopias with the statement that "as nightmare to its dream, like a malevolent and grimacing *doppelganger*, anti-utopia has stalked utopia from the very beginning."⁴ In a note to this, he explains that he uses "'anti-utopia' as a generic term to include ... the 'dystopia'"⁵ It is precisely this sort of

generic slippage which Sargent's work serves to prevent. Clearly then, for his history of the development of the field to be complete, he must detail how this single field was subdivided to allow for the analysis of dystopian fiction, and how this itself has been further refined.

These distinctions are important, such as that between utopian and anti-utopian pessimism.⁶ This distinction is Moylan's clarification of Soren Baggeson's work. In his 1987 essay "Utopian and Dystopian Pessimism: Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* and Tiptree's 'We Who Stole the Dream'", Baggeson identifies two opposed tendencies within dystopian fiction, which he identifies as utopian and dystopian pessimism. Utopian pessimism is expressed in dystopian narratives which develop their "surplus utopian possibilities in the extensive details of the alternative world"⁷ in the exploration of spaces in which the possibility of resistance is not yet closed off. The opposed term, which Moylan relabels as anti-utopian pessimism, describes texts in which "revolts are decisively crushed, with no slippage or surplus of dissent or opposition left in the society."⁸ The value of this distinction resides in the way that it opens up texts to politically engaged discussions.

As Moylan has observed, "throughout the history of dystopian fiction, the conflict has often turned on the control of language."⁹ While this is true, I would express this insight differently, saying rather that the conflict has often turned on the control of communication. This includes visual representations which are not linguistic and yet serve a vital communicative function. An example would be Mr. and Mrs Everywhere, from Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968). Here too, we see the dystopian state involved in "the reproduction of meaning and the interpellation of subjects".¹⁰ Dystopian texts are one of the dominant locations for fictional representations of this battle for control of and through communications, or to be more concise, the media.

M. Keith Booker's discussion of dystopias, *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* (1994), is useful in this connection. This perhaps derives from the fact that Booker's analysis of dystopian texts serves not to pin down the boundaries of the genre, but rather to identify its function. Booker states in his introduction, "first and foremost, I wish to underscore the role of dystopian fiction as social criticism."¹¹ In order to establish this, Booker provides a close analysis of a number of key dystopian texts up to the time of writing. His discussion of these texts examines their treatment of six broad and overlapping issues, "science and technology, religion, sexuality, literature and culture, language and history."¹² Four of these issues are clearly linked to the media in various ways, and as we will see, the media also come to effect religion and sexuality. Given these broad areas of concern, it comes as no surprise that Booker deals with the media in some detail. Indeed, Booker's work informs my discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and *Brave New World* (1932). To a certain extent, Booker's work is a necessary precursor for my own, as Booker establishes that dystopia "functions as a form of social and political criticism"¹³ while I take a narrower focus to examine how this form approaches the specific institution of the media.

There are a number of particular essays that provide close analyses of key dystopian texts, which have proved valuable in the development of my own argument. However, even

here some of these essays seem to gloss over the role of the media. For example, William Matter, in his 1983 essay 'On *Brave New World*' makes only passing reference to the fact that "the silly, sensual dramas of the 'feelies' do not approach *Othello* in artistic merit."¹⁴ Similarly, he only allows a single paragraph for his discussion of the elimination of history and the degradation and simplification of language. There is a similar absence in William Steinhoff's 1983 essay on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which provides an excellent discussion of the effect such a totalitarian society has upon its subjects. He observes that "the Party has to control objective reality because it seeks control over the individual"¹⁵ but provides only minimal discussion of how objective reality is controlled, rather focussing instead upon the effect of this upon the individual. However, his discussion of the effects of the totalitarian state derive from "what Arendt called 'the preparation of the victim,' the three-step process by which human beings are destroyed".¹⁶ These three stages seem to occur primarily in the period after Smith's capture, and relate to his brutalisation by O'Brien. Once again, there is little discussion of the system of the media which enables the Party's control over objective reality on a day-to-day basis. Of course, it would be an over-statement to suggest that the media have been disregarded in all studies of dystopian fiction. Much of my work is informed by the analysis of critics who have explored how the media function in specific individual texts. What is lacking is a systematic attempt to assess how the development of the media has been reflected in dystopian fictions.

Central to my approach to these texts is the operation of the media, both within these fictional worlds, and within our own context. This is based partly upon McLuhan's theories about the media, in particular his belief that "any invention or technology is an extension or self amputation of our physical bodies."¹⁷ Indeed, the subtitle of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964) indicates how central this idea was to his work. An example would be the wheel as an extension of the individual's foot. His analysis of this process has its interest. However, this, like much of McLuhan's work, is problematic, as is McLuhan's ideas concern with 'hot' and 'cold' media.

Also problematic is his aphorism that 'the medium is the message'. This reads like an advertising slogan, and shows us McLuhan imitating the process he is analysing. This proposition is awkward, because it is both true and insufficient. The nature of any medium will shape its use, and thus some of the effects it produces in its users. The invention of the telegraph will inevitably shrink the world for those with access to it. It cannot but increase the pace of communication over large distances where the appropriate lines have been laid. However at the same time, the medium is not sufficient in itself. The effects of any medium are also shaped by the uses to which it is put, its content and its context. The telegraph will have different social effects depending upon who has access to it. Will it be open to the military, commerce, the public, or a combination of the three? It is necessary to know who will have access to the system before its final effects upon society can be determined.

This becomes particularly important when one considers McLuhan's statement that "with the arrival of electrical technology, man extended, or set outside himself, a live model of his central nervous system"¹⁸. The validity of this description can be seen in the fact that the nervous system is the means by which we obtain and process information about our

context. This is precisely what the mass media do, providing us with selected information about our world and framing it within an interpretive and institutional structure. There are a number of reasons why this is a particular concern, for instance in his suggestion that the extension of a sense or organ is accompanied by its psychological self amputation. The clearest example of this is the fact that the car results in a strange sort of 'amputation' of the feet. By providing an extension of the feet, the car has produced a reduction in their utility, a diminishment of the actual physical organs. However, even the apparently straightforward example of the wheel replacing the foot is problematic. It indicates that there is a gap between the extension of the body and its self-amputation. By incorporating the foot into this machine, its power has been increased, its reach extended. But it is not 'amputated' by its incorporation into this greater machine. However, for McLuhan extension and self-amputation seem to be inseparable. We must therefore be concerned about whether the extension of the central nervous system will be accompanied by a similar numbing. McLuhan states that this does indeed happen, that our "central nervous system [is] strategically numbed".¹⁹ For McLuhan this does not seem a particularly threatening development. However, any 'numbing' which occurs as McLuhan predicts would increase the value of the media as a tool of manipulation. This would probably result in the acceptance of the interpretive scheme which the media construct, and a failure to subject it to a critical interpretation. Of course, it is not necessarily the case that 'numbing' will occur. It can be avoided by the simple expedient of taking a critical attitude to the media. However, it would be more appropriate to think of the extension of our bodies in terms of their incorporation into a larger assemblage. This is of no less concern, as it indicates that our involvement with the media necessarily binds us into the media system. This in turn raises another concern: once the central nervous system has been projected out into the world, as a component of this media machine, what use is it put to, and by whom it is used?

Here we encounter an important aspect of the mass media which McLuhan does not seem to have considered. In his discussion of the various media, and his characterisation of them as extensions of our senses, he only describes how they function as extensions of the final consumer. Of course, this is only one side of the equation. The media also extend the senses and reach of their producers as well. Television and the press are also methods of extending the voice of the producer, so that they can make a direct address to all of the thousands of consumers who watch their show, or read their paper. McLuhan does briefly touch upon this when he refers to the operation of the press in the USSR. He quotes Lenin, Stalin and Krushchev describing the press as "a collective propagandist ... [] agitator [and] organizer", "the most powerful weapon of our Party", and "our chief ideological weapon" respectively. However, he does not take this any further, except to observe that the USSR "needs the press ... to translate a tribal and oral community into some degree of visual, uniform culture to be able to sustain a market system."²⁰ He purely considers these comments in relation to his own concerns with the difference between, and movement between, visual and auditory-tactile cultures. The process of political manipulation which is indicated by the use of the press as an 'ideological weapon' does not seem to have affected his ideas. Indeed, McLuhan is blind to the media as business or institution. Rather, for him they seem to be free floating aspects of our technological environment. There is no sense that

they are actively created and owned, or that they serve specific institutional purposes. While he notes that they can be 'ideological weapons', he seems to have no concern for or sense of what this actually means.

The process by which this 'ideological weapon' operates is indicated by another concept which has shaped my perception of the action of the media upon the subject. This is the cyberneticist Gregory Bateson's question, whether "a blind man's cane is part of the man."²¹ The point of this question is to change our understanding of the boundaries of the subject, away from the corporeal boundary of the skin, towards boundaries constituted by the flow of information. From this point of view "cane and man join in a single system, for the cane funnels to the man essential information about his environment."²² Should the cane be removed, the blind man's ability to apprehend his world is reduced, and the man's capacity to operate in his context is diminished. Bateson is clearly a natural partner for McLuhan, as he too is concerned with the modification of the boundaries of the subject which is produced by the media along which information flow. This work also has the virtue of escaping some of the more questionable aspects of McLuhan's work, such as the characterisation of media according to specific senses, or the curious criteria of 'hot' and 'cold'. Rather, it focuses upon the more fundamental issue of how the media which provide us with information are incorporated into the subject. Specifically, this theory dissolves the boundary between the subject and its mediated context. In this way, television and the press are drawn into the subject, being integral to our understanding of the world in which we find ourselves. This has some worrying implications when we consider my earlier observation that the media are not simply extensions of the subject that consumes them, but also of those who produce them. The media then provide a bridge between producer and consumer, giving the producer intimate access to the consumer's sense of self and context, and the relation between the two.

It is understandable that the Soviet leaders quoted above described the media in such glowing terms, presenting them as such a powerful tool. Indeed, the media were embraced by Nazi leaders for the same reasons. The media provided them with direct access to the interior spaces of the populations they led. They provided a means of defining the external world, of imposing their terms upon the viewing audience of ordinary citizens. The media construct various positions, within which and through which the viewing audience find themselves. This brings me back to the subject of interpellation, which I have briefly touched upon earlier. This term was coined by Althusser, in his essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.' (1970) Interpellation, in Althusser's use of the term, basically describes the operation of ideology. Indeed, one of the headings which subdivide the essay is simply "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects". This does however require further clarification. Althusser explains the term through a discussion of the hail 'hey, you there', directed at a man on the street, and the act of recognition when the individual addressed responds. The cry constructs a position, and by responding to it, we are adopting this position as our own. In responding to the cry, the individual recognises "that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was really him who was hailed'"²³ This individual identifies with and adopts the position which the hail constructs. They recognise and adopt the role which has been constructed for them. This process is accomplished through the agency of

what Althusser refers to as Ideological State Apparatuses. He identifies a number of them, amongst them the family, the church, the school and “the communications ISA (press radio and television, etc)”.²⁴

Althusser's contemporary, Jacques Ellul, uses a different label for this phenomenon. He characterises this process as sociological propaganda. For him, this covers “the group of manifestations by which any society seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its' members behaviour according to a pattern, to spread its' style of life abroad, and thus to impose itself on other groups.”²⁵ This process of the unification of the group's members under a single ‘style of life’ is very similar to the process of interpellation, which inculcates in the population the ideology of the ruling class. Indeed, when Ellul lists the forms which such sociological propaganda takes, he lists the same institutions that Althusser identifies as Ideological State Apparatuses. And this force, this sociological propaganda is, like all propaganda, ideological. “*It is the penetration of an ideology by means of its sociological context.*”²⁶ Its force derives from the fact that “the existing economic, political and sociological factors progressively allow an ideology to penetrate individuals or the masses.”²⁷ Put this way, Ellul's discussion of this process might seem like a simple restatement of the truism that we are shaped by the world in which we live, the almost tautological statement that our subjectivity is shaped by the systems to which we are subject.

Through this process the existing system adapts the subject to its context, and in so doing “moulds individuals and makes them conform to society.”²⁸ In this way sociological propaganda reduces variations in the population, making them more easily managed. As Ellul observes “nothing is easier than to graft direct propaganda onto a setting prepared by sociological propaganda”.²⁹ Sociological propaganda then operates by creating a context which in subtle and indirect ways, through our education and our entertainment, imposes the value systems of the ruling class on the mass, and in so doing adapts subjects to existing conditions. It is this aspect that I feel marks the congruence between Althusser and Ellul's ideas; in both the subject is put in its place.

The media, or the communication ideological State apparatus, plays a dominant role in this process. The influence of the media derives at least in part from the fact that it is not imposed by any external authority, but is instead experienced as pleasure, as leisure, as relaxation. It penetrates our lives, for all we criticise and condemn it. The authors I discuss are well aware of the covert ideological power which can be exercised through the media, which feature as the dominant ideological State apparatus of their worlds.

It is therefore important to consider the uses to which it has been put. Inseparable from this issue is the subject of who controls the media, as it is this will inform their activities in the world. These problems, and the concerns I will outline in the following chapters have been present in the media since their inception, because of this relationship.

Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, in *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), identify five filters of the media, which determine media content. The second of these is the increased dependence upon advertising revenue. This primarily operates through economics, as “ad-

based media receive an advertising subsidy that gives them a price-marketing-quality edge, which allows them to encroach on and further weaken their ... rivals.³⁰ This economic leverage gives advertisers a lot of influence over the content of the media as well. This was most overt in the early days of commercial television in the US, where advertisers sponsored the production of television series. Ellis Cashmore sites examples of this influence, such as “tobacco companies [which] would insist that only positive characters, the ‘good guys’, smoked cigarettes.”³¹ It was commonplace for sponsors to ensure that “scripts reflected their priorities” in this way.³² This should come as no surprise, given that the media are one of the dominant ideological State apparatuses. At the very least, this should give the lie to the myth of media objectivity.

As I have stated above, in the early days of the press, papers were often explicitly linked to political parties. There was therefore no pretence of an objective representation of the facts. The myth of media objectivity seems to have arisen as a result of the BBC’s coverage of the General Strike of the 20’s. I will discuss this at some length, because it is important that we understand how this idea gained currency, and that it was false from its inception.

During the General Strike, the knee-jerk reaction of some of those in power, such as Churchill, was to commandeer the BBC as a government mouthpiece. This was prevented by Lord Reith, the director of the BBC, as he felt that it was more important and productive for the BBC to “act as a link to draw together the contending parties by creating an atmosphere of good will towards its service on both sides.”³³ However, it should be noted that the importance of maintaining the good will of both sides was that it would increase the utility of the BBC as a tool. “Authentic impartial news”³⁴ was important for the goodwill and trust it generated, not as an end in itself. It should also be noted that Reith stated during this period that “since the BBC was a national institution and since the government in this crisis was acting for the people ... *the BBC was for the Government too.*”³⁵ This comment makes it explicitly clear that the BBC was conceived of as a tool of the State, and that the illusion of impartiality then was a means for increasing its effectiveness in this role. Another important factor was the BBC’s right to gather and broadcast its own news service. This news service helped maintain the illusion of impartiality, as it reported statements by both sides in the dispute. However, no representatives of organised labour were allowed to broadcast on the BBC, and this empowered the State to define the presentation and interpretation of events. For this reason, Curran and Seaton identify the General Strike as marking “the end of propaganda based on lies and the start of a more subtle tradition of selection and presentation.”³⁶ These two trends feed in to each other, as the illusion of impartiality is necessary to validate the heuristic which is constructed through the media.

Throughout the development of the media, there are two factors which inhibit its independence and ensure its allegiance with established power. These are the economic control exercised by advertisers, in relation to the press, and the bulk of television and radio broadcasting, and the political and legislative power of the States which determine how the media can operate. For the most part, these two forces operate in a passive way, having been internalised by those who operate and media. Self-censorship is now an almost universal

process throughout the media. It is only rarely that the state or the advertisers need to step in to actively exert their power. There is good reason for this, as doing so disrupts the illusion of impartiality and the interpretive scheme which the media have established.

We now need to look at how the function of the media was theorised in early twentieth century. I particularly want to look at the work of Walter Lippmann, who was an important figure in American journalism in the early part of the twentieth century. He was also one of the first to form a coherent theory of the media, and particularly of their function within democracy, in his work on public opinion. Broadly stated, Lippmann argued that the media enabled “what he called a ‘revolution in the art of democracy’ [which] could be used to ‘manufacture consent’, that is, to bring about agreement on the part of the public for things that they didn’t want by the new techniques of propaganda.”³⁷ Lippmann arrives at this conclusion through an argument which prefigures Baudrillard’s work in some interesting ways. Much of Lippmann’s work examines the influence of stereotypes on our thinking and our perception of the outside world. Concisely put, his arguments rest upon the fact that “whatever we believe to be a true picture, we treat as if it were the environment itself.”³⁸ This clearly possesses strong similarities to Baudrillard’s idea of the hyperreal, of that which becomes more real than the real. This link is even more explicit when he elaborates that what this process entails is “the insertion between man and his environment of a pseudo-environment”, which then informs thought and action. ³⁹ For Lippmann, this process is entirely natural, as our real environment is simply too complex for us to fully apprehend. We therefore need to “reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage ... it.”⁴⁰ These facts lead Lippmann to the conclusion that “representative government, either in what is ordinarily called politics, or in industry, cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of election, unless there is an independent, expert organisation for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions.”⁴¹ This conclusion in itself does not seem too problematic, until one understands that the electorate does not fill the space of ‘those who have to make decisions.’ Rather, this ‘independent, expert organisation is to allow the electorate “to escape from the intolerable and unworkable fiction that each of us must acquire a competent opinion about all of public affairs.”⁴² We are to be freed from the obligation to use the available information in order to produce our own ideas about the world. Instead, we are to be told the correct attitudes to take, by this independent, and, of course, incorruptible, public body. The public is not to be allowed to form its own opinions, but rather “public opinions must be organised for the press if they are to be sound.”⁴³ The broad argument is that the public are not competent to make their own decisions, so it is the responsibility of a specialist class to decide what actions need to be taken, and then manufacture public opinions which create support for that decision. So it becomes clear that even as early as 1922, the most coherent theory of the media saw them as tools for manufacturing and manipulating the ‘pseudo-environment’ which determines our actions. In this, quite underhand way, democracy is twisted so that it is no longer the rule of the mob, but rather the mechanism by which the mob is ruled, and then handed the illusion of power. Public opinion is to be managed and manufactured, before the public are permitted to make any decisions.

Soviet leaders' awareness, noted above, of the media as a tool for managing and manufacturing political opinion was shared in the West. There are two clear examples of this from the early part of the twentieth century. The first is particularly relevant to Lipmann. This is President Roosevelt's 'fireside chats'. Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave twenty eight of these prolonged broadcasts over the course of his four terms in office, and almost three hundred shorter speeches. Roosevelt's skill with the medium led contemporary broadcasting officials to identify him as "the best political speaker in the nation [for his] 'ability to create a feeling of intimacy between him and his listeners [and present] complicated matters in such simple terms that the man on the street believes he has full mastery of them'"⁴⁴ This was particularly efficient for a number of reasons. The first was the style of his 'fireside chats', which was carried through to his other shorter broadcasts. These broadcasts had a "folksiness and [an] unforced natural style of ... delivery".⁴⁵ It is this style of delivery which gave their broadcasts their name, which indicates its value. These one way broadcasts are somehow transformed through Roosevelt's informal delivery into 'chats'. They created an illusion of dialogue, of a real relationship between the electorate and the president. Also important is the fact that the relationship established here is informal, with Roosevelt feeling like a friend of the family, rather than the most powerful man in the country. Key to this process was ensuring that policy was discussed at a level pitched to his audience. In order to ensure that this was the case Roosevelt would rewrite passages which were "constructed in an overly complex way that might confuse the average listener".⁴⁶ In this way he mobilised support for his political programme. As Robert J. Brown observes, he used his broadcasts to "explain to his listeners the measures his administration had undertaken to deal with the economic situation, earn their confidence, and enlist their support behind future efforts."⁴⁷ This enabled him to push policy past a resistant Congress. Were Congress to dig in their heels, it would seem that they were going against the will of the public, so effectively was public opinion managed by Roosevelt. It is for this reason that I see Roosevelt's broadcasts as being profoundly connected to Lipmann's ideas. Roosevelt's domination of the airwaves enabled him to determine the nature of the information available to the public, which in turn helped to determine their attitude to his policies. He comes to occupy the position of Lipmann's specialist class, which serves to formulate public opinion in the interests of government. The incredible success of this project is reflected in the fact that Roosevelt served as President for an unprecedented four terms.

The Nazi's use of the media gives a more malign example of state control. The programme of the Nazi party required a firm control over the media to ensure the production of an effective regime of propaganda. Oliver Thomson notes that "Hitler quite consciously and deliberately [based] his entire career on planned propaganda."⁴⁸ Hitler made use of a wide range of media over the course of his career. In the early stages of the Nazi Party, it used simple pamphlets to advertise its meetings and attract members. However, it soon moved beyond such simple techniques, and the gradual takeover of the radio and cinema meant that by the early 30's the Nazi Party had gained almost total control over the German media. Goebbels was inspired by Soviet films like *Battleship Potemkin*, which disguised their propaganda purposes behind a high degree of artistry. Hitler meanwhile felt that art and propaganda should not be mixed, stating "let it be art or politics."⁴⁹ This in itself indicates the

importance of Goebbels' contribution to the Nazi propaganda machine, which can be viewed in terms of Althusser's ideological state apparatuses. It specifically exploited two of the most powerful of these apparatuses, the media and education. Hitler's complaints about the overlap between art and politics show that for all his understanding of propaganda, he did not fully grasp how the media operate as an ideological state apparatus. He seems to have had an excellent understanding of the operation of direct propaganda, such as his rhetoric, but the more subtle influence of cinema seems to have escaped him. It did not however escape Goebbels, who made it a priority to have cinemas rebuilt and reopened after allied bombing raids. The range of media used by the Nazi Party for their propaganda purposes helps to identify an important point. Leonard W. Doob, in his study of Goebbels' diaries, observes that Goebbels' "basic assumption appears to have been that all media must be employed simultaneously".⁵⁰

It is vital to understand that the media are linked together. The introduction of new media is often accompanied by fear that old media will be replaced. This can be seen in Hollywood's initial resistance to television, such as its refusal to allow the broadcasting of films. However, it should be clear that the introduction of television did not in fact supplant cinema, but rather created a new source of revenue for it, as old films could be sold on to broadcasters. It also created an important new method of advertising films. The two media are now quite closely bound together, by common ownership if nothing else. The introduction of television simply required that the system of the media come to a new equilibrium. It is the broader system of the media which must be the focus of study. It is difficult to identify the function of a single medium without considering its place in the broader system within which it operates. This interpenetration of media is increasingly apparent today, as creative properties proliferate through various media, spawning films, TV shows, comics, books and computer. It is these systems of media which I intend to study, as they are presented to us in dystopian narratives.

The thesis begins by examining the classic dystopias of Huxley and Orwell. The systems presented in these texts seem diametrically opposed, but are interpreted as two extreme points on a spectrum of manipulation. They represent the two quite distinct forms of totalitarianism identified by Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964). Indeed, much of my discussion of these texts is informed by Marcuse's concept of repressive desublimation. Huxley depicts a stagnant society which is stabilised through the desublimation of the libidinal energies of Eros, and in contrast with this, the Foucauldian disciplinary regime in Oceania operates through the desublimation of Thanatos. These opposed societies require quite different systems of media.

Chapter 2 explores how these tendencies come together in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1954). I begin by examining the system of media Bradbury depicts, showing how it combines tendencies apparent in both Orwell and Huxley's dystopias to construct a coherent system of conditioning. The figure of Mildred reveals how this system affects those subjected to it. Finally, I look at how the novel's discussion of the media relates to McCarthyism, and its contemporary attack on the media.

Chapter 3, on Frederick Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth begins with an account of the changes in the media environment brought about by television and advertising. An important part of this is a discussion of the changes made to advertising as psychologists were employed by advertisers. This determines how I approach Pohl and Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants* (1953), as I use psychoanalytical approaches to advertising to shed light on the operation of the media in this text. This is supplemented by reference to Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), which helps me to understand advertising and the media more broadly as an exercise in what Hardt and Negri term 'biopolitics'. In my discussion of how this biopolitical regime was represented in the 50's, I also discuss *Gladiator-at-Law* (1953) by Pohl and Kornbluth, and Shepherd Mead's novel, *The Great Big Ball of Wax* (1954).

The exercise of biopolitical power remains an important consideration in Philip K. Dick's fiction, which is the focus of Chapter 4. Given how prolific Dick was, I limit myself to a discussion of a small selection of novels, from every stage of his career. In this way, it is possible to identify how his ideas about the media change. His early works are very suspicious of the media, depicting media systems which exert a high degree of control over the lives of their subjects, keeping populations passive and productive. However, an important tendency in Dick shows how alternative uses of the media can serve to subvert these systems. Indeed, in *Dr. Bloodmoney* (1965) he uncharacteristically shows us a positive system of the media, which serves the interests of the scattered population of its post-apocalyptic world. This chapter closes with a discussion of *Radio Free Albemuth* (1985), which shows a coherent and controlling system of media operating in a very contemporary world, which is opposed by a group who themselves work through the media. I think that this sense of the positive potential of the media, and the high value Dick places on those who use it against the established system helps us to understand Dick's goals for his own fiction.

The ambiguous status of the media, which we see first in Dick, is an important theme in John Brunner's representations of the media. In this chapter, I use an analysis of *The Squares of the City* (1965), *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968), *The Jagged Orbit* (1969) and *The Shockwave Rider* (1975) to show how Brunner represents the media as a thoroughly problematic tool. For Brunner, the media can be used for any goal, any political platform, but their use tends towards manipulation, and is inherently problematic as a result. What seems most important for Brunner is the relationship the media have with power. What good is achieved by the media in Brunner almost invariably comes from its opposition to established power. This is particularly true in Brunner's final, and most prescient, dystopia, *The Shockwave Rider*. This deals with the social and psychological consequences of the abundance of information made available by a computer network much like the internet. The resolution of this text comes from decoupling access to information from power, in a move which is only enabled through the media themselves. I end my discussion here, as this text introduces the new digital media which have produced significant change in how systems of media are constructed and represented over the decades following the 1970s.

¹ Sargent, Lyman Tower, 'The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited', *Utopian Studies*, 5, i (1994) pp2.

² Sargent, 'Faces', pp12.

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- ³ Moylan, Tom *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 2000) pp122.
- ⁴ Kumar, Krishan, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) pp99.
- ⁵ Kumar, pp447.
- ⁶ Moylan, pp157.
- ⁷ Moylan, pp156.
- ⁸ Ibid. Moylan's clarification is important as Baggeson's original term dystopian pessimism reproduces the slippage between the terms dystopian and anti-utopian.
- ⁹ Moylan, pp148.
- ¹⁰ Moylan, pp149.
- ¹¹ Booker, M.Keith, *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*, (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp18.
- ¹² Booker, pp21.
- ¹³ Booker, pp174.
- ¹⁴ Matter, William, 'On *Brave New World*', in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, ad. By Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), pp103.
- ¹⁵ Steinhoff, William, 'Utopia Reconsidered: Comments on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*', in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, ad. By Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), pp150.
- ¹⁶ Steinhoff, pp151.
- ¹⁷ McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (London: Routledge, 1968), pp45.
- ¹⁸ McLuhan, *Media*, pp43.
- ¹⁹ McLuhan, *Media*, pp47.
- ²⁰ McLuhan, *Media*, pp214-15.
- ²¹ Hayles, N. Katherine, *How We Became Posthuman*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) pp84.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Althusser, Louis, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', <http://www.marx2mao.com/Other/LPOE70ii.html#s5>, pp174.
- ²⁴ Althusser, pp143.
- ²⁵ Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp62.
- ²⁶ Ellul, pp63.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ellul, pp64.
- ²⁹ Ellul, pp66.
- ³⁰ Chomsky, Noam & Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, (London: Vintage, 1994) pp14.
- ³¹ Cashmore, Ellis, ... *and there was television*, (London: Routledge, 1994) pp82.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Quoted in Curran, James and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press & Broadcasting in Britain*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp120.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ³⁶ Curran & Seaton, pp121.
- ³⁷ Chomsky, Noam 'Media Control', <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/talks/9103-media-control.html>.
- ³⁸ Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, (London: Transaction Press, 1998) pp4.
- ³⁹ Lippmann, pp15.
- ⁴⁰ Lippmann, pp16.
- ⁴¹ Lippmann, pp31.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Lippmann, pp32.
- ⁴⁴ Delli Carpini, Michael X., 'Radio's Political Past' in *Radio – The Forgotten Medium*, ed. by Edward C. Pease and Everette E. Dennis, (London: Transaction Press, 1995) pp26.
- ⁴⁵ Barnard, Stephen *Studying Radio*, (London: Arnold, 2000) pp175.
- ⁴⁶ Brown, Robert J., *Manipulating the Ether: The Power of Broadcast Radio in Thirties America*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998) pp16.
- ⁴⁷ Brown, pp71.

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- ⁴⁸ Thomson, Oliver, *Mass Persuasion in History: An Historical Analysis of the Development of Propaganda Techniques*, (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1977) pp111.
- ⁴⁹ Welch, David, *Propaganda and the New German Cinema*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp44
- ⁵⁰ Doob, Leonard W., 'Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda" in *Propaganda*, ed. by Robert Jackall, (London: MacMillan, 1995) pp199.

Chapter 1: The Classic Dystopias: Two Forms of Totalitarian Media

Totalitarian *a. Civics*, of or pertaining to a polity which permits no rival loyalties or parties.¹

I choose to begin this chapter with the definition of 'totalitarian' because I feel that the application of the term to Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia has led to it becoming entirely identified with such nations' use of terroristic violence against their own populations in order to silence opposition parties and opinions. Its utility as a tool in the 'us vs them' rhetoric of the Cold War further modified its commonly understood meaning, with the result that it was only really a viable description of enemy, communist states.² In this way the meaning of 'totalitarian' has been diminished, as it comes to represent one specific articulation of power, in a way that disregards the breadth of possibilities which are covered by the actual definition cited above.

It is only if the real definition of 'totalitarian' is understood that it then becomes apparent that *Brave New World* depicts a totalitarian society. It depends not upon the terroristic violence which is normally associated with totalitarianism. Rather, it prevents "rival loyalties and parties" through its technical domination of its population, its rationalisation of the reproductive process into a production line, and the behaviouristic conditioning which begins even before birth. The definition cited above does not, however, refer to the means by which "rival loyalties and parties" are precluded, what is significant is the fact of their exclusion. Thus, it becomes clear that Marcuse is right to say that "totalitarian' is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests."³ This is particularly useful, not only because it provides a real understanding of the meaning of "totalitarian", but also because it provides succinct descriptions of the states established in the classic dystopias which are the subject of this chapter. That Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a totalitarian, "terroristic political coordination of society" is quite obvious. It utilises terroristic policies similar to those of Hitler and Stalin, and is thus easily identified as totalitarian even using the limited definition which has become current since 1945. Less apparent, perhaps, is the fact that the World State in *Brave New World* is similarly totalitarian, although it does not conform to the post-1945 definition, being instead a "non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests." When Huxley says that the difference between his dystopia and Orwell's is that "in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ... society [is] controlled almost exclusively by punishment and the fear of punishment" while in *Brave New World* "the nearly perfect control exercised by the government is achieved by systematic reinforcement of desirable behaviour, by many kinds of nearly non-violent manipulation, both physical and psychological, and by genetic standardisation"⁴ it is this difference between terroristic and economic-technical totalitarisms which he is describing.

However, this chapter will not look at these totalitarian societies as a whole, but rather will specifically consider how the media operate in these societies to help to shut down spaces for dissent. The media necessarily operate in quite different ways in these two texts, as one would expect given the quite different systems of power which provide their contexts. In *Brave New World* the media, particularly the feelies, contribute to the “reinforcement of desirable behaviour”. They constitute a form of psychological manipulation, which continually reinforce the preconditioned behaviours which have been hypnopaedically implanted during childhood. Specifically, they are used to maintain “an immediate identification of the individual with *his* society and, through it, with society as a whole”⁵, or what Marcuse terms *mimesis*. Huxley also opposes the mass media which ensure this mimesis with literature, which he perceives to be an individualistic media, encouraging individual thought and individual self definition.

By contrast, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the media serve to propagate the fear of punishment. This is accomplished through constant surveillance, and the dissemination of the fact of surveillance, so that the population always knows that it is being watched. This helps to reduce the need for police, as it ensures that the population constantly police themselves. Indeed, the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* form a kind of panopticon, enabling the state to observe its subjects at all times, and therefore to impose punishment on them at any time. In this way, they make the fear of punishment the dominant factor in their subjects’ lives. This helps to ensure the automatic functioning of power, so that the population will behave according to the dictates of the State. This in turn ensures that actual punishment need only be applied rarely, as the fear of punishment is enough to keep the population in line.

Brave New World: Totalitarian Consumerism

Brave New World might not seem the most obvious of texts with which to begin a study of the role of the media in maintaining social control. The commentary on the media which Huxley provides us with in the text is easily obscured by the more shocking mass production of people through industrial production line methods, or the associated childhood conditioning which provides uniform, regulated minds to go along with the uniform, regulated bodies which are force-grown in the hatcheries. Indeed, our introduction to this ‘brave new world’ is in a tour of one of these hatcheries, where the intellectual classes of Alphas and Betas are separated out from the ‘Bokanovskified’ classes of manual labourers, the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons. Bokanovskification is the process by which one egg is split, so that it provides up to ninety-six identical twins, and we are told early on that this process is “one of the major instruments of social stability”.⁶ However, it is only *one* of the major instruments of social stability; the media comprise another of these instruments of social stability.

The importance of the media in Huxley's text is indicated early on, in the style he adopts in Chapter 3, where we move away from the class of schoolchildren, to focus upon the characters who will be important to the plot of the novel. During the first two chapters we have been on the tour with these children, learning about the processes which have supplanted the family's role as the main agent of reproduction and socialisation. As Keith May has pointed out, "at this stage Huxley is ... telling the reader what he needs to know about the society"⁷ he is confronted with. However, during Chapter 3, as Mustapha Mond explains to the children how the World State came to power, we move away, to watch the workers as they leave at the end of their shift, focussing particularly on Lenina and Bernard Marx in their own separate strands, before returning to Mond's exposition. The rest of the chapter moves between these three strands increasingly rapidly, until by the end of the chapter we are moving on after only a single sentence. May perceptively refers to this process as "cutting"⁸, which highlights the cinematic origin of this technique. It is a literary reworking of classic Hollywood style, which dictates that scenes should begin with an 'establishing shot', in order to give the audience a basic understanding of the space within which the scene is to occur, before closing in on the details or action which are relevant to the plot. In *Brave New World* the first two chapters operate as an establishing shot, enabling the reader to get a basic understanding of the social and cultural 'space' within which the narrative is to occur, before moving in to 'close-ups' of the characters who are to drive the narrative.

While this technique indicates the importance of the media for Huxley's conception of his text, that the media are indeed one of the "major instruments of social stability" is clearly indicated in the 'establishing shot' provided by the opening chapters. The first instance of childhood conditioning which we are shown is the conditioning of a recently decanted Bokanovsky Group of Deltas against books. They are offered books, each showing "some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird", (BNW, p16) which they, in their curiosity, crawl towards. However, on their arrival they set off painfully loud alarms, which are followed by electric shocks. The result of such Pavlovian conditioning is that when they are next shown books, they cringe away in terror. As the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning points out "They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an "instinctive" hatred of books.... Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books ... all their lives." (BNW, p18) All of which begs the question, why should they need to be safe from books? What threat can books possibly present to them?

The answer, of course, is that books present no threat to them at all. They are, instead, a threat to the consumerist, collectivised World State. The reasons for this are twofold. First of all, books inhibit consumption. Members of the lower castes would be "wasting the Community's time" reading books. (BNW, p19) Continual consumption is the ultimate good in the World State, and it has been taken to such a level that new games will not be permitted onto the market unless they contain at least as many moving parts as the most complicated of existing games. The complexity of these games serves to ensure that the population must consume considerable amounts of manufactured products in order to actually play them. At

the same time, the population is conditioned to play such games, and enjoy them, which ensures that they will indeed consume these products. A similar effect is achieved through the hypnopaedic aphorisms “ending is better than mending”, and “the more stitches the less riches”. (BNW, p46) These fill the functions of planned obsolescence and aesthetic innovation which W. F. Haug identifies in the appliance and fashion markets respectively.⁹ They ensure that old products are constantly being replaced by newly made ones, ensuring that the factories’ production is not going to waste. A similar goal can often be seen in current adverts. This is particularly explicit in a series of adverts for the mobile phone retail company, The Link, which used slogans like “is your mobile phone too embarrassing to be seen with”. They do not promise better value for money, or any improvement in use-value. They merely state that they can provide you with a phone which is newer and therefore more desirable. It is this sort of effect which World Controller, Mustapha Mond is referring to when he comments on the “conscriptio[n] of consumption”. (BNW, p44) The difference is a matter of success. Hypnopaedic conditioning would appear to be much more effective at ensuring constant consumption than current advertising techniques. This hypnopaedic conditioning, which is central to the “conscriptio[n] of consumption”, is the World State’s most effective propaganda. In differentiating between propaganda and advertising Huxley says that while political propagandists must “invite their readers to repress their cravings and set limits to their egotistical impulses”¹⁰ the advertiser only “begs [them] to succumb”.¹¹ The advantage that the World State has is that its hypnopaedic conditioning, its political propaganda, is advertising. It seems probable that this parallel was intentional, as Huxley has described advertising as “the most interesting and difficult of modern literary forms.”¹² As discussed above, “the more stitches the less riches” encourages the constant desire for new clothes which is served by aesthetic innovation in today’s fashion industry. It encourages the populace to succumb to its desire to shop. “A gramme is better than a damn” encourages them to succumb to the desire for the loss of self provided by the mindless euphoria of Soma. “Even Epsilons are useful” encourages them to succumb to their given position in the social order. It even uses the techniques of advertising slogans, using short snappy phrases with internal rhymes to ensure that they are easily remembered. Everything about the state’s regime of hypnopaedic conditioning is intended to sell the lifestyle of sex and drugs and continual consumption which they demand of their population.

Books, however, destabilise this constant, compulsory consumption. To quote Mustapha Mond once more ““You can’t consume much if you sit still and read books.”” (BNW, p44) Also, to further compound the problem, books are old, and contain beauty. This creates a particular problem for the World State, as “beauty’s attractive, and [they] don’t want people to be attracted to old things. [They] want them to like the new ones.” (BNW, p200) So, not only would books cut into the population’s time, and prevent them consuming as they are supposed to, they would also turn them away from the novelties which are being constantly placed in front of them, further diminishing the amount which they consumed. Rather, the isolated, individual process of reading might induce thought, or ideas, which

would pose a serious threat to the World State, as I will discuss further below. Clearly then, their prohibition is the only sensible course of action.

The second reason for the prohibition of books is somewhat more complicated. This is the fact that “there was always the risk of [the population] reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes.” (BNW, p19) The reasons for this are linked with the nature of the print media. Marshall McLuhan’s work on the phonetic alphabet, which he characterises as an explosive medium, might seem to be relevant here. He argues that the breaking up of sounds into the uniform, visual components of the alphabet is paralleled by “the breaking up of every kind of experience into uniform units in order to produce faster action and change of form (applied knowledge)”.¹³ However, the increased speed which the written word gives to the acquisition of knowledge only actually produces social stratification, as specialisation becomes necessary, rather than the sort of romantic individualism which the World State might have reason to fear. This stratification of society is a cornerstone of the World State, as is manifest in its caste system. Indeed, specialisation begins even before birth. An obvious example of this is the heat conditioning of foetuses “predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miners and acetate silk spinners and steel workers.” (BNW, p13) The consequences of specialisation can also be seen in the higher classes, in Linda’s complete ignorance of chemistry. Indeed, the only vestigial explanation which she can give John is that “you get [chemicals] out of bottles. And when the bottles are empty, you send up to the Chemical store for more.” (BNW, p118) Indeed, specialised scientific literature, such as *The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo. Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo Store Workers*, is one of only two forms of literature which are still permitted. As Huxley points out “the relations existing between scientific writers and their readers are governed by rules agreed upon in advance.”¹⁴ They are bound by their scientific discourse. However, even these texts are rigorously policed, and censored should they step beyond the bounds of their scientific framework. A good example of this is Mustapha Mond’s censorship of the paper ‘A New Theory of Biology’. The reason given is its “treatment of the conception of purpose” which “might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes”. (BNW, p160) Its author makes the mistake of attempting to deal with the big questions, such as ‘why are we here?’ which the World State believes it has answered adequately, by proclaiming that “the purpose of life was ... the maintenance of well-being”. (BNW, p160) The fear which is expressed here is that members of the upper castes will start to attempt to form their own, individual explanations of human purpose, rather than accepting the explanations offered by the state.

Clearly then, the World State has nothing to fear from specialisation. Indeed, as long as specialist scientific literature remains within the bounds of its specialisation, it is put to good use. It is, instead, the possibility of individuation which is felt as a threat to the World State. Even this, however, is dealt with by the Bokanovsky Process, which ensures that the lower classes shall always think of themselves as a part of a group, rather than as an individual. Surely there can be no better guarantee against individuation than the biological, educational and contextual uniformity which is enforced upon the members of a Bokanovsky

Group. Thus, it is primarily only among the upper classes that there is any real risk of psychological individuation, as a complement to the biological individuality that they require. Indeed, as Bernard's case shows, psychological individuation can be produced by nothing more than individual biology. Bernard is constantly made to feel like an outsider within his class because he is significantly shorter than the norm for his class, which leads to the malicious rumours that "somebody ... put alcohol into his blood-surrogate". (BNW, p41) These foster a sense of isolation and individualism which runs quite counter to the approved conditioning, as it constantly subjects him to the strong emotions which the World State is so opposed to, and which he comes to identify as typical of himself. It is this which causes his resistance to the soma which would enable him to take 'holidays' from his emotions. The sense of self these emotions give him is used to justify his resistance to Soma, as is made clear when he tells Lenina, "I'd rather be ... myself and nasty. Not somebody else, however jolly." (BNW, p80) However, the magnification of the power of the written word in its transformation into the printed word intensifies this risk, so that books represent a threat not only to the conditioning of the biologically differentiated upper classes, but also to the conditioning of the physically conformist labouring classes of Gammas and below.

This intensification of the power of the written word comes from the increased uniform repeatability which was given to the written word by its mechanisation in the printing process. This enabled "the typographic extension of man".¹⁵ That is to say, the printed book made it possible for individuals to express their points of view, their beliefs and ideas, in a repeatable form. It "created a medium in which it was possible to speak out loud and bold to the world itself".¹⁶ Exposure to books could therefore expose the citizens of the World State to the multitude of individual and diverse voices of their authors, and oblige them to attempt to interact with these ideas they put forward in order to decide where they stand. Indeed, Huxley himself states that this diversity of voices is exactly the point of the media in a democracy, when he comments that in the early days of the press "thousands of ... editors expressed thousands of independent opinions".¹⁷ However, Huxley is also somewhat dubious of the power which such editors and their independent opinions might have on the public at large. In 'Writers and Readers' he points out that propagandists are dependent upon two factors which are beyond their control; the historical context within which they write, and the subjective emotional states of the population at large. He points out that a dissatisfied population is more likely to adopt a new philosophy which, criticises the status quo, and explains the roots of their dissatisfaction and suggests courses of action which might provide an outlet for such dissatisfactions, than a fundamentally satisfied population, who are likely to ignore such a critical philosophy. This clearly poses problems for the writer working against the World State, which controls both the historical context and its populations' subjective emotional states. Indeed, its primary goal is ensuring that no such dissatisfaction manifests itself. The case of "A New Theory of Biology" does however prove that such dissatisfied groups do exist, who might be destabilised should the right theory become available.

In the same essay, Huxley suggests that there is a much greater potential for change in fictional writing than in non-fiction. He argues that “by a kind of suggestion [authors of fiction] modify the characters of those who read them.”¹⁸ That is to say, readers identify with the characters in fiction, and as a result of this identification, modify their own beliefs and behaviours so that it more accurately matches the beliefs and behaviours manifested by the character. This process can be clearly seen in John’s identification with Romeo, and his subsequent behaviour towards Lenina, which will be discussed further below. Fiction then, poses a greater threat to the World State than writing which consciously aims at producing change. Were the population confronted by the prodigious range of characters to be found in the fiction of the past centuries, they would be provided with a vastly increased range of positions upon which to model their own behaviour. They would thus come to express a similarly increased range of beliefs and opinions, shaped by the personas they chose to adopt and the effects these had upon how they perceive the external world. Such a process is clearly not acceptable to the World State, in which “everyone belongs to everyone else”, and is required to believe what they have been conditioned to believe, rather than to form opinions for themselves.

Indeed, much of the hypnopaedic conditioning the population receives is specifically intended to prevent the population thinking for themselves. Rather, the hypnopaedic aphorisms which the population are conditioned to believe provide a bit of ‘homespun’ wisdom for every situation, such as “a gram is better than a damn”, (BNW, p49) and “everyone belongs to everyone else”. Their recurrent use in conversation throughout the text indicates that they do indeed function in this way. Bernard’s common bad moods are continually met with “a gram is better than a damn”, as his conditioned contemporaries have no language with which to respond to his emotional states, other than these aphorisms which have been implanted in them since youth. They also serve “the function of herd recognition”, providing a “ritual of recognition”¹⁹ through which citizens of the World State acknowledge the common, preconditioned ideals which underpin their common beliefs. Bernard’s individuality, and his resistance to his conditioning, can also, in part, be ascribed to his role in the conditioning process. He works in the Psychology Bureau of the Department for Emotional Engineering, overseeing the hypnopaedic conditioning of children. As a result, when he is confronted with a hypnopaedically implanted phrase, he does not accept it as a truism, but rather recognises it as externally imposed conditioning. An example occurs when Lenina reminds him to “never put off till tomorrow the fun you could have today”, to which Bernard replies, “two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half.” (BNW, p84) This is typical of his attitude, which often refers to the means by which such hypnopaedic aphorisms have been implanted in the population rather than accepting them at face value. Reading can also be seen to present a threat to this system, as it would oblige its readers to confront a variety of ideas from different points of view, rather than merely accept the point of view which has been drummed into them from birth. For these reasons the only books available are necessary scientific textbooks.

The resistance to such individual points of view can be seen quite clearly in two places in the text. The first is Mustapha Mond's censorship of scientific papers, which I have discussed above. The other obvious example is the warning Helmholtz Watson is given after he recites his own poem to his students. He is brought before the Principal and threatened with the sack. The reasons for this are clearly stated in the text. His poem is "flatly against all [his students'] sleep teaching", and as such threatens to compromise their conditioning. (BNW, p164) For these reasons, all published texts have to be strictly controlled. Anything which might provoke thought, or which contradicts the State's conditioning, must be prohibited. An interesting aspect of this is the exclusion of history. This prevents the population from attempting to compare the present with the past. It prevents the contextualisation of the present which is one of the main functions of history. However, the World State is aware of the importance of this function, and as such has not done away with history altogether, but merely reduced it, so that it is only passed on in the superficial, generalised oral form which Mond offers in the opening section of the novel. This gives a second meaning to my description of this opening section as an 'establishing shot'. Not only does it establish for the reader the basics of the political system operating within this fictional world, it also establishes for the children their appropriate attitude to the past. This basic historical outline can be seen as serving to interpellate the children. It identifies the position they are to take to the past. Huxley said of such historical generalisations that "if they have value, it is as stimulants to make us think about the present."²⁰ However, as we will also see in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in this *Brave New World*, history becomes entirely the domain of the state. Its definitions are the only definitions possible, as they are the only people with access to the information which would enable one to draw conclusions. The uncomplicated historical generalisations which Mond offers serve not to 'stimulate' us to 'think about the present' in any critical, or questioning way, but rather to structure how the class "think about the present". Thus, they are able to characterise monogamy and the emotional bonds of family as "suffocating intimacies [and] insane obscene relationships" (BNW, p33), in order to construct an appropriately negative point of comparison against which to view their promiscuity and the production line approach to 'childbirth' and education which are their substitutes in the World State's present. An additional benefit is the ability to obscure the violence which was necessary for the establishment of the World State, and the barely discussed Nine Year war which preceded it. Any attempt to deal with these obscured complexities is prevented by the impossibility of gaining access to the necessary information. In these ways the present is naturalised, as the past is presented as something alien and threatening.

This brings us to the second form of literature which is permitted by the World State: the sanitised press. This is permitted because of the specific way in which newspapers function, which lends itself to the World State's goals. While the book expresses its author's point of view in a coherent way, the newspaper has a quite different form. With its columns and headlines, its juxtaposition of various stories and attitudes on a single page, the newspaper constructs a mosaic of various aspects of society. A similar representation of the

newspapers can be seen in John Dos Passos' trilogy, *U.S.A.* (1938). In the Newsreel sections of this text, Dos Passos has used headlines and passages of text cut from newspapers, and then pasted them together to give an indication of the state of the nation and the world at the time. In Dos Passos' text, this produces two separate effects. In one way, it illustrates the way in which the absurd and the trivial can serve to distract from serious issues, as in the juxtaposition of "BUGS DRIVE OUT BIOLOGIST" and "EMPEROR NICHOLAS II FACING REVOLT OF EMPIRE GRANTS SUBJECTS LIBERTY".²¹ In contrast with this, Dos Passos' text also illustrates the way that the mosaic form of the newspaper can highlight the internal economic contradictions of the state, in the pairing of "GENERAL STRIKE NOW THREATENS" with "OIL KING'S HAPPIEST DAY".²² Dos Passos uses this mosaic form in this way to give the reader a sense of the collective mentality of his era, and the conflicts and contradictions contemporary to it. This option is open to Dos Passos because he takes his stories from real contemporary newspapers, with a variety of editorial attitudes.

The variety of stories which we can see in Dos Passos' use of the papers is, however, sadly lacking in the papers published by the World State. In this way, the brightly coloured mosaic of various issues and attitudes which we see in Dos Passos is reduced to a mosaic made of chips of only one colour, with no contrasting or conflicting colours to spoil the unity of the image. The singular strength of this mosaic form, from the World State's point of view, is its ability to present "corporate images of society in action".²³ In McLuhan's point of view the press is a retribalising, implosive form, "a group confessional form that provides communal participation".²⁴ That is to say, by combining all of the various aspects of society in one publication, on one page, it involves its reader in the whole of society, rather than merely the fragmented part which represents his/her specialisation. It collapses the whole of society into the unity of the page. It draws the individual back into the group. In Huxley's text this function of form can also be seen in the content of the papers. They are full of articles on Community Sings. These are social rituals which emphasise the individual's subsumption into the corporate entity of the World State. The publication of these articles in the press extends participation in them throughout the readership, emphasising the retribalisation inherent in the press. The other articles mentioned by Helmholtz are those which discuss the latest improvements in scent-organs. These also emphasise collective participation, through a collective sensual experience.

Such collective sensual experiences comprise the rest of the media. The feelies, the scent-organ, even music represents a collective sensual experience, as is illustrated by the fact that "CALVIN STOPES AND HIS SIXTEEN SEXOPHONISTS" do not play alone, but rather are accompanied by "LONDON'S FINEST SCENT AND COLOUR ORGAN". (BNW, p67) As Marshall McLuhan has pointed out, the media are the extensions of man, the extensions of our organs into the external world through technology. The feelies and the scent-organ offer extensions of our tactile and olfactory senses respectively. The feelies are particularly interesting because they offer not just tactile stimuli, but their narratives are also bolstered by visual, auditory and olfactory stimuli. They offer not just the extension of one sense through technology, but rather an extension of the whole sensorium. In this way they

provide an artificial experience of synesthesia, or the full involvement of all of the senses in one another. They produce the ultimate experience of depth involvement, using the whole sensorium to involve the audience in the narrative. The feelies are what McLuhan awkwardly terms a 'hot' medium. That is to say, they require very little participation from the audience. Hot media are ones which "do not leave ... much to be filled in ... by the audience".²⁵ He also states that they are ones which "[extend] one single sense in 'high definition'", where high definition is "the state of being well filled with data".²⁶ The feelies do not perfectly fit this definition, as they do not extend merely one sense in high definition, but this is precisely where they derive their power. They extend not one sense in high definition, but rather the entire sensorium. Every mode of sensory input is well filled with data. The audience has no possibility of participation in the narrative, but is rather indulged by a totally passive, and passively total involvement. The entire audience is passively involved in a uniform sensory experience. This very uniformity acts as a bond for the audience, as it ensures that the entire audience can be confident that they experienced the same thing, that when discussing the feely they will be operating from a shared frame of reference. The value of this idea of 'hot' media is rendered questionable by the fact that books are also identified as a 'hot' medium. The results of these two media are quite different, despite their shared 'temperature'. However McLuhan's work helps us to understand the feelies as their operation is so dependent upon filling the viewers' senses with information.

The effects of this uniform, communal sensory experience are more easily analysed if we look at N. Katherine Hayles comments on the work of Gregory Bateson. She points out how Bateson's question, which asks is a blind man's cane a part of the man, indicates the change in the nature of the boundaries of the human subject which was wrought by cybernetics. "Cybernetic systems", Hayles states, "are constituted by flows of information".²⁷ From this point of view, the cane, by carrying information to its user, becomes linked in to the cybernetic system of man-and-cane. Such a belief quite clearly has a lot in common with McLuhan's argument that the media operate as extensions of our organs and senses into the external world. The primary difference is that Bateson is looking at the implications this has for our conceptions of our selves, and how we, as subjects, are formed and perceive the world, while McLuhan is looking at the effects of the various media as cybernetic extensions of ourselves, the psychic effects they have when they are linked into the cybernetic systems that constitute a subject or a society. Bateson, meanwhile, uses this cybernetic viewpoint to argue that "we never know the world as such", but instead, "know only what our sensory perceptions construct for us".²⁸ However, with the feely, the entire sensorium has been externalised, extended outwards into the technologies of screen, camera and projector, speakers, scent-organ, and the galvanised knobs which create tactile sensation. Thus, the world that the audiences' sensory perceptions construct for them has already been constructed. It is a manufactured thing, made for them by artificers at the Department of Emotional Engineering (a telling name), which requires nothing more from its audience than the passive acceptance of total involvement. Thus, the feely offers the World State a way to guarantee that its uniformly conditioned citizens receive uniform sensory experience, or to

put it another way, perceive a uniform world, free of individual, subjective variations. That is to say, it is merely another way to prevent individuation, or individual action.

The World State certainly does not want its citizens to act while immersed in a feely. Indeed, they do not want their citizens to act at all. They merely want them to *react*, to react to their condition that is. By this I mean to act according to their conditioning, and to react to the feely. And the only possible form that this reaction can take is sexual arousal. This is prescribed by the content of the feelies.²⁹ The very first image in *Three Weeks in a Helicopter* is of a man and a woman in a sexual clinch, accompanied by the physical sensation of a kiss and the actors' moans of pleasure. The audience is dropped into a simulation of sex, a simulation which is "far more real than reality", in which every sense is stimulated, from "that sensation on his lips" to the scent of "pure musk". (BNW, p151-52) This excessively sexual stimulation continues throughout, with scenes of sex on a bearskin rug, every hair of which can be felt, with the heroine being "*ravished* away into the sky" (italics mine) so that the villain can satisfy his "exclusive and maniacal passion" for her for three weeks in "a wildly anti-social *tete-a-tete*", until the triumphant conclusion in which she is rescued by three male Alphas and "decorously" becomes the mistress of all of them. (BNW, p152) As Theodor Adorno has pointed out, "when a film presents us with a strikingly beautiful young woman it ... announces ... the injunction to be like her".³⁰ This effect which Adorno identifies in film is further reinforced by the tactile stimulus of the feely. This also, like the linkage between electric shocks and literature, operates as a sort of Pavlovian, behaviouristic conditioning. The realer than real pleasure of "that sensation on his lips" serves as a reward for identifying with the socially approved, sexually promiscuous behaviour depicted on screen. By contrast, the blow to the head which motivates the villain's "exclusive and maniacal passion" is accompanied by a painful "twinge through the forehead". (BNW, p152) In this way, the socially unacceptable behaviour of monogamy becomes associated with pain, to complement the disapproval with which it is viewed. One might see this aspect of the feelies as a way of continuing the Pavlovian conditioning, begun during childhood, through into the populations' adult lives. The feely thoroughly valorises sexual excess, although it is perhaps more accurate to say that the feely normalises sexual excess, rendering the concept of excess redundant in this context. The idea of excess for the World State only really operates in relation to emotions, as can be seen in the demonisation of the attempt to form an exclusive relationship, and the emotional excess which that represents, especially when compared with the validation of the decorous foursome which concludes the film. It is therefore no wonder that after such unrelieved and fully tactile sexual stimulation, Lenina and the rest of the audience should leave the cinema somewhat sexually aroused. Rather, it is the intended effect.

That the promiscuous sexuality such feelies advocate is vitally important for the World State is indicated by Lenina's conversation with Fanny, who points out that "it's horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man." (BNW, p36) The reason that this should be so important to the World State is expressed in the pop song which is repeated throughout the text. The first two lines of this song run "Hug me till you drug me, honey /

Kiss me till I'm in a coma". (BNW, 150) This makes it clear that the reason this promiscuous sexuality is encouraged in the population is the loss of identity experienced in the little death of orgasm. It is an attempt to ensure the loss of individual thought in the overwhelming sensual experience of sex. This is also the function of *soma*, as is indicated by the end of the verse, which runs "Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny / Love's as good as *soma*". (BNW, 150) The strength of *soma*, both from its users' point of view, and from the World State's, is that it allows "the possibility of lying in bed and taking holiday after holiday". (BNW, p138) But a holiday from what? The answer, of course, is from the self. *Soma* provides "a bit of ... eternity", an immersion of the self in the enormity of the infinite. (BNW, p139) In doing so, it prevents individual thought, indeed, it prevents individuality itself. Such a loss of self is even sanctified in the pseudo-religious ritual of the Solidarity Service. The participants consume numerous doses of *soma* while reciting ritual formulae such as "I drink to my annihilation", and singing hymns beseeching 'our Ford' for a loss of self in "the Social River". (BNW, p72) The whole thing concludes with the verse "Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun / Kiss the girls and make them One / Boys at one with girls at peace / Orgy-porgy gives release", which clearly indicates the role sex has in this annihilation of self. This is an indication which is further affirmed by the fact that by the end of the ceremony the participants are described as "prone or supine dancers". (BNW, p76) This clearly suggests that they are having sex, as what other 'dance' can be performed in a prone or supine position.

As well as indicating a loss of self, this also illustrates the process of infantilization which the World State has imposed upon its population. The language of pop songs and Solidarity hymns are completely childish, in their use of such phrases as "snuggly-bunny", "Orgy-porgy" and their references to girls and boys rather than men and women. Also, the rhythm of the Solidarity hymn evokes playground chants. An even clearer example, which also indicates the use of gossip as a substitute for surveillance, occurs when the Director of Hatcheries tells Winston "I'm not at all pleased with the reports I receive of your behaviour outside working hours. ... It is [Alphas'] duty to be infantile, even against their inclination." (BNW, p87-88) Haug, in his discussion of the use of sex in advertising, points out that "the general sexualization of commodities has also included people [and] provides an outlet for expressing previously suppressed sexual urges",³¹ an outlet which is particularly valuable to adolescents who use it to construct themselves as sexual beings. This is clearly also the case in the World State, in which the comprehensive sexualization of people has been accomplished through the conditioning and media programmes managed by the department of emotional engineering. However, within the World State, sexual identity is the only permitted form of self-expression. Also, with the removal of physical ageing, and the prohibition on individual ideas and individual self definition, there is neither any need nor any possibility of any other construction of a more mature identity, while the removal of parenting has prevented the construction of any sort of adult sexuality. Marcuse refers to this process of liberalisation of sexual attitudes as 'repressive desublimation' of sexuality.³² He argues that this effects "a localisation and contraction of libido, the reduction of erotic to sexual experience and satisfaction."³³ This is produced by the lack of erotic stimuli to be

found in the mechanised environment. This might be a curious observation in relation to *Brave New World*, in which large parts of the world are sexualised, particularly through the media, but it is worth noting that sexuality is a “specialised’ partial drive” while “Eros [is] that of the entire organism”.³⁴ Marcuse himself observes that with the de-eroticisation of the environment “localised sexuality ... is intensified”³⁵, and it is this intensification of localised sexuality which manifests in the sexualisation of space through the media we see in *Brave New World*. Thus the entire population becomes frozen at this adolescent state, in which they construct their sexual identity through their consumption of commodities and each other. That they also think of themselves as commodities can be seen in Bernard’s complaint that the other men discuss Lenina “as though she were a bit of meat ... and what makes it worse, she thinks of herself as meat” to be sexually consumed. (BNW, p40-47) To quote Adorno, “the power which stands behind this everyday poetry [of mass culture] ... can still deceive adult human beings about the extended childhood that is only prepared for them so that they might function in all the more ‘adult’ [conformist] a fashion.”³⁶ That is to say, the reconstruction of this adolescent, commodified sexuality as appropriately adult operates to keep the population docile and obedient.

Solidarity Services also indicate the way in which linear, historical progress has been replaced. While Mond has traced the development of the World State through a traditional, linear approach, identifying progress towards the ‘ideal’ society of the World State, once the World State is in place there is no further need for progress. Instead, it is replaced by the cycle of manufacture and consumption which are the only activities it permits. This cyclic substitute for historical progress is venerated in the Solidarity Services. This is particularly apt, given Ford’s desire that his workers should be able to buy the cars that they themselves had made, so that both their labour and their consumption were put to the service of the company. This cycle can be seen in the circular table at which the participants sit, in the *soma* which is consumed as it cycles around this circle, and in the “circular procession of dancers” (BNW, p75) which precedes the ritual’s culmination in an orgy of collective sexual experience.

This collectivising aspect of the media is actively sought by the citizens of the World State. When Bernard and Lenina pause over the Channel, Lenina is distraught when confronted by the sublime, unmediated reality of the sea, of the “rushing emptiness of the night, ... the black foam-flecked water heaving beneath them” she cannot cope. (BNW, p80) In Burke’s words, the sublime is that which is “productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling”.³⁷ It is this feeling, this strong individual emotion which enables Bernard to feel more himself, and “not just a cell in the social body”. (BNW, p81) However, it is just such powerful and individual emotions which the World State wishes to avoid, and while Bernard, as an isolated social misfit seeks such sensations, Lenina as a good citizen is appalled by them, and her response is telling. She turns on the radio. McLuhan sees the radio as another retribalising force, like the press, which “affects most people intimately, person-to-person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer-speaker and the listener.”³⁸ Thus by turning on the radio she is attempting to relocate herself within society, to

submerge herself within the collectively experienced medium of the radio. The radio relocates her as a cell in the social body, where she can believe the comforting lies that “the skies are blue inside of you”, rather than facing the real skies external to herself. (BNW, p81) Indeed, for Lenina the media are a vital necessity. Her complaints about the North Pole are all due to its lack of media: it has no TV or scent-organs. Thus, there too she was obliged to confront the reality of nature, rather than hide behind the illusions which the World State constructs through the media.

Lenina's dependence on the media can also be seen as part of the problem between her and John. It would probably be truer, however, to state that the difficulties they have in forming a relationship arise from the contrasting media and cultures which have shaped their experience. John's experience of the World has been shaped by his reading of Shakespeare, while Lenina has been conditioned by the collectivised and collectivising media of the World State. As Booker points out, “John's expectations from and reactions to the experiences he encounters are almost entirely conditioned by his reading of literature.”³⁹ His speech constantly carries echoes of Shakespeare, from the use of Miranda's words on seeing a Bokanovsky group for the first time to the reference to pill-boxes as caskets, which is motivated by “remembering *The Merchant of Venice*” (BNW, p148), through to the numerous references in his conversation with Mond. He also characterises his relationship with Lenina through Shakespeare, and particularly *Romeo and Juliet*. When he sneaks in to Lenina and Bernard's room, while Lenina is asleep, he borrows Romeo's descriptions of Juliet in order to describe Lenina. Having cast Lenina as Juliet, he then has to attempt to adopt Romeo's position himself, and he does so willingly. He is desperate for the sort of struggle to find true love which Romeo faced. This is made clear in his desire to “do something first ... to bring her the skin of a mountain lion ... to undergo something nobly” before he sleeps with her. (BNW, p172-73) Sadly this is entirely opposed to Lenina's conception of sexuality, which has been shaped by the permissiveness of the World State, and feels like *Three Weeks in a Helicopter*, in which the only apparent sexual taboo is monogamy. As a result she cannot fit into the role of Juliet. Instead she comes to him reciting the inane pop song discussed above in an attempt to seduce him. However, in doing so, she is resorting to an approach which valorises sexuality above emotional content, the reference to ‘love’ being an obvious euphemism for sex. This is no surprise, however, as the World State “is designed above all else to prevent the development of strong emotions”.⁴⁰ Her only contact with strong emotion comes from Violent Passion Surrogates, which leaves her able to express strong emotions only as “V. P.” (BNW, p169) rather than with any specificity.

Unfortunately, Lenina's sexually charged but emotionally empty approach is quite at odds with John's expectations of her. His expectations are modelled on *Romeo and Juliet*, so that he expects an emotionally charged, exclusive relationship. Her sexual overtures evoke for him “the embraces in *Three Weeks in a Helicopter*”, arousing “horror, horror, horror” rather than desire. (BNW, p174) They lead to his violent rejection of her, a rejection which is also “to a large extent triggered by his own conditioning via the element of sex nausea which runs through much of Shakespeare's work”.⁴¹ This sex nausea is further reinforced by his

own childhood experience of his mother's sexuality. His mother's relationship with Pope provoked in John an anger and a jealousy which he could only give voice to once he had read *Hamlet*. His reading of Shakespeare helped to solidify his hatred of Pope, by providing him with the words to express "how much he hated him". (BNW, p119) It also suggests the violent action which he takes in response to his hatred. In both of these occasions, the emotions aroused in John by his Shakespearean language are the ugly, violent and destructive emotions of Shakespeare's tragedies. John, however, only ever "half knew" what Shakespeare's words were about. As Booker points out, "he has little control or understanding either of his language or of his emotions."⁴² The subtleties of Shakespeare's work elude him, so that he seems simply to be drawn to the more violent, aggressive sections, which enable him to express the violent passions which he feels. To quote Booker once again, "John has been just as brainwashed by Shakespeare as Lenina has been by her popular culture; both his linguistic and emotional resources are just as limited as hers."⁴³

This is also the cause of John's inability to fit in in the World State. Having been shaped by literature, John is, as McLuhan would lead us to expect, fundamentally individualistic. An example of this is his failure to attend Bernard's party. Instead, he spends his time in the isolated and individual pleasure of reading. In doing so he is attending to his own needs, rather than those of the community, as the World State requires. He is submerging himself in his romantic fantasies of an impossible and unreal relationship with Lenina (he is reading *Romeo and Juliet*). His individualism can also be clearly seen in his conversation with Mustapha Mond, in which he states "I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." (BNW, p219) In claiming these, John is claiming individual accomplishment, individual risk, individual blame and individual merit. He is claiming the right to define one's own value, rather than the acquisition of worth which comes from behaving according to one's conditioning in the position you have been allocated by the World State, which is stated in the hypnopædic aphorism that "even Epsilons are useful". (BNW, p81) However, such a position is untenable in the World State. Even John's isolation and his self-flagellation becomes a feely, "seen, heard and felt in every first-class feely-palace in Western Europe." (BNW, p231) Through the media, he is drawn back into the collectivised web of experience. It is this failure to escape from society, and from the challenge it makes to his own reviled sexuality, which leads to his suicide.

In this text Huxley provides us with a forceful argument for the central role which the media play in the formation of identity. He indicates how the media can be used to inculcate a certain system of beliefs, and a certain morality, through the use which the World State puts them to. Also, through the figure of John he indicates a parallel process of conditioning, albeit a more unconscious and undirected one. Through these two opposed forms of development, Huxley indicates the way in which the media which form our cultural context help to constitute our identities. He goes further than this, however. In the World State's use of the media, he shows us how a culture which is bereft of depth can act against the formation of individual identity, and instead, idealise conformity. In my next section we will see how Big Brother, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, uses the media to crush individual identity, while

simultaneously preventing the resistance which might threaten the Party's dominance.

Nineteen Eighty-Four: Terroristic Totalitarianism

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* we see a quite different system of media. The role of the media in this text, and its importance in the maintenance of Oceania's totalitarian regime, are much more obvious than the manipulations of Huxley's World State. Winston's position at the Ministry of Truth, revising the documents which constitute history, and the mediated surveillance of the telescreens both make quite apparent the role that the media play in maintaining the Party's dominance. I will discuss these before moving on to the less central functions of the media, such as the Two Minutes Hate, and the pop culture which the Ministry of Truth produces for the proles.

Winston's job at the Ministry of Truth is to rewrite the documents of the past so that they conform to the Party's current statements. Every day he receives a list of jobs, each of which refers to "articles or news-items which for one reason or another it was thought necessary to alter, or, as the official phrase had it, to rectify".⁴⁴ It is necessary to ask why they need changing, what is wrong with them. The answer to this is given by Winston's modification of an article which gives official production forecasts for the fourth quarter of 1983, which have since proven to be incorrect. Winston changes this article so that the original predictions have been exceeded by the actual production figures. To 'rectify' then, means to make the past conform to the current party line. This is clearly informed by the abuses of the media practised in Stalinist Russia, and the historical revisionism which these enabled. Orwell himself comments on this in his essay 'The Prevention of Literature', which makes a very useful companion piece to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In this, he points out that totalitarian states, like the Soviet Union, "where only one opinion is permissible at any given moment ... [demand] the continuous alteration of the past."⁴⁵ Thus, we can see that Orwell believes such revisions to be an utterly vital component of totalitarianism.

These revisions have two functions. The first function of this continual 'rectification' of the media is the destruction of history. It completely prevents the study of history. For example, it would be utterly impossible to produce a history of Oceania's continuous war, "to say who was fighting whom at any given moment ..., since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made any mention of any other alignment than the existing one." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p36) This idea redefines history, so that it is no longer the concrete events which took place in the past and were then recorded, but rather becomes the product of the records in which the past events are recorded. It has no objective existence beyond them. The past is nothing but the sum of the records which claim to describe it. Thus, as Booker points out, "the Ministry of Truth in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* literalizes de Man's observation, proclaiming that history is not recorded in texts, but that it *is* the texts in which it is recorded."⁴⁶ The party takes full advantage of this. The Party's control of the present enables

them to control the representations of the past, and thus to control how the past is perceived. This is the meaning of the Party slogan “Who controls the present controls the past”. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p37) This control of the past enables them to further modify history, to push back the boundaries of their activity, so that they can claim to have been active in the ‘thirties, or even to have invented the aeroplane. There is also another side to this coin. The control does not only permit the exaggeration of the Party’s achievements, it also enables the exaggeration of the evils of other political systems. These misrepresentations extend from the almost innocuous, such as the gross caricature of capitalists as “fat, ugly men with wicked faces”, to the more extreme attribution of the archaic, mediaeval right of *prima noctis* to capitalists. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p76). This prevents history from providing any useful comparison between the political systems of the past and the Party. Booker relates this process to Nietzsche’s concept of “plastic power”. That is, the ability to “put [the past] to use in the service of the present”.⁴⁷ What is most significant about the Party’s misuse of this ‘plastic power’ is that it forecloses the possibility of any individual Party member attempting to take on such power for themselves. Marcuse has pointed out that “recognition and relation to the past as present ... renders possible the development of concepts which de-stabilize and transcend the closed universe by comprehending it as a historical universe.”⁴⁸ It is exactly this possibility, and the threat it constitutes to the Party’s domination, which the Party’s appropriation of the plastic power of history prevents. No individual can make any use of the past for any individual or collective purpose, because the Party’s control over the past ensures that the only needs which it serves are those of the Party itself.

This continual revision of documentary history also goes some way towards explaining the “strange phenomenon” of “the quick and almost complete oblivion of personal memories.”⁴⁹ McLuhan has argued, in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), that print media form an extension of memory, through their capacity to store information.⁵⁰ However, he goes on to point out that with this extended capacity to store information externally, the internal, individual memory has withered. ‘Withered’ possibly overstates the case, but it is certainly true that with the availability of precise external referents there is less need to commit so much to internal memory. The Party’s constant revision of the documents which comprise the external ‘memory’ changes the nature of the interaction between these two forms of memory. Under current conditions, external documentary memory exists as a backup, to be consulted whenever individual, internal memory cannot provide the information required. This can no longer be the case when documentary memory is recast as a “palimpsest, scraped clean and re-inscribed exactly as often as was necessary” to ensure that history conforms to current Party policy. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p42) With this change, documentary memory can and probably will contradict individual memory, as in the case of Winston’s memory that Oceania used to be at war with Eastasia, while all of the evidence which might support this memory has been revised to show that Oceania has only ever been at war with Eurasia. As Lyman Tower Sargent points out, “since the official account of events will always be provable, everyone will doubt their own memories.”⁵¹ And indeed, they must go further than doubt their own memories. They must consign them to oblivion. The ideal form of this sort of

memory is indicated by the 'memory holes' in the Ministry of Truth, in which previous configurations of the past are consigned to destruction, so that the only existing record is that validated by the Party at the moment. Winston refers to his memory of the prior war with Eastasia as a "piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p36) This very memory constitutes a contradiction of the Party line, and as such is an example of thoughtcrime, and punishable by death. Thus, the population must keep their memories under control; they must expunge all memories which contradict Party proclamations in an act of constant revision which mirrors that accomplished by the Ministry of Truth. At the same time, they must not acknowledge that this process occurs, as to do so would be to know that the Party has changed the past and therefore throw into doubt all of the Party's statements. In this way, the population is ensnared in the convolutions of doublethink, the Party's system of Reality Control. This mirrors another of Orwell's comments about totalitarianism, that it "demands a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth". (PrOL, p333) This can be quite clearly seen in Oceania, where there is no objective truth, but only the contingent and mutable declarations of the Ministry of Truth.

This also relates to the second function of the constant revision of history. It serves to empower Big Brother with a sense of omnipotence. He becomes infallible, as "every prediction made by the party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p42) Again, Orwell identifies this as a vital component of totalitarianism. He points out that the "ruling caste, in order to keep its position, has to be thought of as infallible." (PrOL, p332) This sense of the Party's infallibility, like the appropriation of the 'plastic power' of the past, helps to prevent the possibility of resistance. How is it possible to struggle against someone when they are always right? The Party's opposition can therefore only be in the wrong, a thoughtcriminal. It is the only position open to them, as the other end of that binary has always previously been claimed by the Party itself, which can always rely on documentary evidence to prove their rectitude and their opposition's obviously fallacious thoughtcrime.

This is similar to the mediaeval system of justice as it is discussed by Foucault. He points out that "in criminal matters the establishment of truth was the absolute right and the exclusive power of the sovereign and his judges."⁵² However, the Party is not willing to accept that its absolute right and exclusive power to establish truth are limited to criminal matters. Its seizure of the media, and its constant revision of them, enables the Party to claim the exclusive right and power to establish the truth of reality itself. Indeed, the only remaining crime which the party admits is thoughtcrime, or the failure to accept the Party's definition of reality, ie. believe in and to accommodate oneself to the Party's definition of reality. While Winston's crime is that he contests that definition, and indeed, begins to attempt to mount some sort of futile resistance against the Party, his conformist neighbour, Parsons, is also brought in for punishment for thoughtcrime. On the surface he seems to have accommodated himself to the system, as he is an enthusiastic member of various societies and clubs. He even goes so far as to say "I'm glad they got me before it went any further."

(Nineteen Eighty-Four, p245) Underneath, however, his repressed rage against the conditions in which he lives finds an outlet during his sleep, so that at night he murmurs “Down with Big Brother” repeatedly. This indicates that he has not entirely accepted the reality which Big Brother and the Party define, contrary to all appearances. This too is an operation of doublethink, although an unconscious one. It is the holding of two contradictory positions in the mind at once; Parsons’ active support for the Party contradicted by his subconscious hatred of it. While it is not an operation which the Party would necessarily support, it is one upon which they depend. As O’Brien tells Winston, “the Party seeks power entirely for its own sake”, where “power is in inflicting pain and humiliation”. *(Nineteen Eighty-Four, p275, 279)* Therefore, the Party must have a constant supply of thoughtcriminals to torture and degrade, to exercise power over. This need will be constantly supplied by these operations of doublethink. Doublethink is the synthesis of opposing terms, thesis (the fact that the past can be altered), and antithesis (the fact that the past never has been altered). By enshrining doublethink at the centre of Party doctrine, the Party both enables people to believe in the absurdities of Party doctrine (thesis), and guarantees the production of the antithesis, the disgust and horror and hatred of the Party which Parsons expresses in his sleep talking, and which Parsons, true to the mode of doublethink, does not even know he possesses. Parson’s predicament is indicative of the “age of schizophrenia” (PrOL, p336) which Orwell argues is produced by totalitarianism. It fractures its subjects’ consciousness, creating in them ‘two minds’, which can never be joined, for fear of a fuller understanding of the operations of the Party and one’s own resentment of and thoughtcrime against it. Given the impotence of individual Party members and the futility of resistance, the only product of such knowledge would be the terrible apprehension of one’s impending liquidation, of the kind we see in Winston.

Orwell’s 1946 essay ‘Politics and the English Language’ indicates that Orwell saw a move towards doublethink in his own time, in changes in the use of English in political writing and speeches particularly. Orwell’s criticism of his contemporaries English is based on the fact that “modern writing ... does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning [but rather] in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug.”⁵³ The problem with such language is that it does not convey meaning, but rather obscures it. The important point here is that it does not simply obscure meaning for the listener, but also performs “the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself.”⁵⁴ This is the connection between the debasement of the English language which Orwell identified in his own time, and the process of doublethink. In this language, meaning hides behind stock phrases which have been repeated until they have become utterly empty, and polysyllabic words. For Orwell, this change seems to be necessary because “in our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible.”⁵⁵ As a consequence, hollow rhetoric has come to stand in for argument, for both speaker and audience. In Oceania, it is the subject itself which is indefensible; that is, the subject cannot defend itself from the

Party's exercise of power. It has therefore been obliged to hide in the gaps created by the twisted operations of doublethink.

Goldstein's book can also be seen to serve a similar function to that of doublethink. Like doublethink, which serves to guarantee an element of resistance to the Party's domination and the subject's subjugation, its distribution by the Party ensures the continual production of thoughtcriminals for the Party to exercise their power over. This is certainly the case if we accept O'Brien's claim that it was written by the Party. Even if it were not, even if Goldstein is a genuine revolutionary with an existence outside of the media, the Party has taken over his attempt to disseminate his ideas and twisted it to its own ends. In doing so, the Party signals its total control over the media through its ability to reappropriate oppositional discourse to its own ends. It may also have a broader function for the reader. It serves to describe the context of Winston's struggle far more completely, and on a more global scale, than Winston ever could with his restricted knowledge base. He is only ever able to offer a critique of that part of the Party apparatus which he contributes to, the revisionism practised by the Ministry of Truth.

Indeed, the shape of Winston's rebellion comes from his employment. In his work he is constantly writing and rewriting the party's version of history, and so, in his first act of rebellion, he begins to write a diary, to attempt to record his own personal history. But as Orwell has observed, "totalitarianism ... can never permit either the truthful recording of the facts, or the emotional sincerity" (PrOL, 336) which we can see in Winston's writing. Indeed, when Winston first begins to write his diary, grammar and punctuation break down and his thoughts pour onto the page in a stream of consciousness. This is surely one of the most 'emotionally sincere' forms of writing, permitting the full expression of an individual's identity and history. However, even this does not manage to communicate sincere emotions, uninfluenced by the Party. This is made quite apparent by the dismissive comment at the end that the prole woman's reasonable complaints about the film's brutality are a "typical prole reaction" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p11), despite his own understanding that the only hope for change lies with the proles rather than the Party. Indeed, one might argue that any form of emotional sincerity is not only prohibited by the Party, but is also rendered impossible by the Party's requirement that members must internalise Party dogma. Despite this internalisation of the Party line, the diary remains, and predicts, a death sentence for Winston. As he is aware, it is entirely in opposition to the Party's attempt to control the possible forms of identity, and the possible construction of history. The historical bent of Winston's 'revolution' can also be seen in his attempt to find an oral history among the proles to contrast with the history the Party constructs through its documents. However, all that he finds is "a rubbish-heap of details". (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p95) He is forced to the realisation that "all the relevant facts were outside the range of [the proles] vision." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p96) He can find nothing against which to judge the Party's revised history.

This rectification of the past also extends into the cultural sphere. The classical texts of literature, while of too much value as an index of Oceania's cultural superiority to its

enemies to simply do away with, are also profoundly problematic. They are expressive of a vastly different value system from that of the Party. They enshrine freedom and love, and attach a positive value to sexuality. They are entirely at odds with the party's teaching. And therefore, in order to maintain the cultural cache which they carry, while removing the oppositional value systems which they propose, the Ministry of Truth is also engaged in revising them. They are being translated into Newspeak. Newspeak's entire *raison d'être* is the removal of concepts inimical to the Party. By removing words it ensures that the concepts that they define cannot be expressed. And by translating classical literature into Newspeak, the Party intends to guarantee that it comes to support the Party, only expressing concepts the Party can accept and has chosen to keep in its grossly reduced language.

However, such a system, in which the only crime is thoughtcrime, or the belief in certain sets of values, or in historical event rather than mutable historical documentation, necessitates an elaborate means of catching such criminals. It requires a means of judging the internal subjective state of suspects, so that conclusions can be reached about their thoughts. This too is accomplished through the media, or to be more specific, through the audio-visual medium of the telescreens, through the medium of the ubiquitous posters of Big Brother, and through the associated institutions of the Ministry of Love and the Thought Police. This is best understood through Foucault's analysis of the panopticon. The panopticon was designed by Jeremy Bentham as the ideal prison. I will allow Foucault to describe it for me:

at the periphery [it has] an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other.⁵⁶

A supervisor works within the tower, while prisoners are put into the cells in the outer building, so that the light coming through the building enables the supervisor to observe them constantly. Similarly, the looming presence of the central tower constantly reminds the inmates of their constant domination, of the fact that they are constantly under surveillance. As Foucault points out, "the major effect of the panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."⁵⁷ It is a simple process to see correlations between the functions of the media in Oceania and the operation of power in the panopticon. The constant surveillance is ensured by the telescreens, the two way television screens which observe every space where party members might reasonably wish to go. Indeed, early on, we are told that the telescreen is normally installed "in the end wall, where it can command the whole room", just as the window in the panopticon enables the supervisor to see the whole cell. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p7) The power of the telescreen exceeds that of the panopticon though. It makes its inmates entirely

visible *and* audible, its microphones even being sensitive enough to pick up heartbeats. In his Translator's Note to *Discipline and Punish*, Sheridan discusses the difficulty of adequately translating the title, due to the fact that "'surveiller' has no adequate English equivalent."⁵⁸ 'Surveillance', we are told, "has an altogether too restricted and technical use", while "'observe' is rather too neutral, though Foucault is aware of the aggression involved in any one-sided observation."⁵⁹ This last clause seems to imply that this aggression is one of the implications Foucault wishes to capture.

It is exactly this combination of surveillance and active aggression which the use of the telescreens creates. It enables the Party not only to observe its members constantly, but also to reach into and regiment its members' lives, or discipline them. A good example of this is the exercise class which Winston has to take every morning. However, his compulsory participation could be ensured merely by the knowledge of surveillance. The extra capacity for discipline and aggression is indicated when the instructor looks out of the screen and finds Winston's exercises unsatisfactory. As a result he is reprimanded, and instructed "6079 Smith, W! Yes, *you!* Bend lower, please!" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p39) Party members are always susceptible to direct command from the screen. A rather more forceful example of this comes when Winston and Julia are captured. They are utterly unable to attempt escape after they have been caught by the voice of the telescreen, it is so "unthinkable to disobey the iron voice from the wall". (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p230)

The effect of the looming tower, which ensures that the inmates are constantly aware of their visibility is also assured through the media. In part this is merely another function of the ubiquitous telescreens. This is also reinforced by the cultural conditioning which encourages everyone to inform on everyone else, particularly in the case of children, who are told to watch their parents and inform on anything suspicious which they may do, as Parsons' daughter does. There is, however, another device for ensuring that this awareness of constant visibility is always consciously known. This also operates through the media, or to be more specific, through the posters of Big Brother. These, like the telescreens, permeate the urban environment. They hang on every landing in blocks of flats. They are "plastered everywhere [so that] the black-moustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner". (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p4) The composition of the posters is as important as their ubiquity. The text, which reads "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" acts as a constant reminder of the disciplinary regime which contains Party members. The artwork, meanwhile, depicts an "enormous face", in a picture which is "so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move". (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p3) This too operates as a reminder of the domination which the Party practices. In this case, however, it works on the sensual level, as the optical illusion of the eyes following you creates the impression that Big Brother is literally always watching you. The size of the face suggests the Party is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, while the combination of art and text constructs Big Brother as a media icon of the Party's domination of the people. It seems likely that this is the only existence Big Brother actually has. Winston has only ever known this particular articulation of power, and yet he makes no mention of Big Brother ever changing, or aging. It therefore seems safe to

assume that there is no real person behind the images, but that Big Brother is actually a fictionalised avatar of the Party's power. This is connected to the infallibility of Big Brother which has been established through the revision of history. Big Brother is infallible in his surveillance as in everything else.

It becomes impossible to believe that one might rebel without being caught. Winston certainly never believes that he will escape punishment. He is always aware that the Party will catch him, he is merely unsure when. Thus, through these posters and the constant pressure of the telescreens, everything comes to be a sign of surveillance. As William Steinhoff has observed, "the pervasive and corrupting influence of the Party becomes clear when Winston listens to the thrush and asks ... 'whether after all there was a microphone hidden somewhere near.'"⁶⁰ This constant surveillance, and the awareness of constant surveillance, requires people to police their behaviours, so that they act in accordance with Party doctrine. As such, it has a direct impact on the formation of subjectivity. As Booker points out, "this awareness of always being watched helps to suppress individuality ... [and increases] the interpellating power of the telescreens"⁶¹ as the only modes of behaviour which can keep you alive are the ones broadcast by the Party through the telescreens. This is reinforced by the fact that the telescreens are always on; ordinary Party members are not allowed to turn them off. Indeed, nothing in the text leads us to believe that it is physically possible for ordinary Party members to turn off their telescreens. Therefore they are constantly bombarded by the Party's latest announcements, informing them what they must believe at any given time.

This also, like everything else I have discussed, reduces the possibility of resistance. There is no way any organised resistance can arise, as there is no space where the discussion of resistance can occur. Everywhere has been occupied by the Party through its manipulation of the media. Thus, there is no possibility of any discussion of resistance. Foucault says of the inmate of the panopticon that "he is the object of information, never a subject in communication."⁶² This is not entirely true of the inmates of the Party's media panopticon. It is not true to say that they cannot communicate, but it is true that they only do so as Party members, rather than as individual subjects. Everything about their communication, from the concepts they can express to the attitudes they take to one another, indeed, even to the grammar they can use in the case of Newspeak, is defined in advance by the Party. 'Politics and the English Language' is useful again here. The essay argues that written English, and political speeches, are largely constructed from a number of stock phrases, which then serve to obscure meaning, from both audience and speaker. As I have stated above, this prefigures the operation of doublethink. Orwell's discussion of this process also sheds some light on Newspeak itself, and the way it structures communication in such a way that it always occurs between Party members rather than subjects. Orwell argues that these stock phrases simplify writing, as "they will construct your sentences for you – even think your thoughts for you".⁶³ These stock phrases gel together into stock sentences, which express stock ideas. It is possible to view Newspeak's reduced vocabulary as such a set of stock phrases. Indeed, their function is to "think your thoughts for you", or at the very least to shape the thoughts it is

possible for you to think. For Orwell, “a speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance towards turning himself into a machine.”⁶⁴ The act of enunciation has been automated by the language that is used. As Orwell points out, this is “favourable to political conformity.” Indeed, the production of such conformity is Newspeak’s reason for being. In this way, by determining the language and concepts to be expressed, and the mode of their expression, Newspeak ensures that communication only happens between Party members, rather than the subjects that hide below in the tangled growths of doublethink.

Their communication is also shaped by the information which the Party force-feeds them, and which it obliges them to accept. Thus, the telescreens invert McLuhan’s hypothesis. Where he thought that television enabled the viewer to “probe, [to] slow down and involve themselves in depth”⁶⁵ in society, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the telescreens have enabled the Party to probe into individuals lives, and to involve themselves in depth in the entire structure of those lives. When Julia and Winston feel that they have managed to carve themselves out a space where true communication is viable, free of the telescreens and the surveillance they impose, they discover that they have been entrapped by the Thought Police.

The Thought Police also correspond to an aspect of the panopticon. According to Foucault, “Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable”⁶⁶ so that the prisoner cannot know if he is being watched at any given time, but must assume that he is being watched, or may be watched at least, all of the time. The Thought Police ensure that this is the case. They are constantly undercover, so that while people know they exist, they cannot identify them. Indeed, the pun in their title indicates their function. That they are ‘thought’ to exist ensures that the population will ‘police’ themselves. Indeed, until Winston and Julia are arrested, it is possible to believe that they too, like Big Brother, are in fact fictitious. Their title then would take on new implications, with ‘Thought’ indicating imagined. Even if this were the case, it would not impair their function. Their existence imagined or not, further reinforces the fear that you are constantly being watched. Their invisibility enables them to permeate society, so that anyone could be a member of the Thought Police, and no one can be trusted. This is illustrated by the “black terror” Winston feels when he first sees Julia, fearing the “she might be an agent of the Thought police.” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p12) This adds a new layer of terror to the culture of informing which the Party has created. Not only might anyone around you be able to inform on you, but if they are the Thought Police then they have the right and the power to punish you, which in Oceania means being made an ‘unperson’. This basically means removal to the windowless halls of the Ministry of Love, but it is also removal from the records. Every trace of your existence is removed from the records, so that it is as if you have never existed. This too is quite a Foucauldian manoeuvre. Thoughtcriminals set themselves up against the Party, through their attempt to define their own reality in opposition to the reality which the Party has shaped for them. His “offence opposes [him] to the entire social body.”⁶⁷ Thus, the entire social body becomes his enemy. Or rather, the Party, which controls and constitutes the entire social body becomes his enemy, and it demands “his elimination.”⁶⁸ Given that his crime was to contest the reality which the Party is always reconstructing, his elimination is the

elimination from this reality. As O'Brien tells Winston in the Ministry of Love, "you do not exist" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p272), a statement which is true of all of the inmates of the Ministry of Love, and potentially true of all of the inmates of the Party's panopticon. The Party has set itself up as the only author and arbiter of reality, and its members only exist as long as the Party chooses to acknowledge their existence.

In light of this, it is interesting to note the Party line on Big Brother's reality. I have already argued that he is fictional, a media icon of the Party's complete domination. He is more than this, however. He is an icon of the Party. As O'Brien states when Winston questions Big Brother's existence, "of course he exists. The Party exists. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p272) In a world where reality is defined by presence within the records, the media, Big Brother's vital media functions guarantee his existence. His image is the stable rock around which the changing permutations of history flow. He is the Party's face in the media. He is quoted in the newspapers, he gives speeches on the telescreens, he stares down from all the posters to remind us that we are being watched. Where other members of the Inner Party may commit thoughtcrimes, may become 'unpersons', he has no existence outside of the media, and as such will never need to be written out.

Big Brother also plays a central role in films that are broadcast during the Two Minutes Hate. This is a ritual in which Party members are subjected to two minutes of rabid propaganda against the Party's detractors, represented by the "primal traitor", Emmanuel Goldstein, and against Oceania's military opponents, whoever they may be at any given time. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p14) Indeed, these two are bound together, with Eurasian soldiers depicted marching into the screen behind Goldstein's attack on the Party. Thus, criticism of the Party becomes associated with destruction at the hands of the Party's enemies. The Two Minutes Hate creates a charged environment. It is necessary to show one's support for the Party by abusing the figures of hate on the screen, and the expressions of rage all around make it "impossible to join in." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p16) What is interesting is that it does not necessarily produce rage at Goldstein and Eurasia, but rather "an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp." (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p16) Thus Winston's rage switches from Big Brother and the Party to Goldstein and then back again. Party members are being encouraged to express their rage at being denied an individual identity or any autonomy by the Party, and yet the rage is deflected from its proper target by the misdirection of the Two Minutes Hate and the artificial enemies that it offers. This is also a process of 'repressive desublimation', although in this case we see the desublimation of aggression, rather than sexuality. We are seeing here what Marcuse describes as "society's ... *capacity to manipulate and control [the Death Instinct]*, ie. to satisfy it 'productively.'"⁶⁹ (Italics in text) This is a 'productive' use of the Death instinct as it helps to bind society together, in their common hatred of their common enemy. It produces the support for the Party's constant war which we see manifest in Hate Week.

This is also related to the suppression of sexuality and religion which the Party has accomplished. The Two Minutes Hate is a substitute for religious ceremonies, which borrows the religious, and specifically Christian, “tendency to unify the majority in a given society through hatred of a designated Other.”⁷⁰ The other side of this is the elevation of Big Brother to a God-like status. He has already been marked as omnipotent and omniscient through the rectification of the media to ensure that he is constantly right, and the constant warning that “Big Brother is Watching You”. At the end of the Two Minutes Hate he becomes a God, “an invincible, fearless protector, standing like a rock against the hordes of Asia”. (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p17) The control of sexual expression, and the limitations which the Party imposes upon sex, also serve to emphasise this hero worship. The Party limits sexual contact because “sexual privation [induces] hysteria, which [is] desirable because it [can] be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship.” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p139) This can also be seen to be inspired by Stalinist Russia, and Nazi Germany, in that it mirrors the cult of personality which grew up around Stalin and Hitler. Similarly, the demonisation of Goldstein evokes the parallel treatment of Trotsky.

The final use of the media is perhaps the least significant. This is the production of entertainment for the proles. The departments of the Ministry of Truth which are responsible for this produce “rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex and sentimental songs...” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p46) This connects to a number of strands in Orwell’s thought. On the one hand, machines like the kaleidoscopes which Julia works on evoke the low quality Literary Schools of his time, which provide their pupils with “algebraical formula” or “packs of cards” with which to construct narratives. (PrOL, p338) Orwell condemns these for their mechanisation of the creative process, and argues that they probably represent the “way that the literature of a totalitarian society would be produced.” (PrOL, p338) It would also seem to relate to his discussion of comic postcards. Like them, the texts produced for the proles seem to find “their whole meaning and virtue ... in their unredeemed lowness, not only in the sense of obscenity, but lowness of outlook in every direction.”⁷¹ While he does point out that the comic postcards he is discussing have no sort of political agenda, and indeed to suggest that they might would seem absurd, he is aware that such a mode of art could easily serve a political function. He observes that “in a totalitarian society, if they had any freedom of expression at all, they would probably concentrate on laziness or cowardice, but at any rate on the unheroic in one form or another.”⁷² That is to say, they would produce an art which was just unredeemably low and obscene as the texts we see produced for the proles. The function of this can only be to inculcate in the proles just this lowness, this cowardice and lack of heroism, so as to head off the possibility of any popular revolution. Thus, as Bernard Crick has argued, “Julia’s job [is] a savagely Swiftian satire on the British Press and reading public (whether the debauched or the debauchers).”⁷³ Indeed, such a criticism of British institutions can also be inferred from Orwell’s comments on “the encroachment of official bodies like the [Ministry of Information] and the British Council, which help the writer to keep alive but also waste his time and dictate his opinions”. (PrOL, p329) This clearly draws

a connection between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Truth. Finally, the media produced for the proles echoes the use of the media in *Brave New World*. In both cases, as, it could be argued, in the present day, “non-stop distractions ... are deliberately used as instruments of policy, for the purpose of preventing people from paying too much attention to the realities of the social and political situation.”⁷⁴ The differences lie in the political systems people are being distracted from. Where the population of the World State are distracted from their lack of freedom to do anything other than consume and their emotional poverty and immaturity, the proles are being distracted from their basic lack of freedom, to do anything, and their comprehensive physical poverty.

It is quite apparent, then, that the media are an essential tool for the Party. It is only through their control of the media that they are able to achieve their reality control. It is only through the media that they are able to establish their panopticon, which enables them to discipline their population into believing their lies, and to detect those that don't. And it is through the media that they justify themselves, through the elevation of Big Brother and the Party he represents to a deity. This is quite at odds with the massive and constant distractions the Huxley's World State uses to keep its citizens happy and ignorant, although this is reproduced in the entertainment which is provided for the proles.

Conclusions

It is quite clear then, that these two early dystopias depict quite different, but similarly totalitarian, uses of the media. It should also be clear that Huxley's argument that “in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the lust for power is satisfied by inflicting pain” while “in *Brave New World* [it is satisfied] by inflicting a hardly less humiliating pleasure”⁷⁵ is not entirely adequate for understanding the differences between these texts. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* power is maintained not by inflicting pain, but by threats. And they are not threats of pain, but threats of destruction, in past present and future. This is what happens to thoughtcriminals. They are expunged from the historical record, so that it is as if they had never existed. Their torture is incidental. This is somewhat undermined by the fact that Winston is allowed to live, but this goes utterly against both his expectations and what we have been led to expect throughout the novel. It is in fact the World State, in Huxley's own novel, which is dependent upon inflicting pain. They get it out of the way early, so that they can then constantly reinforce the conditioning they have achieved through the pleasurable forces of sex and drugs. But that does not alter the fact that the hatred of books and nature which is felt by most of the population is due to the agony people learned to associate with them during infancy.

The real differences between the texts are more fruitfully examined in terms of Marcuse's distinction between economic-technical and terroristic totalitarianisms. *Brave New World* depicts an economic-technical totalitarian state. The economic aspect of this depends upon the “conscription of consumption”, and the happy labourers and happy consumers who

ensure the constant flow of goods.⁷⁶ My focus falls on how they are kept happy, and how the media contribute to maintaining this happiness. An important tool for this end is the repressive desublimation of sexuality, which imposes the ‘humiliating pleasure’ which Huxley comments upon. This is accomplished through the promiscuous sexuality which is advocated through the media, and which permeates social space through the media, the Solidarity services and such products as Lenina’s zipper laden clothes. The technical aspect manifests in their strict control of the means of production, of people, of products, of education and of entertainment. Through these they are able to ensure the standardisation of the population. The people they produce are biologically standardised, and through their education/conditioning they have standardised attitudes imposed upon them. These attitudes ensure that they will enjoy the standard products and entertainments which are produced for them, which in turn reinforce these attitudes. Nothing is allowed to contradict these attitudes, so the literature and history which might lead to the formation of individual opinions has to be suppressed.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, in contrast, depicts a terroristic totalitarian state, and it behaves accordingly. Its ideal image of power is “a boot stamping on a human face” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, p280), and while this might suggest that they mainly operate through inflicting pain, in actuality their main means of grinding people down is fear. The fear of becoming an unperson is constantly reinforced through the panoptic media, so that the population repress their dissatisfactions and beliefs, as this is the only safe course of action. The destructive energies that this unleashes are mobilised in the interests of the Party, through the repressive desublimation manifest in the Two Minute Hate and Hate Week, through which this aggression is redirected at Party sanctioned enemies, both internal and external. Any genuinely productive expressions of this aggression which might contest the Party’s power are prevented through the system of surveillance which is established through the panoptic media, and through the absence of any media or historical documentation which might equip them with the conceptual and intellectual framework with which to do battle. Meanwhile the only social group with the real potential to defeat the Party is kept passive through a system of trivial and inane media.

It should also be apparent that there are some significant similarities between the two texts. Most apparent is the control both States exert over the past. While this takes different forms, in both cases it serves the same purpose. It closes off the possibility of understanding how the past developed into the present. It prevents the understanding of the historical factors which underlie the ‘facts’ of the present day, and in doing so prevents any attempt to mobilise those same factors in the service of further development and change. They also share their distrust of literature. Again, they take different approaches to controlling it, but the reasons are the same. They are frightened of the intellectual diversity which is to be found in literature, as free access to it would produce a similar diversity in its readers. It also indicates an intellectual freedom which is quite at odds with the needs of the states in power, but which might well prove attractive to their citizens. Finally, both of these societies inflict significant psychological harm on their populations. They twist peoples’ lives into tortuous shapes which

are utterly damaging. Again, different approaches are taken, but once again, the cause is identical. It is their redirection (repressive sublimation) of psychic energies towards goals which serve only the state itself, but fail to fulfil the needs of the individual.

Clearly then, these texts do have much in common, for all they depict quite different forms of totalitarianism. However, I would dispute Lyman Tower Sargent's argument that later dystopias lack the "rich and varied harvest of institutions and practices" one might expect, instead depicting only "a series of variations on themes laid down before 1950."⁷⁷ While I would concede that this may be true in general, it certainly is not in relation to the media. Huxley wrote in 1932, just before television had begun broadcasting. While broadcasting began in 1936, it reached only a small population, and ceased during the Second World War. As such, to expect Orwell to fully understand how it would operate seems absurd, even given his understanding of the manipulations of the media in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. However, his criticism of the Ministry of Information in 'The Prevention of Literature', and his description of political language as 'the defence of the indefensible' clearly indicate both his own awareness of the operations of propaganda at home as well as abroad. It also clearly indicates that his criticisms are based on British propaganda, and not just the excesses of the Nazis and Stalin. While one might argue that the media is merely one of the institutions to which Sargent refers, it has been put to a wide range of practical uses, a range which has only grown as new media have become available. These two texts, and the different totalitarianisms they describe, represent the two extremes of the dystopian spectrum. In the next chapter, I will look at how Bradbury takes a position between these two extremes in his great novel on the dystopian power of the media, *Fahrenheit 451*.

¹ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Vol 2*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp2332.

² This can be seen as an example of the 'operational language' Marcuse condemns, in which concepts are diminished through their reduction to a specific set of operations which defines them. Thus, 'totalitarian' has become a description of the politically oppressive operations performed by the totalitarian governments of Stalin and Hitler, rather than a trait which may be possessed by any state which 'permits no rival loyalties or parties.' For a fuller discussion of operational language and its effects, see Marcuse, Herbert, *One-Dimensional Man*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp14-16, 88-123.

³ Marcuse, pp5.

⁴ Huxley, Aldous *Brave New World Revisited*, (London: Flamingo, 1994), pp4.

⁵ Marcuse, pp12.

⁶ Huxley, Aldous, *Brave New World*, (London: Flamingo, 1994) pp5. In future quotes will be marked as BNW after the text, with the page number.

⁷ May, Keith M., *Aldous Huxley*, (London: Elek, 1972), pp105.

⁸ May, pp105.

⁹ Haug, W.F., *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society*, 8th edition, trans. by Robert Bock, (London: Polity Press, 1986) pp39-41, 79-83.

¹⁰ Huxley, Aldous, 'Writers and Readers', in *The Olive Tree*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), pp5-6.

¹¹ Huxley, 'Writers and Readers', pp5.

¹² Huxley, Aldous, 'Advertisement', in *On the Margin*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1928), pp133.

¹³ McLuhan, *Media*, pp85.

¹⁴ Huxley, 'Writers and Readers', pp1-2.

¹⁵ McLuhan, *Media*, pp172.

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- ¹⁶ McLuhan, *Media*, pp178.
- ¹⁷ Huxley, *Revisited*, pp50.
- ¹⁸ Huxley, 'Writers and Readers', pp30.
- ¹⁹ Uncited quotation in Aldous Huxley, 'Polite Conversation', in *On the Margin* [1923], (London: Chatto and Windus, 1928), pp94.
- ²⁰ Huxley, Aldous, 'Historical Generalizations', in *The Olive Tree*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), pp134.
- ²¹ Dos Passos, John, *U.S.A.*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp63.
- ²² Dos Passos., pp61.
- ²³ McLuhan, *Media*, pp204.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ McLuhan, *Media*, pp23.
- ²⁶ McLuhan, *Media*, pp22.
- ²⁷ Hayles, pp84.
- ²⁸ Hayles, pp78.
- ²⁹ On this I would depart from McLuhan, who argues that the content of one medium is merely another, earlier medium. The lie in this is made quite clear when he states that the "content of the movie is the novel" (*Understanding Media*, p305). This fails to acknowledge the vast difference between the two media. The great strength of the novel is its ability to impart significant information about the internal, subjective sensations of the characters. This is almost entirely absent from film, without the addition of an intrusive voice-over, or through such oblique techniques as editing, which can only ever imply things about internal states, rather than overtly stating them as the novel can. This lack is filled in by the overwhelming visual detail which is offered by film, which can show in an instant a scene which may take pages of writing to adequately describe. Even ignoring this, the vast amount of unsatisfactory adaptations should indicate the problems which can arise when films attempt to take novels as their content. See McLuhan, *Media*, pp8, 305.
- ³⁰ Adorno, Theodor, 'The Schema of Mass Culture', in *The Culture Industry*, by Theodor Adorno, ed. by J. M. Bernstein, (London: Routledge, 2001), pp94.
- ³¹ Haug, pp56.
- ³² Marcuse, pp75-76.
- ³³ Marcuse, pp76.
- ³⁴ Marcuse, pp76, note16.
- ³⁵ Marcuse, pp77.
- ³⁶ Adorno, pp63.
- ³⁷ Burke, Edmund, quoted in Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror Volume 1: The Gothic Tradition*, (London: Longman, 1999), p39.
- ³⁸ McLuhan, *Media*, pp299.
- ³⁹ Booker, pp58.
- ⁴⁰ Booker, pp59.
- ⁴¹ Booker, pp60.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Booker, pp61.
- ⁴⁴ Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), pp41. Future quotes will be indicated by *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the page number after the text.
- ⁴⁵ Orwell, George, 'The Prevention of Literature', in *Essays*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), pp333. Future quotes will be indicated by PrOL, followed by the page number.
- ⁴⁶ Booker, pp88.
- ⁴⁷ Booker, pp86.
- ⁴⁸ Marcuse, pp103.
- ⁴⁹ Hellemans, Karel, 'Always the Eyes Watching You', in *Essays from Oceania and Eurasia: George Orwell and 1984*, ed. by Benoit J Suykerbuyk, (Antwerp: Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen, 1984), pp30.
- ⁵⁰ McLuhan, Marshall *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, (London, Routledge, 1962), pp25.
- ⁵¹ Sargent, Lyman Tower, 'Social Control in Contemporary Dystopia', in *Essays from Oceania and Eurasia: George Orwell and 1984*, ed. by Benoit J Suykerbuyk, (Antwerp: Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen, 1984), pp37.
- ⁵² Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp35.

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- ⁵³ Orwell, George, 'Politics and the English Language', in *Essays*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), pp354.
- ⁵⁴ Orwell, 'English Language', pp355.
- ⁵⁵ Orwell, 'English Language', pp356.
- ⁵⁶ Foucault, pp200.
- ⁵⁷ Foucault, pp201.
- ⁵⁸ Foucault, Translator's Note.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Steinhoff, William 'Utopia Reconsidered: Comments on 1984' in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, ed. by Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), pp148.
- ⁶¹ Booker, pp79-80.
- ⁶² Foucault, pp200.
- ⁶³ Orwell, 'English Language', pp355.
- ⁶⁴ Orwell, 'English Language', pp356.
- ⁶⁵ McLuhan, *Media*, pp308.
- ⁶⁶ Foucault, pp201.
- ⁶⁷ Foucault, pp90.
- ⁶⁸ Foucault, pp90.
- ⁶⁹ Marcuse, pp82.
- ⁷⁰ Booker, pp72.
- ⁷¹ Orwell, George, 'The Art of Donald McGill', in *Essays*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), pp202.
- ⁷² Orwell, 'Donald McGill', pp202.
- ⁷³ Crick, Bernard, 'Introduction' to *Essays*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), ppviii.
- ⁷⁴ Huxley, *Revisited*, pp51.
- ⁷⁵ Huxley, *Revisited*, pp37.
- ⁷⁶ These terms are basically interchangeable. The labourers are the consumers. The caste system does not produce classes in the sense we currently understand, as there is no indication that the higher castes have greater economic power. Rather, they are distinguished by the different labor they perform for the benefit of the state. While the lower castes produce products, the higher castes produce people and media.
- ⁷⁷ Sargent, 'Social Control', pp41.

Chapter 2: W(h)ither Literacy: *Fahrenheit 451* and the Loss of Literature

In Ray Bradbury's classic, *Fahrenheit 451*, we can see echoes of how the media operated in both Orwell and Huxley's earlier work. The central role of the media in *Fahrenheit 451* should be immediately apparent. Montag's job as a fireman, burning books, should make this quite clear even disregarding the other references to the media which permeate the text. Three questions arise regarding Bradbury's representation of the media in this text. First, how do the media function as a system of social control in Bradbury's dystopian world? That is, how do the media operate to guarantee conformity, and how do they interact with other institutions which share this goal. Second, and relatedly, how have Orwell and Huxley's representations of the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* informed Bradbury's? How has Bradbury negotiated a position between the two extremes which Orwell and Huxley depict? Given the profusion of work which Bradbury has produced, it would seem absurd to expect any of his themes to be expressed in only one piece. As such, while I will focus upon *Fahrenheit 451*, as the best developed expression of Bradbury's concerns about the media, I will also refer to some of his short stories, where they are relevant. Finally, I will attempt to examine how Bradbury's novel has been informed by the assault on the media which was occurring while he wrote *Fahrenheit 451*. That is to say, I will examine how his representation of the media has been shaped by McCarthyism. That he was both aware of it and affected by it can be seen from his comment in the introduction that he "had immense difficulty selling" a prior draft of the text "for it was the time of the UnAmerican Activities Committee."¹ This draft was then further revised to produce the final text, which also proved difficult to sell at the time due to its subject matter. It thus seems not unreasonable to argue that the final form of the text was in some way shaped by Bradbury's reaction to McCarthyism. I will therefore close this chapter with an examination of how McCarthyism and contemporary interpretations of it has shaped the text.

Let us start with assessing how the media in *Fahrenheit 451* serve as a form of social control. As in Huxley's prior dystopia, books have been banned in *Fahrenheit 451*. However, while in the World State of *Brave New World* this prohibition against books has been universally successful, in Bradbury's America some form of police force is still required to prevent the use and distribution of books. Montag and the Firemen combine this role with an inversion of the fire service's social function. It is their job to burn any house which is found to contain books, thus both punishing the reader and destroying their library.

The most senior Fireman in the novel is Beatty. Beatty is an interesting character, and fills an important role which recurs in these dystopian fictions. He is a senior figure in this dystopian system, with sufficient power to escape the limits the system imposes. He is contained by the system, but not constrained by it. In *Brave New World* this role is filled by Mustapha Mond, while in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* O'Brien plays this part. The trajectory of dystopian texts revolves around a protagonist who gradually comes to understand the operation of the society which dominates them. These privileged insiders play an important role in the development of the protagonist's new understanding, as they offer expository commentary on the development

and operation of the societies they represent. In this role, Beatty offers an explanation for the prohibition of literature. His explanation makes it clear that the reasons for the criminalisation of reading are largely the same as in *Brave New World*. Beatty explains that the threat posed by books is their presentation of “conflicting theory and thought” (*F451*, p69) which recalls Mustapha Mond’s concerns that reading might destabilise the conditioning of his state’s citizens, by providing them with ideas which contradicted their conditioning. That is to say, reading presents ideas which the reader must interact with, think about.

The opposition to literature in these novels is based upon the nature of the print medium. The great strength of the printed word is that it enables the accumulation of knowledge over time. Later generations are able to interact with and build upon the ideas of their forefathers. However, with this accumulation of knowledge, it becomes too great for any one individual to know all of it. Thus, it becomes necessary for individuals to specialise. This is what McLuhan is referring to when he calls the printed word an explosive medium. It enables individuals to be known as such through the different sets of knowledge and skills which they possess, and which distinguish them from others in the social group. It is precisely this individualistic aspect of literacy which poses the threat. It is a solitary medium, which is enjoyed by an individual in private, and allows and enables the formation of individual opinions, or ‘conflicting thought’ in Beatty’s words.

However, as I pointed out in relation to *Brave New World*, some specialisation is necessary, and as such it is important to domesticate literacy, to preserve past knowledge and to expand upon this base. This process of domestication is achieved, in both Huxley’s and Bradbury’s dystopias, through the preservation of textbooks at the expense of all other forms of literature. This relates to Marcuse’s discussion of functionalism.² Textbooks preserve knowledge which is functional, which enables people to fulfil the roles which are necessary for the continued operation of society. They enable people to become doctors, chemists, engineers. However, this is all that they will ever be able to learn. The prohibition on literature ensures that all doctors will ever read are the textbooks which teach them their craft and as such their knowledge base will never be truly individual, but will merely mark their function in society. This sounds innocuous, but this functionalist knowledge impacts upon how they carry out their role. They are concerned only with restoring the body to its correct operation, with no sense of the subject occupying the body. They have been reduced to engineers of the body, technicians of our flesh. This is particularly clear in the passage where they treat Montag’s wife, Mildred, for her presumably accidental overdose, which I discuss in more detail below.

What such functionalism loses is knowledge for its own sake, knowledge which fulfils no function in society, which only serves to stimulate the mind, to provide the population with the means to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, to enable people to search for concepts which challenge them and the way they see the world. What is lost is “slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology”, stuff which might enable people to try “to slide-rule, measure and equate the universe” (*F451*, p68), or to put it another way, ideas which might enable people to try to understand their world. To use Erich Fromm’s terms, what is lost is reason, which “aims at

understanding; [which] tries to find out what is behind the surface, to recognise the kernel, the essence of the reality which surrounds us.”³ All we are left with is a sort of dumb intelligence, which knows how things are done, but does not care in the least why things are done. This is of course entirely intentional. This is made apparent in Beatty’s comments about Clarisse, where he argues that her desire to understand, to know why things were done “can be embarrassing” going on to say that if “you ask Why to a lot of things ... you wind up very unhappy indeed” and that as such “the poor girl’s better off dead.” (F451, p67) Clearly then, reason has been deliberately done away with. As Beatty points out, “if you don’t want a house built, hide the nails and wood.” (F451, p67-68) In order to prevent the population building their reason, the state has locked away books, the tools with which it is built.

In place of literature, a massive and vacuous system of mass entertainment has been established. “Films and radios [and] magazines” have taken the place of books, and in the process the arts have been “levelled down to a sort of paste pudding norm.” (F451, p61) Bradbury, like McLuhan, has no sense of the media as something which is actively produced, instead making it seem that they are passively called into being by their audience. He makes it very easy to lay the blame for the reduction of the media to this ‘past pudding norm’ largely on the public themselves. He seems to argue that the public’s fear of difference produces it. Through Beatty he points out that it is “the exceptionally ... bright boy [who is] selected for beatings and tortures after hours” and then uses this fact to identify the collective desire that “we must all be alike”. (F451, p65) It is to fill this conformist need that the challenge has been stripped from the media, that digests, and “digests-digests-digests”, were produced, promising that “*now at least you can read all the classics [and as such] keep up with your neighbours.*” (F451, p62) This is a quite explicit reference to, and attack on, the series of condensed books which were launched by *Reader’s Digest* in 1950. Through such digests, as Marcuse observes, “the absorbent power of society depletes the artistic dimension by assimilating its antagonistic contents.”⁴ Prior to this reductive assimilation, the arts were “essentially alienation, sustaining and protecting ... the unhappy consciousness of the divided world, the defeated possibilities, the hopes unfulfilled, the promises betrayed.”⁵ In place of such productive alienation, these digests, these mass media produce alienated individuals, cut off from ‘the unhappy consciousness of the divided world’, blind to the possibilities which they will never realise, the hopes they do not even know they possess. In this way, the “rational, cognitive force” of the arts is lost, leaving man unable to perceive the “[dimensions] of man and nature which [are] repressed in reality.”⁶ In place of such productive alienation, the population are left with a destructive alienation from their selves and from their own real needs.

Clearly then, Adorno is right to point to out that such pre-digested media are “baby-food ... based upon the infantile compulsion towards the repetition of needs *which it creates in the first place.*” ⁷ (Emphasis mine) The need for rapid gratification and conformist mass consumption does not exist prior to the mass media, when literature was the dominant medium, as literature requires an investment of time to enjoy, and requires little enough capital investment to produce that it can recoup its costs with only a small market share. This then permits a diverse range of products, each targeting only a small section of the market, which in turn permits the

individualistic accumulation of knowledge I describe above. It is only with the arrival of the electronic media, such as film and television, that immediate gratification becomes possible, and a mass market necessary. Films provide the gratification of narrative resolution in a mere hour and a half, T.V. shows in just half an hour, while the scale of investment required for their production means that in order to cover costs a film or T.V. show must attract a huge audience. This, in turn, means that the level of intellectual challenge must be reduced so as not to intimidate the potential audience, to scare them away with the threat that they might not get it. It is apparent though, that Bradbury was aware of this as well, as Beatty observes that with the arrival of film, T.V. and radio “things began to have *mass* ... And because they had mass, they became simpler.” (F451, p61) ‘Mass’ here is loaded with a double meaning; on one level, it seems to refer to weight, while on the other it refers to the mass, the crowd. These mass media are then capable of “[whirling] man’s mind around so fast ... that the centrifuge flings off all unnecessary, time-wasting thought.” (F451, p62) This metaphor makes the conflation of the two meanings of mass quite interesting, as physical mass translates in such a whirling motion to increased speed and centrifugal force, and the pun here indicates that to be involved in this mass market is to be subject to this stultifying, centrifugal force. Clearly then, Bradbury does not simply blame the population itself for its own stagnation, but also ascribes blame to the producers of the media as well, who are responsible for the reprehensible state of what is produced. While the public must take its share of the blame for demanding easy and quick gratification, “the employers help make the situation worse by producing only that which requires no original thought to enjoy”⁸, by producing ‘baby-food’. Adorno’s point, that consumer demand is in fact shaped by the mass media, that infantile desires are the product of being fed baby-food, is compelling, but I think that the active role of the consumer requires that they accept some responsibility. This is certainly the point made by Faber’s guilt at his own failure to act out against the simplification of mass culture and the prohibition against books. Thus, Rafeeq McGiveron is right to point out Bradbury’s argument that “the disseminators of mindless escapism are to some extent to blame, and the consumers of this escapism are guilty as well.”⁹ I will discuss other aspects of this allocation of blame later on in relation to Bradbury’s attitude to McCarthyism.

What should be clear is that this reduction of film and television, this removal of any intellectual challenge from all media has much in common with the banal distractions produced by the World State in *Brave New World*, and with the media produced for the Proles in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This connection is made even more obvious when Beatty says “if the drama is bad, if the film says nothing ... sting me with the theremin, loudly. I’ll think I’m responding to the play, when its only a tactile reaction to vibration.” (F451, p68) And this “tactile response” is enough to mark a film as “solid entertainment.” (F451, p68) It is almost as if he is describing an early forerunner of the feelies, before the technology was perfected.

This change in the nature of the media, the prohibition of books and the vacuous mass media which replace them, necessarily has a profound effect on education. It is here that the loss of literature, of the tools with which reason is built, is felt most keenly. The most obvious effect is the need to change the curriculum, so that “philosophies, histories, languages [are] dropped,

[while] English and spelling are neglected, finally almost completely ignored.” (F451, p63) In place of these, to fill the void they leave in the timetable, children are given “TV class, ... basketball or baseball or running ... transcription history or painting pictures” (F451, p37) none of which offers any stimulus to any sort of intellectual curiosity. Indeed, this seems to be the last thing that is wanted. There is no space left for pupils to ask questions. Instead, as Clarisse puts it, “they just run the answers at you, bing, bing, bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film-teacher.” (F451, p37)¹⁰ Indeed, Clarisse’s attempts to ask questions have resulted in her having to see a psychiatrist. This should make it clear that the function of education has changed. Where, in an ideal world, education serves to build reason, to give children the tools to think for themselves, in Bradbury’s dystopia these very tools have been removed from the syllabus. It is apparent then, that education is no longer the function of schools. Jack Zipes has pointed out that the emphasis on sport serves “to exhaust the young so that they are tame”¹¹ and while this partially explains the change in the nature of education, there are other issues which Zipes does not acknowledge. The real function of schools in this world is clarified by Beatty’s statement that “we’ve lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now were almost snatching them from the cradle” because “the home environment can undo a lot of what you try to do at school.” (F451, p67) This makes it obvious that what schools actually provide is conditioning. The ‘home environment’ is a threat to this because it provides an alternate source of socialisation, and as such the possibility that kids might be taught a different set of values. The reduced school age is, as Beatty points out, intended to reduce this threat, to ensure that the values of the state, which are taught in schools, have a chance to get established before the family can start to undermine them. It also recalls *Brave New World*’s row upon row of hypnopaedically conditioned children, sleeping in their cots. Schools in this world exist to condition children to accept the world in which they live. As McGiveron points out, “children who are never taught to think about anything challenging are unlikely to want to be challenged” and as such this replacement of education with conditioning “reinforces the public’s existing desire to avoid difficult thought, reteaching the lesson already taught by mass entertainment: thoughtless conformity is simple and pleasurable.”¹² This use of education as conditioning recalls Althusser’s argument that education is the dominant ideological State apparatus. This conditioning can definitely be seen as a form of interpellation.

Such difficult thought, the exercise of reason, has been supplanted by competitive diversions, such as the overabundant sports which fill the school day. Indeed, these sports also have the added advantage of teaching team-play, of teaching the value of losing oneself in the team, in a sort of “group spirit” in which “you don’t have to think.” (F451, p64) However, sports will not provide an adequate diversion for everyone. There will still be those who feel a need for some sort of intellectual challenge, however diminished it might be, and competitive diversions can work here as well, in the form of quizzes and game shows. These require no dangerous skills, such as analytical or critical thinking, but rather merely a memory for “non-combustible data”. (F451, p68) The competitors and audience for these shows do not need to think, but are “so damned full of ‘facts’ [that they] feel they’re thinking.” (F451, p68) There is no real intellectual challenge here, merely a test of memory, but it is enough to stop the population

seeking any real intellectual stimulus.

It should, however, come as no surprise that the population finds its sole intellectual challenge through the media. Their entire lives are lived through the media. Indeed, it would not be exaggerating to say that they live in the media. This is made particularly clear by Mildred's lifestyle. She lives in her parlour, surrounded on three sides by walls of television, and desperately wants a fourth wall, because "it'd be just like this room wasn't ours at all, but all kinds of exotic people's rooms." (*F451*, p28) It is this room of empty dreams in which Mildred lives her life. Indeed, Bradbury makes great use of the potential pun in the name 'living-room'. On one level, this is appropriate because it is where Mildred lives out the totality of her life. She rarely steps beyond its boundaries. As Montag states, "no matter when he came in, the walls were always talking to Mildred." (*F451*, p52) And this brings us to the second meaning of 'living-room'; it is the room itself which lives. Mildred has let her energies, her creativity, her drives, her very life itself stagnate. She has projected her life into the walls themselves. That is to say, instead of living her own life, she lets the walls beam a poor substitute at her, she lives vicariously through the inane soap operas which she incessantly watches. The walls do her living for her. In place of real sensation she has the "great thunderstorm of sound [which gushes] from the walls." (*F451*, p52) This has the same function as the 'sting from the theremin' which Beatty mentions. It creates an impression of sensation, it makes her feel that she is reacting to the play when all she is reacting to is the noise, it creates meaning and resolution from the interminable and meaningless arguments of meaningless characters. It enables her to identify with these meaningless characters, with "the uncles, aunts, the cousins, the nieces, the nephews, that lived in those walls, the gibbering pack of tree-apes that said nothing, nothing, nothing and said it loud, loud, loud." (*F451*, p51) The volume here is a part of this 'great thunderstorm of sound', which makes the experience of this medium a visceral sensation sufficient to supplant reality.

Mildred is utterly alienated from her own life, living out bland fantasies with her artificial family of 'aunts' and 'uncles'. Fromm has identified a sense of relatedness, of belonging, as one of humanity's fundamental needs, arguing that "the necessity to unite with other living beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfilment of which man's sanity depends."¹³ It is with her artificial family, those luminous figures in the walls, that Mildred satisfies this need. Indeed, Montag even refers to them as 'the relatives'. Mildred is detached from the real world, from objective reality, instead finding her sense of belonging in the tawdry and trivial media with which she is bombarded. Indeed, she is so detached that she is willing to assert that "the 'family' is 'people'." (*F451*, p92) And she is not alone in this. When her friends visit (to watch the walls, obviously) it becomes quite apparent that their connection with their televisual 'families' is much stronger than their connection with their real, flesh and blood families. Montag turning off the walls upsets them more than Gloria's husband's recent suicide, while the only one of them to have children does not love them, she merely "[puts] up with them when they come home three days a month." (*F451*, p104) It is clear that these women care far more about the relatives in the screen that they do about any family they might have in the physical world. It is this fictional world which has become their consensual reality, rather than the physical world. The 'families' constitute their community. Mildred's connection with her friends depends on their common

emotional involvement with this empty soap opera.

This relates to Fromm's discussion of anonymous authority. Fromm points out that in contemporary life, "nobody is in authority except 'It.'" which is constituted by "the market, common sense, public opinion, what 'one' does, thinks, feels."¹⁴ This anonymous 'It' then exerts its authority through conformity, through the feeling that "I ought to do what everyone does, ... not be different, not 'stick out'."¹⁵ There can be no revolt against common sense. As a result, "nobody has power over me, except for the herd of which I am a part, yet to which I am subjected."¹⁶ In this text, the televisual families represent this herd. It is them who Mildred and her friends identify with, it is them to whom Mildred and her friends subject themselves. Thus, we can see that in this text, it is the media which constitute the 'It' which exerts anonymous authority over the population. It is the media which shape public opinion, as we can see quite clearly from Mildred's friends' discussion of politics. The only issues which are relevant to them are the appearances of the two candidates, their mediated images. The president is described as "one of the nicest-looking men who ever became president", while his competitor in the election was "fat ... and didn't dress to hide it" and "was always picking his nose." (F451, p105) This should not be surprising, as the electorate is no longer equipped to deal with actual politics, which would require the sort of cognitive thought which the state has attempted to prevent. This clearly supports Huxley's argument that "a society, most of whose members spend a great part of their time ... not here and now and in the calculable future, but somewhere else, in the irrelevant other worlds of sport and soap opera ... will find it hard to resist the encroachments of those who would manipulate and control it."¹⁷ And this is precisely the point. The great strength of the mass media from the state's point of view is that it can be used to distract the population so that the government can get down to the serious business of exploiting them. If everything works as it should, the population will neither know nor care. That this is the case is demonstrated by the jets which roar overhead at regular intervals. These represent a military activity which is almost entirely disregarded by the population. Its intrusion into their world is entirely detached from its real significance. We never find out where the jets are going, or what war they are involved in; it impinges on the public purely as this sound, which has been stripped of any significance. Even the fact of voting is meaningless for Mildred and her friends. It is not, as it should be, an act based on any sort of political understanding or conviction, but rather one more act of mindless conformity. Mildred and her friends voted "same as everyone", (F451, p105) they voted according to the injunctions of 'It', of the herd.

The T.V. walls are so effective at supplanting reality that not only does Mildred relate to the world through them, she also interacts with the walls themselves. By collecting box tops, she has gained access to a show which is written, or rather, filmed, with one part missing. At the relevant times, Mildred is to refer to the script she has been sent and read her lines. Her lines are cued for her by the rest of the cast staring out of the walls, to indicate that she is expected to speak. To call this interaction is perhaps stretching things a little, as Mildred has no opportunity to shape her own responses. Rather she is merely to respond as and when indicated by her script. Once again, we see Mildred subjecting herself to the 'It', to the herd of the televisual families. This is made particularly clear when we examine the lines she has been given. These lines, such

as “I think that’s fine” and the response “I sure do” to the question “do you agree to that?” (F451, p28) serve to further subject her to the anonymous authority exercised by the media. As David Seed points out, this relates to McLuhan’s argument that “the low definition of TV insures a high degree of audience involvement.”¹⁸ Given the nature of Mildred’s interaction with the T.V., one must agree with Seed’s argument that “Bradbury burlesques this notion of audience participation as no more than [a] ... trick.”¹⁹ Such partial audience involvement merely serves to further detach them from the real conditions of external reality.

The media's capacity to disrupt human relationships, to provide another, more attractive world to lure people away from external reality, is a theme which Bradbury has touched upon in other stories, particularly ‘The Veldt’. In this story George and Lydia Hadley begin to be concerned that their children are spending too much time in their nursery. This is an artificial environment in which “whatever you thought would appear.”²⁰ The couple become concerned initially because their children, Wendy and Peter, have locked the nursery to an African veldt, in which a pack of lions repeatedly eat an unidentified animal. Their fears are aroused by the violence this fantasy entails, the sense of “murder in the heat”²¹ of the sun. As a result they decide to turn off the nursery. Wendy and Peter’s objections make it clear to them that there is something wrong with their relationship with their children. As George states, “they come and go when they like; they treat us as if *we* were offspring.”²² In response to this, they call a psychiatrist, David McClean. He realises that the shift to the African veldt is a response to George and Lydia turning off the nursery as a punishment, that it is an expression of the kids’ resentment of their parents. As he points out, George and Lydia have “let this room and this house replace [them] in [their] children’s affections” so that the nursery “is their mother and father, far more important in their lives than their real parents.”²³ As he states, the nursery is, like Mildred’s living-room, the space in which the children live their lives; they are utterly disconnected from the real world and real human relationships. They are so detached from their parents that they would rather lose them than the nursery. Indeed, in the story’s resolution, Peter and Wendy lock their parents in the nursery, where they are eaten by the lions. It should be quite obvious that the lions have always been eating them, that this is the fantasy which Peter and Wendy have been living out for the past month. The story’s resolution is merely the realisation of this somewhat twisted dream. Clearly then, we can see Bradbury’s fears about the media, about their power to produce a damaging sense of disconnection from the real world, being expressed in this story.

Like Mildred’s living room, the nursery is a space which requires a large amount of audience involvement. I think that it serves as an instructive illustration of what particular ‘trick’ is being played through such an artificial sense of involvement. The function of the nursery is to create a variety of alternative worlds with which the children can interact. This too is the function of the T.V. walls. They serve to ‘trick’ their audience into interacting with an entirely artificial, mediated world, distracting them from the real events occurring outside, from the bombers flying overhead. However, I feel it also goes further than this. As I have argued, the ‘families’ constitute the herd to which Mildred and her friends subject themselves. Similarly, Peter and Wendy, by murdering their parents, indicate that they too have adapted their behaviour

to their artificial world: they have an aggressive, predatory mode of behaviour which is entirely appropriate for the lions of the veldt. In this way Bradbury seems to be arguing that the repressive violence which is used to enforce obedience and conformity in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is unnecessary. Instead, he suggests that the false sense of involvement which T.V. produces is sufficient to ensure conformity in the bulk of the population. This operates through the sense of detachment which the media produce, which leads people to live in an utterly artificial world.

Of course, the T.V. walls are not the only cause of this detachment. They are merely the most effective means of achieving it. The miniaturised radios people constantly listen to also contribute to this. Again, Seed is quite right to point out that "Bradbury anticipates Marshall McLuhan by presenting the media ... as extensions of faculties ... or their substitutes."²⁴ I would argue that these radios function as the latter rather than the former. They do not merely extend the range of auditory information which is available, but rather substitute an auditory media product for the auditory information which is produced by the real world. They form another means of entry into the media world of the 'families', another form of escape from lived reality. Indeed, they even allow Mildred to occupy this artificial, mediated world in her sleep. As such, they provide a kind of substitute for the sleep teaching of *Brave New World*. Mildred's detachment from the real world is so complete that Montag thinks at one point that he might have to actually "buy himself an audio-Seashell broadcasting station [to] talk to his wife." (*F451*, p49) He must find a way into the mediated world in order to have any sort of meaningful relationship with his wife.

Such detachment from the real world serves to thoroughly blind the population to politics. As I have already discussed, political figures have become little more than images, with no real mass or meaning. There is no evaluation of how they will run the country, but merely whether or not they look like someone who could, or in other words, whether or not they are sufficiently telegenic for us to put up with them on T.V. for four years. Of course, this is entirely intentional. As Beatty says, "if you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry about; give him one. Better yet, give him none." (*F451*, p68) As a result, as I mentioned above, the population is utterly unqualified for any sort of real discussion of politics. This then enables the government to go about its business without the burden of such democratic concerns as what the people might feel. This can be seen in the utter lack of concern which Mildred and her friends feel about the war. Instead of expressing any interest in the underlying causes of the war, in who the U.S. is at war with, or why, or what will be gained from it, they merely accept the bland reassurances of the Army that it will be a "quick war. Forty-eight hours they said, and everyone home." (*F451*, p102) This political ignorance might offer some explanation for Donald Watt's complaint that "the reader is justifiably irritated by the absence of any account of the country's political situation or of the international power structure."²⁵ As the text is written from Montag's point of view, our knowledge of the state of the nation is entirely dependent upon Montag; we only have what knowledge he has. His only access to information about world politics comes through the media, and through Beatty's lectures on domestic history. As such, he has no means of learning about his country's political situation or the international power structure. It is therefore entirely appropriate that such information should be excluded

from the novel. I can quite understand Watt's irritation, as it is information which I would also be interested in, but there is a good diegetic motivation for the exclusion of such information. Indeed, government policy, as explained by Beatty, is to "let [the population] forget there is such a thing as war." (F451, p68) This provides an interesting inversion of one aspect of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Like Oceania, Bradbury's America seems to be in an almost constant state of war. However, while Oceania choose to foreground the war, drawing in public support with Three Minute Hates, and reports emphasising Oceania's victories, this society pushes it into the background, erases it from consciousness so it exists only in the sound of jets overhead. This society's approach has more in common with the World State's in *Brave New World*, particularly the erasure of history. In this novel, not only has history been erased, but politics, the process by which history is produced, has also been subject to such erasure. As such, it should be no surprise that Montag knows nothing about the underlying causes of the war. He is not supposed to. All he is supposed to do is remain happy in his ignorance.

Yet how are Montag and his fellow men to be happy when their genuine needs remain so thoroughly unfulfilled? T.V. and the other media provide one means by which this void is filled, but they alone are insufficient. What is required is the redeployment of psychic energies on a massive scale, or repressive desublimation. Again, this evokes prior dystopias, recalling *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s desublimation of the death drive in the Three-Minute Hate and Hate Week, or *Brave New World*'s repressive sexual 'freedoms'. We can see such repressive desublimation in action in the opening paragraphs of the text, which read:

"It was a pleasure to burn.

"It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and *changed*. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history" (F451, p11)

As Seed points out, what we have here is "a depiction of orgasmic destruction [which] articulates a preliminary state of mind where Montag is totally engrossed in his work."²⁶ Here we see Eros and Thanatos joined in a frenzied orgy of destruction, with Montag in the throws of the 'pleasure' he derives from the "quasi-sexual intoxication of power."²⁷ His productive psychic energies have been twisted so that his creativity, signified by the representation of Montag as a conductor, are redirected, so that he is only able to create 'symphonies' of destruction. This is a complex metaphor, as the conductor occupies a privileged position within an orchestra, but like the rest of the orchestra he is bound by the score, his power can only manifest in a personal interpretation of this specific piece. His only choices here are how he will execute this particular act of destruction. Indeed, most of the pleasures which are offered to the population are similarly destructive. This is particularly clear when we examine the Fun Parks, where people can "bully

people around, break windowpanes in the Window Smasher place and wreck cars in the Car Wrecker place with the big steel ball.” (F451, p37) Clearly, these ‘Fun Parks’ are places where the population’s destructive energies can be released. This serves a very similar function to the Three Minute Hate in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It provides the population with a way of releasing their rage, of working off their fundamental dissatisfaction with their lives in a way which does not threaten the state, and as such does nothing to improve their quality of life. It, along with the ignorance which the media and the diminished system of education produce, serves to ensure that such rage does not find political and productive expression, but is instead expressed, or rather, desublimated, in a controlled and repressive way. The joy Mildred takes in driving at speed, and running down animals, serves a similar function. Here we see, as is the case in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, society manipulating the Death Instinct so as to satisfy it ‘productively’, or rather, in such a way that “social cohesion would be strengthened at the deepest instinctual roots.”²⁸ This is in opposition to the action of the unsublimated Death Instinct, which finds its expression in oppositional outrage, in antagonism to the society which so thoroughly fails to satisfy the real needs of the population, which instead subjects its citizens to the dead, alienated lives they lead. Indeed, the Death Instinct has been so liberalised, so thoroughly desublimated, that it has “attained a degree of normalisation where the individuals are getting used to the risk of their own dissolution and disintegration in the course of normal”²⁹ life. This risk of dissolution has been so normalised that it has become a component of children’s games, they welcome the risk of death in their games of “chicken”. Clarisse informs Montag that “ten of [her friends have] died in car wrecks.” (F451, p38) And if this were not enough, children are also shooting each other. They have been so numbed to the reality of death that it is part of their games, as Montag discovers to his cost when he narrowly avoids getting run down by a group of bored adolescents.

This change in the balance of psychic energies, this ‘productive’ unleashing of Thanatos, also has profound effects on the possibilities of libidinal energy, of Eros. As we have seen, at the start of the book Montag himself primarily expresses his Erotic energies through his work, through destruction. How necessary this is can be seen on his return home. Here he discovers that Mildred, in her profound disconnection from the real world, has taken a lethal overdose of sleeping pills. However, even before he is aware of Mildred’s ‘accidental’ suicide attempt, Montag thinks of his wife as a corpse, “stretched on the bed, uncovered and cold, like a body displayed on the lid of a tomb.” (F451, p19) Thus, we see that even here the Death Instinct is dominant. Mildred’s life is saved by two technicians, who use machines to pump her stomach and to replace her blood. This first machine “drank up the green matter that flowed to the top in a slow boil”, leading Montag to ask “did it drink of the darkness? Did it suck out all the poisons accumulated with the years?” (F451, p22) As Watt has pointed out “the darkness suggests all the unimagined psychic bile that builds up in people, to embitter them, alienate them from one another, snuff out any inner light on their mode of existing.”³⁰ I would argue that this ‘psychic bile’ is the Death drive desublimated, the energies which would be productively expressed as political opposition in a less repressive and alienating environment.

It is certainly clear that Eros has left the building. Montag’s mental image of his wife is of her with the “little Seashells, the thimble radios tamped tight”, being swept away on “an

electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk and music and talk.” Indeed, he even goes on to say that “there had been no night in the last two years that Mildred had not swum that sea.” (F451, p20) Clearly then, for at least that long, Montag’s marriage has not been a sexual relationship. This is also clear from the fact that they have separate beds. Marcuse points out that “mechanisation has ... ‘saved’ libido, the energy of the Life Instincts- that is, has barred it from previous modes of realisation.”³¹ This effect is basically what Clarisse is discussing when she points out that “drivers don’t know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly.” (F451, p16) Again, as in Beatty’s comments about ‘mass’, we see the speed of technological society interfering with man’s relationship with his context. Clarisse is pointing out the way in which mechanisation, technology, intrudes between people and their world, preventing them perceiving it fully or taking real pleasure from it. Clearly then, in this world, where mechanisation and the mass media have penetrated the bedroom, even marriage is no longer necessarily a means of realising and releasing libidinal energy. It is apparent then, that Marcuse is right to say that “a whole dimension of human activity and passivity has been de-eroticised. The environment from which the individual could obtain pleasure ... has been reduced. ... The effect is a localisation and contraction of libido.”³² The only environment which continues to offer the individual pleasure is the media, with the only ‘pleasures’ on offer being the joys of conformity, the intense sensations produced by the theremin and storms of sound, and of course the mediated sexuality of the “three-dimensional sex-magazines”. (F451, p65)

Opposed to this world of violence and vicarious, mediated sensation are Clarisse and Faber, who both continue to take pleasure in genuine lived experience, in the natural environment. Clarisse finds her pleasure in the taste of the rain, in the smell of fallen leaves, in dew on the grass and the man in the moon. She has evaded the trends of mechanisation, and continues to find real Erotic pleasure in the real world. In this I am following Marcuse, in using the definition of Eros “used in the later works of Freud: sexuality as ‘specialised’ partial drive; Eros as that of the entire organism.”³³ footnote33 This is what Clarisse means when she says “I like to smell things and look at things.” (F451, p14) She is illustrating how “the environment partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis and tends to be eroticised”, how her libido “transcends beyond the immediate erotogenic zones- a process of nonrepressive sublimation.”³⁴ She is describing the joy she takes in the physical sensations of the natural world, her erotic pleasure in the lived experience of nature. The same can be said of Faber. He is associated with literature, as his name evokes the publishers Faber and Faber³⁵. His name also associates him with nature, as it means ‘maker’ in Latin, so he is tied in with production, and creativity. Montag first meets him in a park, “looking at the sky and the trees and the green park.” (F451, p82) The real pleasure he takes from this lets him “sit here and *know* I’m alive” (F451, p83). This is clearly diametrically opposed to the living death Mildred exhibits as she lies unsleeping, being fed her pleasure by the media. Even the joy Faber takes in literature is marked by a fully erotic pleasure, experienced by the whole organism, taking in the smell and the texture of the book as well as its contents.

These two characters educate Montag, teach him the value of literature and lived, unmediated, experience, and help him to move beyond his initial state of repressive desublimation to an unrepressive, sublimated joy in the whole of experience. Clarisse begins this

process, by forcing him to consider the natural world in a way which he previously hadn't. Her comments lead him to actually pay attention to the natural world, to look at the moon. This is further reinforced by the gifts she leaves him. These "[bouquets] of late flowers ..., [the] handful of chestnuts in a little sack, ... [the] autumn leaves ... thumb-tacked to his door" (*F451*, p35), all force him to interact with the natural world, to experience it more fully than he had previously. This can also be seen in the catalogue of the weather on the different days he sees her, which indicates his growing perception of the natural world, of its processes and changes. As Watt has observed, Clarisse serves as a catalyst, "she is dominant in Montag's growth to awareness."³⁶

This educational function is not merely a product of her interest in nature; it also derives from her questioning attitude, her thoughtfulness, her attempt to exercise her reason. She forces Montag to attempt to ask questions himself. This is most clear in his repetition of one of her questions, regarding whether or not "long ago firemen put fires *out* instead of starting them?" (*F451*, p15) Indeed, when he does ask this question himself it seems to him that "he opened his mouth and it was Clarisse McClellan" (*F451*, p41-42) asking the question for him. Of course, the answer he receives is utterly unsatisfactory and dishonest, a revision of history along the lines of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World*. Beatty claims that Benjamin Franklin was the first fireman, and that the Firemen were founded "to burn English-influenced books in the Colonies." (*F451*, p42) This deception is of course dependent upon the prohibition of literature, and the destruction of the historical record which accompanies it, as is the case with similar lies in prior texts. As I have stated above, such erasure of history is common to dystopian texts.

This is, however, only one of the questions Montag finds himself asking as a result of his friendship with Clarisse. Indeed, he finds himself questioning his whole life, and finding it wanting. She forces him to acknowledge that he is not happy, that he loves no-one. And how could he be happy, how could he love anyone, when his real needs are so comprehensively unsatisfied. Montag realises that "he wore his happiness like a mask" (*F451*, p19) to conceal his fundamental dissatisfaction with his life. This dissatisfaction can be seen from the opening of the text, in his attempts to deal with Mildred's 'accident' with her sleeping pills. Clarisse's questions simply force Montag to acknowledge this to himself. Nor is it surprising that he does not love anyone. He has rooted himself in his career, in his position of power and irrational authority, and as such he has separated himself from his fellow man. Montag became a Fireman because his "grandfather and father were firemen. In [his] sleep, [he] ran after them." (*F451*, p58) He has mindlessly obeyed the paternal injunction to "be obedient, to serve father [or rather, the state, the source of power and authority], to be like him."³⁷ This "submission to the father ... [is] based on power and law"³⁸, on Montag's desire for power. He submits to the father in order to achieve patriarchal power, in order to dominate others. He is trapped by the 'quasi-sexual intoxication of power' and as a result he cannot fully relate to other individuals, let alone love them. This is made quite clear when he asks Clarisse "doesn't this mean *anything* to you?" (*F451*, p16) He is referring to the badge of his authority, attempting to exert his authority to redirect the uncomfortable conversation. But as Fromm points out, such "domineering (sadistic) passion [can] never [lead] to satisfaction."³⁹ Instead, it merely serves to distract him from his fundamental dissatisfaction, allowing him to hide behind his mask of happiness.

Sadly, Clarisse disappears before she can take Montag's education any further, and Beatty strongly implies that she has died, but she has at least disturbed him from his prior routine. She has forced him to question his attitudes, his job, his relationship with his fellow man, his whole life. As Zipes points out, after his brief friendship with Clarisse, "Montag is now somewhat more capable of learning from his own experiences, and he ... begins [to] start doubting his own profession."⁴⁰ We can see these doubts manifest in his repetition of Clarisse's question about the history of the Firemen. At this point, Montag begins to realise that the firemen are his version of the mediated 'families'. That is to say, they are the herd to which he subjects himself, whose judgements he allows to supplant his own. This is made explicit by his observation that "these men were all mirror-images of himself!" (*F451*, p40) They are all men who have submitted to the father, who have accepted the loss of their own individuality in order to have power over others. They have exchanged their own identities for the power which comes with their institutional identity, which is signified by their uniform. Fromm points out that "the relationship of the son to the father is one of submission on the one hand, but of rebellion on the other."⁴¹ His doubts about his profession are the first part of his rebellion, of his refusal to continue to submit to his own subjection. This acknowledgement of his own alienation from himself, this awareness that he has lost himself in this herd, is a necessary stage in his movement towards self-realisation, towards living in and expressing fully his own individuality. These doubts about his profession indicate that he is beginning to separate himself from the herd.

This process of separation is accelerated when he actually has to deal with a woman whose books he is burning, when he has to acknowledge the human cost of his actions. Where normally Montag only has to deal with empty houses, on this occasion he has to watch as the woman chooses to burn to death along with her books rather than live without them. Her presence and her choice of death profoundly disturb Montag. She changes the experience of burning, so that it is no longer a pleasure, as "she made the empty rooms roar with accusation and shake down a fine dust of guilt that was sucked in their nostrils as they plunged about." (*F451*, p44) Tellingly, Montag is the only member of the Fire crew who attempts to interact with her as a human being, rather than by exerting his authority. While Beatty only threatens her, and refers to her as a "fanatic", Montag attempts to make some form of human contact with her to get her to leave the house, "[placing] his hand on the woman's elbow" and asking her "please." (*F451*, p46) This indicates his separation from the other Firemen, and his tentative individuation. The trauma of this experience gives Montag's questions about his career a new sense of urgency. It forces him to acknowledge that "there must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house." (*F451*, p58) It is this, more than anything else, which causes him to start reading himself. It is an attempt to understand what motivated her, to understand her choice, and to work through the trauma that that choice has caused him. It is also a way to work off the guilt which he feels as a result of her death, and his share of responsibility for it. Her death, and the guilt he feels about it, make Montag realise that "I didn't like myself at all any more." (*F451*, p74) His response to this is to want to "piece it out, and figure it" (*F451*, p73), to try to understand what has gone wrong with his life, and what other options are available to him. He is beginning to try to reason, to actually think for himself.

As a result, he turns to the books, and tries to get his wife to read them with them, in the hope that they will provide him and his wife with a way “out of the cave” of their enforced ignorance. (F451, p81) However, Mildred has never met Clarisse, she has not been given the education, the questioning attitude which Montag gains as a result of this friendship. As a result, she is unable to deal with Montag’s books. She prefers her parlour and the ‘families’. She merely complains that “Books aren’t people. You read and I look around, but there isn’t *anybody!*”, while her “‘family’ is people. They tell me things; *I* laugh, they *laugh!* And the colours.” (F451, p80) From this passage it should be clear that what Mildred is complaining about is the need for her to interact with the texts, for her to actively construct the fictional worlds, rather than have them constructed for her. Her ‘family’ has an immediacy which books cannot compete with. As I have discussed above, the forms of audience participation in T.V. are rigidly defined beforehand. There is no need for Mildred to think about what sort of response is necessary, as it is provided for her. As she says, “*I* laugh, they *laugh*”. It is immediately clear that laughter is the appropriate response. Books do not, and can not, provide this same immediacy, and that is what Mildred wants. This should be abundantly clear from the fact that she ‘looks around’, as though she expects the characters to leap from the page and act out the story for her. Their failure to do so means that Mildred is happy to ignore them and to instead leave the real world, preferring to flee to the “dead and grey” (F451, p80) world which is projected at her through her parlour.

It is this abortive attempt to involve Mildred in his psychological development, in the real events which are changing his life, which leads Montag to turn to Faber. Montag needs someone “to hear what [he] has to say And ... to teach [him] to understand what [he reads].” (F451, p90) That is to say, he needs some form of real human contact, and the education which comes of such real interaction, and Faber is the only person he can think of who might be able to provide it. Through Montag’s discussions with Faber, Bradbury makes some interesting points about the media. Faber’s role in the novel is like Beatty’s. They provide Montag with opposed explanations of his context, and the media’s role in producing and reproducing it. Faber points out that what is lacking in this world is not books, not literature, but rather “quality, texture of information”, or to put it another way, “truthfully recorded details of life”. (F451, p91) However, such information is not solely available in books. Faber also points out that “the same infinite detail and awareness could be projected through the radios and televisions, but are not.” (F451, p90) It seems to me that this ‘quality of information’, this ‘infinite detail’ is merely Marcuse’s ‘unhappy consciousness of the divided world’. It is the capacity of the arts to “[stitch] the patches of the universe together into one garment for us” (F451, p90), to aid the development of understanding, of reason. This capacity has been wilfully discarded. In its place are the T.V. walls, with their ability to construct “an environment as real as the world [which] *becomes* and *is* the truth.” (F451, p92) This describes well Mildred’s state of mind. For her, external events are secondary to the shows she watches. She does not care about the bombers overhead, and the war they are a part of, because it does not occur in her parlour. She lives in the world constructed by the parlour, by the T.V. walls, rather than in the real world. This is what Faber is describing when he observes that “flowers are trying to live on flowers, instead of growing on good rain and black loam.” (F451, p91) The rain and loam are the depth and details which are to be found in

the arts and in the real world, which enable individuals to achieve complete growth. The reduction of the arts to form the mass media obscures such detail, leaving people attempting to grow without access to the quality of information which they need to do so. Instead of enabling people to relate to the real world, instead of providing them with the quality of information they need in order to do so, the mass media present only a superficially beautiful and utterly vacuous alternative world, which inevitably stunts the psychological development of those subjected to it.

But Faber makes the point that this is not a necessary product of the mass media. Just as they are capable of constructing a whole new world, so too are they capable of accurately reflecting the 'infinite detail' of the real world, of helping the population to come to some sort of understanding of the real world. They are capable of providing real connections between individuals and their external world, and between individuals themselves. The green bullet, the home-made Seashell radio which Faber gives Montag is a clear indication of this. As Zipes points out, "here technology is employed to further emancipatory and humanistic interests [allowing] Faber to share his knowledge with Montag so that the latter will begin to think for himself."⁴² The effect which this has on Montag's sense of self is quite interesting. Listening to Faber through the green bullet, Montag "knew that he was two people, that he was above all Montag, who knew nothing, who did not even know himself a fool, but only suspected it. And he knew that he was also the old man who talked to him." (*F451*, p110-11) We see similar images of a fractured identity at every stage of his education. After his second conversation with Clarisse he describes how he felt "his body divide itself into a hotness and a coldness, a softness and a hardness, a trembling and a not trembling, the two halves grinding one upon the other." (*F451*, p31) What is being described here is Montag's alienation from himself, the fracture in his sense of self which has been inflicted on him by his ignorance, his conditioning by the media. However, as Montag is educated, he becomes aware of his real needs, and of the possibility that they might be satisfied. As Seed puts it, "Montag discovers an inner voice which he has been suppressing and his previously unified self fractures into dissociations of mind from body and limb from limb."⁴³ When Montag feels himself to be at "the start of a long journey, the leave-taking, the going away from the self he had been" (*F451*, p111) he is moving away from his alienated self, towards his full individuality, towards a self which is aware of his real needs and capable of satisfying them. Despite all of Bradbury's criticism of the mass media, this growth towards a fully human, unalienated existence, is enabled by the medium of the green bullet. It thus becomes clear that Bradbury is not using the texts to attack the mass media themselves, but rather those responsible for their stultification. I will discuss the issue of *who* is responsible for this further in relation to McCarthyism. For the time being, it is enough to note that the media are here used in an empowering way, enabling Montag to deal with his confrontation with Beatty.

Indeed, this confrontation is interesting in its own right. Through it, we see how the functionalisation of knowledge serves the interests of the state. Throughout a game of poker Beatty goads Montag, describing a dream in which they argued over the merit of books, using contradictory quotations. However, as this is Beatty's 'dream', it is he who controls it, who provides both his own and Montag's arguments, quoting Pope and Johnson, amongst others. In this way, it becomes clear that while books are prohibited for the bulk of the population, those

who occupy positions of power are, like Mustapha Mond in *Brave New World*, to be allowed such knowledge. The reason for this is that for those in power, this knowledge is functional. It enables Beatty to “[confuse] things”, to make Montag feel as though he is “beaten unmercifully on brow, eyes, nose, lips, chin, on shoulders, on upflailing arms.” (F451, p115) This knowledge enables Beatty to attack Montag, and any other fireman who might turn to literature, with the arguments of literature, and with arguments culled from a wider body of literature than Montag himself has been able to accumulate. It reinforces Beatty’s power over his subordinates. This relates to the fact that Beatty is part of the system, but not limited by it. It also has the benefit of ensuring that Beatty himself will not be persuaded of the merits of books, and leave the service. He already knows of the merits of books, and yet he has chosen to remain in the fire service, and to use his knowledge to shore up his control of it. At the same time, this argument indicates one of the strengths of literature. This is the diversity of opinion which literature contains and enables. Beatty attempts to argue that this is a weakness, calling books “traitors” as while “you think they’re backing you up, ... they [can] turn on you ... [as] others can use them, too.” (F451, p116) So, this ‘weakness’, this ‘problem’ which Beatty is pointing out is nothing more than the fact that books require interpretation, and that they can be interpreted differently by different individuals. All that this really does is illustrate the diversity of opinions which can be formed and supported by books. This is only really a problem where conformity is expected and desired. It is only a problem for repressive states such as the ones depicted in this text and prior dystopias. What is particularly distinctive about Bradbury’s representation of this process is Beatty’s argument that the impulse to conformity came from the bottom up, rather than being imposed from above. Beatty, when explaining to Montag how books came to be banned, states that “It didn’t come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God.” (F451, p65) This paints a picture of collective self-repression, as the mass extends and enforces homogeneity by imposing its collective will upon the distinctive individuals embedded within it.

This attack on Montag and the books which he is coming to value comes to nought, as a result of Faber’s support. Most importantly, Faber reminds Montag that it is up to him to make his own decisions, rather than depending upon Faber to make them for him, or to willingly succumb to Beatty, who represents “the solid unmoving cattle of the majority.” (F451, p116) This support, and particularly this belief in Montag’s competence to make his own decisions, enables Montag to weather the storm, to hold out against Beatty’s assault.

However, Montag must face greater threats from Beatty and the Firemen. They attack not only his reason, his fledgeling beliefs, but also his life, his home. The next time Montag and the Firemen are called out, Montag finds himself at his own house. Mildred and her friends have informed on him, and he is required to burn his own small library, along with everything that he owns. Yet this experience, which one might expect to be somewhat traumatic, is a return to the joy of burning. As Montag says, “as before, it was good to burn.” (F451, p124) The reason for Montag’s pleasure in destroying his past life relates to his earlier sense of having a split identity. As he burns his house he feels “himself gush out in the fire, ... rip in half with flame.” (F451,

p124) By burning his house, he is not burning his whole life, but rather half of it. He is only destroying one half of his fractured identity. Burning his house he is burning the relics of his alienated existence, he is burning his alienated self. He can no longer passively accept the life he has been conditioned to, but must rather fight for the life he chooses. And fight he does. Beaten by Beatty, and fearing the discovery of Faber, Montag turns the flame-thrower on Beatty and the mechanical hound, and makes his escape. As Zipes points out, he has “[regained] touch with his innermost needs and desires, and [as such is able to avoid] the trap set for him by Beatty and [burn] his real enemies for the first time.”⁴⁴

Obviously, in a totalitarian state such violence against the agents of the state cannot go unpunished. As a result, Montag finds himself hunted by the Mechanical Hound. Indeed, this hunt is broadcast live on T.V., so as to ensure that the public is aware of the repercussions of such revolt. In this way, Montag’s resistance is converted into a spectacle of state power. The broadcast announces that the “Mechanical Hound *never* fails. Never since its first use in tracking quarry has this incredible invention made a mistake.” (*F451*, p140) As Zipes points out, the Hound “represents all the imaginative technological skills of American society ... used to obliterate dissenting humanity.”⁴⁵ And it never fails. It is a sign of the infallible power of the state to destroy dissent. As such, it strongly recalls Big Brother. Indeed, much of this section evokes *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The fact that Montag’s hunt is broadcast has echoes of the newsreels of the war which are shown in Oceania. In both of these cases, the state’s capacity for violence is graphically represented to the population, as both diversion and threat. Also, both these broadcasts consolidate the audience against the criminal, establishing their support for the state through their enjoyment of this representation of the state’s power. Montag does escape though, and the Hound does fail. The state, however, has contingency plans for just such an eventuality. Just as the media are capable of creating an artificial world, to supplant the real world, so too does it create an artificial end to the hunt. The broadcast cannot continue indefinitely, as “they can only hold their audience for so long” and to attempt to find the real Montag “might take all night.” (*F451*, p155) The broadcast hunt is bound by the structure of television, it requires “a snap ending.” (*F451*, p155) This is constructed through cinematic techniques, through a “long shot” establishing the scene, followed by “cameras [rushing] down ... [to fall] upon the victim, even as did the Hound” before “blackout.” (*F451*, p156) This scene is carefully constructed to support the myth that the Hound, and the state it represents, is infallible. This is necessary to emphasis the power of the state, and to reward the viewing audience for their identification with the state.

Despite this, Montag does escape. And he escapes by aligning himself with nature. He loses the Hound in the river, before moving off into the forest. He finds himself confronted by “too much land”, he is “crushed by darkness and the look of the country and the million odours on a wind that iced his body.” (*F451*, p151) He finds himself overwhelmed by sensation, which fills every sense, the visual in the ‘look’ of the land, the olfactory in the ‘million odours’, the tactile in the ice of the wind. Montag has managed to escape the automated environs of the city, dominated by that avatar of alienating automation which is the Hound. Instead he has found in nature an environment which ‘partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis’, to return to Marcuse.

Nature here is a space which demands interaction, and which rewards that interaction with libidinal gratification, pleasurable sensation. But this is not the only advantage which the wilderness has over the city. As Granger tells Montag, “the city has never cared so much about us to bother with an elaborate chase ... to find us.” (*F451*, p161) Thus, the wilds serve a similar function to islands in *Brave New World*. They are a safe space, where dissidents can live their lives without disrupting the state by creating dissent in the rest of the population.

It is at this stage that we are confronted by the text’s main weakness. This is the fact that Granger and his group of outcasts attempt to preserve books, not by protecting the books themselves, but by memorising their contents. The reason given for this is that “someone had to do the saving and keeping, one way or another, in books, in records, in people’s heads, any way at all so long as it was safe, free from moths, silver-fish, rust and dry-rot, and men with matches.” (*F451*, p148) This, however, seems to suggest that there is little difference between the various means by which knowledge can be protected, but there is a fundamental difference between knowledge which is stored in a book and that which is stored in one man’s mind, and that is access. While a published book may be accessed by anyone who has a copy of it, knowledge stored in someone’s mind is only available on request, should that individual be in the immediate vicinity. This seems, to me at least, to be an insufficient approach to the mammoth task of attempting to reconstruct a culture from the wreckage of a nuclear holocaust. One could read this conclusion as Bradbury personifying literature, with these books providing this salvation for the remnants of society which have survived the apocalypse. An alternative reading is to note, as Spencer does, that “it seems as if the author has come full circle to an oral culture and the need to circumvent the shortcomings of Theuth’s invention.”⁴⁶ Admittedly, Bradbury does make it clear that “the books were waiting, with their pages uncut, for the customers who might come by in later years” (*F451*, p162), indicating that Granger’s group of outcasts do intend to return to a literate culture soon. However, their decision to reconstruct literacy from an oral base, rather than using what literature remains, seems to me to merely increase the risk that further knowledge will be lost, without significantly increasing the appeal of literature to an audience which has been conditioned to despise it.

I am, of course, obliged to concede that this concluding section of the text does have some merits. I cannot dispute Seed’s observation that Granger recalls the Granger Movements of the 1860s and 70s, which “made a collective protest against the encroachments of large-scale capitalism and asserted the values of the local agrarian community.”⁴⁷ The fact that this movement “set up reading programmes for farming families”⁴⁸ also has a political immediacy in the McCarthyist period, when there was pressure to reduce access to at least certain types of books. However, I cannot help but find the end of the novel somewhat pessimistic, despite the fact that it plays at optimism. In its return to an oral tradition, combined with the reference to the Granger Movement, it seems to suggest that the only way forward for society is through destruction, and a return to such ‘local agrarian communities’ as the Granger Movement tried to preserve. The negative connotations which the speed of technological society carries throughout the novel seem to give weight to this sort of reading. This may have seemed positive to contemporary readers, as it displaces cold war anxieties about a nuclear war, and redefines such

a war as an opportunity for productive reconstruction, for later readers who have grown up with the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction this seems like despair. It closes off the possibility of any productive change in society, and instead tells us that we've got to wait for the whole system to come crashing down around our ears before we can make any attempt to revitalise it, should there happen to be anyone left to do so. I cannot help but see this as a weakness in the novel, as it offers nothing that might comprise a solution for the problems it has presented to us.

This is, of course, only one of the ways in which the text is informed by the cold war America which provided the context for its production. Indeed, Hoskinson correctly identifies it as one of "Bradbury's 'cold war novels.'"⁴⁹ The bombers which are constantly flying over mirror the central concern of the cold war, the anxieties about nuclear war. However, while these anxieties were central to cold war attitudes, they are not Bradbury's most important target for criticism in this text. Indeed, as I have discussed, these anxieties are transformed into the false optimism of the novel's conclusion. More important in this text are the McCarthyist attacks on freedom of expression and assembly, the Loyalty Review Boards and the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. Through such means, the American state in its anti-communist zeal attempted to render the discussion or publication of Communist ideas, or the membership of Communist organisations, illegal. Henry Steele Commager was right to point out that this was merely an attempt "to confine Americanism to a single pattern, to constrain it to a single formula [in a way which was] disloyal to everything that is valid in Americanism."⁵⁰ It is clear that Bradbury agreed with this, recasting his future America as a totalitarian state, as "only totalitarian governments insist upon [such] conformity."⁵¹ It is apparent that what Bradbury is criticising in this text is McCarthyism's attempt to reduce the range of acceptable discourse to a single point of view. What is less clear is how Bradbury interpreted McCarthyism, what he perceived its causes to be, and who he held responsible for it. In order to examine this, I will examine who gets blamed for the reduction in acceptable opinions and practices in this text.

As I have stated above, Beatty informs us that the prohibition on reading did not come from the state in the first instance, but rather from the public itself. Clearly then, Bradbury is exonerating the state. It is not their fault that they burn books, they are just policing the norm which the public have established. While we cannot be entirely sure of how far to trust Beatty, given his lies about Franklin, Faber, by contrast, is an entirely reliable witness, and he confirms Beatty's explanation, saying that "the public itself stopped reading of its own accord." (*F451*, p95) It thus becomes apparent that not only is Bradbury exonerating the state, he is laying blame firmly at the feet of the public. It was the 'minority pressure' which they exerted which resulted in book-burnings. It was the need to avoid "[stepping] on the toes of the dog lovers, cat lovers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, Mormons, Baptists, Unitarians, second-generation Chinese, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Texans, Brooklynites, Irishmen, people from Oregon or Mexico" which lead to books becoming "dishwater." (*F451*, p64-65) With this vast catalogue, Bradbury is showing how "each narrow pressure group pares down free expression of individuals' thoughts a little more."⁵²⁵¹ Here we see Bradbury arguing that it is public intolerance for difference which has reduced the range of acceptable opinion and stifled thought.

Bradbury also engages with McCarthyism in the stories 'The Exiles' and 'Usher 2'. These two stories both deal with consequences of the prohibition and destruction of fantasy literature. In 'The Exiles', the authors of fantasy, such as Poe, Machen and Bierce exist as phantoms on Mars, alongside their creations. The basic narrative deals with their attempt to prevent a rocket from Earth landing on Mars and driving them out. However, these plans come to nought as the Captain of the Earth expedition burns the last remaining copies of their books, finally destroying these lingering remnants of past art. This brief tale gives little sense of why these books were banned, but does make it clear that books on anything bordering on the fantastic were burned "by law".⁵³ That Bradbury is using this prohibition against fantasy as a criticism of McCarthyism is made more explicit in 'Usher 2'. In this story, a millionaire has used his wealth to build a duplicate of the house of Usher on Mars, and stocked it with robots. These robots are then used to murder the members of the Society for the Prevention of Fantasy, and the Investigator of Moral Climates. This latter figure is the bureaucrat who enforces the prohibitions against fantasy. His title does also evoke the McCarthyist institutions of the Loyalty Review Boards, and so we can clearly read this story a criticism of McCarthyism. However, even here Bradbury weakens his argument by presenting the law as enacting the will of the people. Once again in this tale we are told that the problem was due to "one group or another, political bias, religious prejudice, union pressures; there was always a minority afraid of something".⁵⁴ It is this minority pressure which creates the possibility of closing off political debate, and then, finally, the slightly absurd step of banning fantasy. Again we see Bradbury presenting an argument that McCarthyism grew out of the public's fears, rather than being a product of the state and their dominance of the media.

This argument, however, seems to entirely misunderstand how McCarthyism came about. It is, though, in keeping with other contemporary interpretations of McCarthyism, including McCarthy's own. In his speech to the Senate on the 20th of February, 1950, he argued that he was merely giving voice to a "moral uprising"⁵⁵ occurring in the American population. This argument was then reinforced by contemporary academic critics, who also felt that the population themselves were the driving force behind McCarthyism. These academics, such as Daniel Bell and Richard Hofstadter, felt that "McCarthyism was an irrational popular response to the rise of the modern secular state ... rooted in resentments produced by status anxiety."⁵⁶ Indeed, Seymour Martin Lipset argued that "in the identification of traditional symbols of status with pro-Communism, the McCarthy followers, of non-Anglo-Saxon extraction, can gain a feeling of superiority over the traditionally privileged groups."⁵⁷ However, at no stage was empirical evidence provided to support these assertions. They were, instead, based upon McCarthy's speeches. Lipset reached the conclusion above based upon "the image of the Communist which emerges time and again in [McCarthy's] speeches."⁵⁸ This image, of the "Anglo-Saxon, eastern, Ivy League intellectual"⁵⁹ explains the nature of the opposition Bradbury depicts. It is such intellectuals who are most demonised by Beatty, and who provide the only hope for future reconstruction after the war. Contemporary academics depicted McCarthyism as an attack by an ignorant public on the intellectual elite of which they were part. The minority groups Bradbury accuses deal with issues of identity, such as national or ethnic origin, religious

beliefs, professional groups. Daniel Bell condemned such groups for moving “political debate ... from specific interest clashes, in which issues can be identified and possibly compromised, to ideologically tinged conflicts which polarize the groups and divide the society.”⁶⁰ This was quite opposed to the “interest-group ‘democracy’ presided over by ‘progressive’ businessmen, trade unionists, and pragmatic politicians”⁶¹ which was valorised by contemporary critics such as Bell. It is the divisions produced by minority identity politics which are smoothed over through the media in Bradbury’s text. The role of such vested interests as trade unions and corporations is almost entirely absent, occurring in only the brief reference to the ‘cigarette people’ quoted above. Even here, the context suggests that it is the smokers themselves who wanted the book burned, rather than implying any deceptive motives to the cigarette manufacturers.

This misunderstands the way that these vested interests supported McCarthy, and the way in which McCarthyist policies had in fact grown out of a long tradition of American anti-Communism. Red scare politics had been in use in the US since the aftermath of the first World War. During this period, the Red scare was “created by the vigorous activities of conservative businessmen, organized veterans, and by ambitious politicians Business organisations such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Metal Trades Association, ... all worked hard to stir up public opinion against labor unions Even the American Federation of Labor joined the crusade, partially to stifle leftist activities within the labor movement.”⁶² This left as its legacy a body of myth and stereotype which could be easily mobilised again whenever it should prove necessary. Many of the more draconian laws which were passed during the peak period of McCarthyism found precedents in laws such as the Hatch Act of 1939, which restricted the activities of federal employees, and the Smith Act, which made it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow of the state. Truman’s use of similarly oppressive legislation helped to make anti-Communism the big issue with which McCarthy was to make his name. And when he did, McCarthy was able to rally to his cause all of the same organisations as had been actively anti-Communist in the ‘20s. Big business was able to use it to attack unions operating within factories, while labour organisations such as the AFL used it to delegitimise openly Communist unions. Once controlling and policing communist activities had become the concern of the state, it was the state itself which began pulling books out of libraries, rather than public protest at these books’ availability. Clearly then, Bradbury’s attempt to exonerate the state depends upon an entirely false understanding of the origins of McCarthyism, while to attempt to lay the blame on the identity politics of the broader public merely conceals the complicity of large scale vested interests in the assault on political freedoms which went on during the early ‘50s.

Bradbury does seem to be aware of the responsibility of the media organisations that produce the vapid dross which the public consume, as I discussed above, but he seems to be suggesting that this is also the product of the public’s desire to avoid any sort of intellectual challenge. The result of this is that, as Zipes points out, “the dystopian constellation of conflict in *Fahrenheit 451* is not really constituted by the individual versus the state, but the intellectual versus the masses.”⁶³ Throughout the text, intellectuals are shown to be resistant to the sort of conditioning which the masses succumb to. Thus, while Bradbury provides an excellent analysis of how a state might use the media to control its population, he has very little to say on how any

nation might come to be run by such a totalitarian state, arguing simply that the masses bring it on themselves. By eliding politics, both from history and from his texts present, Bradbury fundamentally weakens his text, by ensuring that it cannot “explain or demonstrate from a political perspective ... who profits by keeping people enthralled and unconscious of the vested power interests.”⁶⁴

In my next chapter, I intend to move away from examinations of how the media serve the interests of totalitarian political regimes. I intend instead to examine a group of texts which look at how the media serve to maintain specific economic regimes, and the political organisations which grow out of these. Specifically, I intend to examine the body of science fiction written in the ‘50s which dealt with that boom industry, advertising.

¹ Bradbury, Ray *Fahrenheit 451*, (London: Flamingo, 1993), pp vii. In future references to this text will be marked F451 after the quote.

² Marcuse, pp14-16.

³ Fromm, Erich *The Sane Society*, (London: Routledge, 1968), pp170.

⁴ Marcuse, pp64.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Adorno, pp67.

⁸ McGiveron, Rafeeq O., ‘What “Carried the Trick”? Mass Exploitation and the Decline of Thought in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*’, in *Extrapolation* Vol. 37, No. 3 (Fall 1996) pp252.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ It should be noted that this indicates how the mass media exacerbate the problems with literature which were identified in the myth of Theuth bringing writing to the Egyptian king. Just as literature ‘tells without teaching’, forcing students to reread the passage as they struggle towards understanding, film likewise fails to teach, as it is not possible to ask questions of a ‘film-teacher’. It even removes the possibility of rereading, as there can be no chance to review misunderstood material as the film-teacher rolls through its four hours.

¹¹ Zipes, Jack ‘Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury’s Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*’, in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, ed. by Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Press, 1983), pp186.

¹² McGiveron, pp252.

¹³ Fromm, pp30.

¹⁴ Fromm, pp152-53.

¹⁵ Fromm, pp153.

¹⁶ Fromm, pp154.

¹⁷ Huxley, *Revisited*, pp52.

¹⁸ McLuhan, *Media*, pp41.

¹⁹ Seed, David, ‘The Flight from the Good Life: *Fahrenheit 451* in the Context of Postwar American Dystopias’ in *Journal of American Studies*, 28 (1994), pp230.

²⁰ Bradbury, Ray, ‘The Veldt’, in *The Stories of Ray Bradbury 1*, (London: Grafton, 1981), pp331.

²¹ Bradbury, ‘The Veldt’, pp330.

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- ²² Bradbury, 'The Veldt', pp333.
- ²³ Bradbury, 'The Veldt', pp337.
- ²⁴ Seed, pp228.
- ²⁵ Watt, Donald 'Burning Bright: "Fahrenheit 451" as Symbolic Dystopia' in *Ray Bradbury*, ed. by Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1980), pp212.
- ²⁶ Seed, pp236.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Marcuse, pp82.
- ²⁹ Marcuse, pp81.
- ³⁰ Watt, pp201.
- ³¹ Marcuse, pp76.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Marcuse, pp76, note 16.
- ³⁴ Marcuse, pp77.
- ³⁵ It should be noted here that there is no evidence to indicate that this association was intended by Bradbury. Faber and Faber is a British publisher, and so it seems likely that this is something I am projecting into the text. However, it does connect with Faber's role within the novel.
- ³⁶ Watt, pp197.
- ³⁷ Fromm, pp47.
- ³⁸ Fromm, pp46.
- ³⁹ Fromm, pp31.
- ⁴⁰ Zipes, pp186.
- ⁴¹ Fromm, pp46.
- ⁴² Zipes, pp188.
- ⁴³ Seed, pp234.
- ⁴⁴ Zipes, pp188-89.
- ⁴⁵ Zipes, pp189.
- ⁴⁶ Spencer, Susan, 'The Post-Apocalyptic Library: Oral and Literate Culture in *Fahrenheit 451* and *A Canticle for Leibowitz*' in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Winter 1991), pp335.
- ⁴⁷ Seed, pp239.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Hoskinson, Kevin 'The Martian Chronicles and *Fahrenheit 451*: Ray Bradbury's Cold War Novels' in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter 1995), pp345.
- ⁵⁰ Commager, Henry Steele, quoted in Fried, Albert *McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare- A Documentary History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp53.
- ⁵¹ Commager, Henry Steele, quoted in Fried, pp52.
- ⁵² McGiveron, pp247.
- ⁵³ Bradbury, Ray, 'The Exiles', in *R is for Rocket*, (London: Pan, 1972), pp106.
- ⁵⁴ Bradbury, Ray, 'Usher 2', in *The Silver Locusts*, (London: Corgi [1969], pp104.
- ⁵⁵ Senator Joseph McCarthy, quoted in Fried, pp80.
- ⁵⁶ Theoharis, Athan, 'The Politics of Scholarship: Liberals, Anti-communism, and McCarthyism' in *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism*, ed. by Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis,

(New York: Franklin Watts, 1974), pp264.

⁵⁷ Lipset, Seymour Martin, quoted in Theoharis, pp271.

⁵⁸ Theoharis, pp270.

⁵⁹ Hofstadter, Richard, quoted in Theoharis, pp270.

⁶⁰ Bell, Daniel, quoted in Theoharis, pp276.

⁶¹ Theoharis, pp267.

⁶² Griffith, Robert, 'American Politics and the Origins of McCarthyism', in *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism*, ed. by Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, (New York: Franklin Watts, 1974), pp6.

⁶³ Zipes, pp191.

⁶⁴ Zipes, pp192.

Chapter 3: The Rise of the Ad-Men

Of course, Bradbury was not the only science fiction author of this period who was concerned with the media. The immediate post-war period was a time of widespread social, cultural and economic change. Central to these changes was the introduction of television. Within a few years of its introduction, television had found a place in vast numbers of Americans' homes, and had started to produce changes in the rhythms and routines of everyday life for millions of people. It changed how they got their news, their entertainment, how they related to each other. We have already examined Bradbury's analysis of how television changed the cultural composition of the U.S.A., and particularly how these changes might be used by an unscrupulous, totalitarian government of the sort which looked increasingly credible during the McCarthy era. But there is at least one part of the phenomenon of television which Bradbury does not address fully. This is advertising, and the role which it played in shaping television and the cultural modes which television propagated. However, if Bradbury did not fully explore the impact of advertising on American culture, there were those who did. Amongst these were Fredrick Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, and it is their work on advertising, their 'consumer cycle' which will be discussed in this chapter, with a particular focus on *The Space Merchants*, which is widely accepted to be the best work to come out of their collaboration.

Before discussing Pohl and Kornbluth's work, it is important that we understand the vital role advertising played in the establishment of television in the U.S., and indeed, that it continues to play today. As Ellis Cashmore rather bluntly puts it "television *is* advertising."¹ That is, television has always been entirely dependent upon advertising for its existence. From its inception, 'free', commercial television has been paid for by commercial breaks. The money with which programmes are made comes from advertisers. In the early days of television this took the form of sponsorship of a programme, which basically meant that the company funded and produced the entire show, giving them total control over content. As a result, they were able to change any aspect of the show if they felt it cast their product in a bad light. This resulted in such absurd examples as tobacco funded shows in which only sympathetic characters smoked, and the deletion of the Chrysler building from the New York skyline in a show funded by Ford. Well, that would advertise the competition, and Ford weren't paying for that. Obviously, this is insufficient in itself, if the public does not know who has 'generously' paid for their entertainment, and so sponsored shows were introduced and closed by the now cliché 'word from our sponsors'. Spot advertising, of the sort we have now, was then introduced to allow those corporations which could not afford a whole show to get in on the act. Clearly, advertisers have always dominated commercial interests, ensuring that it served their interests. Indeed, this is one of Chomsky and Hermans' five filters of the media, which serve to ensure that our media are not the independent institutions the purport to be, and can be observed to operate not only in television but also in radio and print media.² Given that this is the case, one might even go so far as to say that "television's primary

customers are not the viewers ... but advertisers, 'whose business is to rent the eyeballs of the audience.'"³

At the same time, the way advertisers worked was undergoing a significant change. This was the introduction of the 'depth approach', which was discussed by Vance Packard in his influential work, *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957). Basically, this entailed the application of psychological research methods to advertising, in the attempt to discover what subconscious psychological processes motivate our behaviour, in order that these underlying motivations might be better exploited by advertisers. For this reason the 'depth approach' was also described as 'motivational research'. As Packard puts it, advertisers began "looking for ... the *whys* of our behaviour, so that they can more effectively manipulate our habits and choices in their favour."⁴ In order that they might do this, advertisers in the '50s began to turn to psychiatrists and social scientists, who began to serve the advertising industry as "'practical' consultants or setting up their own research firms."⁵ Packard highlights the increasing dominance of this approach by referencing the advertisers' journals, such as *Tide*, *Advertising Age*, and *Printers' Ink*, which stated that "overwhelmingly a group of top-drawer advertising agencies and advertising executives, representing many of the nation's outstanding advertisers, favour the increased use of social sciences and social scientists in ... campaign planning."⁶ The approach these 'motivational researchers' recommended was based on the premise that "in the buying in the buying situation the consumer generally acts emotionally and compulsively, unconsciously reacting to the images and designs which in the subconscious are associated with the product."⁷ According to this logic, the most effective approach for advertisers to take is to find out which subconscious images and symbols are most likely to drive the consumer to purchase the product, and then decide how best to position the product so that these symbols become more firmly attached to their product than to the competition's. Having established the basic framework used by 'motivational analysts', Packard then goes on to outline a variety of different sets of symbols which can serve to motivate the purchase of a variety of products. A discussion of these, however, is not necessary at this stage. Packard also discusses the more initially threatening technique of subliminal advertising. This is the insertion of extremely brief images into a film or programme, in the belief that such a brief flash would motivate purchase. Empirical research however indicates that such brief images have negligible effect. It is, however, worth reiterating that Packard's work is fundamentally about the use of subconscious, psychological motivations to determine consumer behaviour, given that this aspect of his work seems to have been disregarded by some recent discussions of advertising due to this brief reference to subliminal adverts, which is then supposed to render his entire argument invalid.⁸

This depth approach is central to Pohl and Kornbluth's greatest collaboration, *The Space Merchants*. It is certain that Pohl would have been aware of it, having "held a copywriting job for the Madison Avenue agency Thwill and Altman"⁹, a position which he apparently hated, which explains, were any explanation necessary, the antagonistic attitude he and Kornbluth take towards advertising in the text. Pohl's biography, *The Way the Future Was* (1979), makes it clear that Pohl took this job because he wanted experience of advertising, to flesh out a novel he had written during the Second World War.¹⁰ He describes

advertising as addictive, because of the power it exercises, and argues that it necessarily produces contempt for one's fellow man¹¹. His time on Madison Avenue certainly does not seem to have warmed him to the concept of motivational analysis, but it is clear that he has understood the reasons for its adoption, as is made apparent when the protagonist, Courtenay, observes that "you can't trust reason. We threw it out of the ad profession long ago and have never missed it."¹² That is to say, advertisers could not rely on appeals to reason to produce the forms of behaviour they desired. This relates to one of the main reasons for the adoption of the depth approach: the failure of market research which presumed that the public were rational. Advertisers had traditionally conducted their research by asking people what they wanted, which products and packages they preferred. This produced some contradictory results, such as a three to one preference for light beer over regular, in one survey for a brewer, despite the fact that "the truth of the matter was that for years the company, to meet consumer demand, had been brewing nine times as much regular beer as light beer."¹³ This is just one example of a wide range of similar results. On the basis of these results, advertisers concluded that "it is dangerous to assume that people can be trusted to behave in a rational way."¹⁴ Huxley has identified two different kinds of propaganda; rational propaganda, which asks its subjects to consider arguments and come to rational conclusions based on enlightened self-interest, and irrational propaganda, which subverts reason and makes appeals to "passions, blind impulses [and] unconscious cravings or fears."¹⁵ Clearly, through Courtenay's comments, Pohl and Kornbluth are indicating how the depth approach has led advertisers to abandon the 'untrustworthy' (read 'unreliable') methods of rational propaganda in favour of irrational appeals to the passions, impulses, cravings and fears of the subconscious.

We are also shown a large number of such irrational appeals throughout the novel, which clearly utilise an approach which Pohl and Kornbluth derive from motivational analysis. A good example of this would be the "limericks ... launched from Fowler Schocken Associates ... with their engineered-in message: that Venus environment increased male potency." (*TSM*, p77) This is a commonplace approach, which can often be seen in car adverts and such classic campaigns as Marlboro's 'Marlboro Man'. This campaign was designed to attract male smokers to filter tipped cigarettes, which had traditionally been perceived as feminine. In order to do so it used "rugged, virile-looking men", with headlines referring to "'man-sized flavour'".¹⁶ Pierre Martineau, a motivational expert, in praising this campaign said that it "set the cigarette 'right in the heart of some core meanings of smoking: masculinity, adulthood, vigour, and potency.'"¹⁷ Or, to put it another way, Marlboro ads, and these jokes about Venus, "overtly deal with questions of phallic realization."¹⁸ That is, they transform the act of consumption, whether of cigarettes or of the Venus expedition, into an opportunity for the consumer to realise their phallic power, to assert their masculine potency. Importantly though, Martineau went on to say that "obviously these meanings cannot be expressed openly. The consumer would reject them quite violently."¹⁹ This explains why Fowler Schocken's campaign has to make this point through limericks and dirty jokes. Humour is one of the guises of the return of the repressed, and by exploiting this Schocken

and Courtenay can make points which would be unacceptable otherwise. They can sneak them in through the back door, so to speak.

This approach, of exploiting unacknowledged psychological tensions in order to motivate sales is central to the depth approach. However, it is only given an outline by Packard, who is more interested in describing the change in advertising than in analysing how this new methodology operates. It is given a more theoretical analysis by the psychoanalysts Doris-Louise Haineault and Jean-Yves Roy, who turned their attention to the operations of advertising. Simply put, they argue that adverts work by creating anxiety about contemporary social and psychological problems, and then resolving this anxiety by positing the product as a solution, constructing the act of consumption as an answer to whatever problem was raised. Their work, however, deserves more than this brief summary. Discussing a poster by Theobald which was used to advertise *Easy Rider*, they observe that the poster in itself “[calls] for freedom in a world of constraint, [suggesting] the possibility of taking to the road ... of creating one’s own image.”²⁰ It is a polysemic work of art, which opens up a world of possibility in opposition to the ordered and restricted world in which we live. It valorises the possibility of escape, of beginning anew, of just riding into the sunset and leaving our problems behind us. They argue that in this way it serves as an “appeal to [our] dreams” of freedom, and in doing so it “fulfils desire.”²¹ However, it only does this while it is just itself. As soon as it is recontextualised as an advert it takes on a different function. The addition of a cinema timetable intrudes into the image and blocks desire, “putting drive into gear, so that finally the main thrust of the advertising message will start to work- so that it will turn into action.”²² In this process, the meaning of the poster is changed, so that “instead of appealing to a potential desire for ‘self-symbolization’ it encourages [the consumption of] the spectacle ... of a ‘good society’ capable of producing its autorecuperation (the film).”²³ Real desire is masked by a drive which aims at nothing more lofty than the consumption of the product. Haineault and Roy argue that this process is universal in advertising, irrespective of specific product. Advertising is thus a union of two images, a latent image (the poster as itself) which “speaks of death, despair, revolt, of desire, homosexuality and subversive freedom.”²⁴ Overlaid upon this image is the second image (the poster as advert), one which stands as substitute for the first, stripping away its subversive qualities in order to camouflage the threatening desires aroused. This second image is “articulated not on desire or on fundamental lack but on drive and need.”²⁵ Obviously, this process is aided enormously by motivational analysis. Motivational research is perhaps not vital for this process, as Haineault and Roy’s discussion of a 19th century advert indicates, but it must necessarily improve its effectiveness. It will obviously be easier to exploit peoples’ subconscious desires, to excite these desires in order to redirect them into the drive to consume, if you have a precise tool for identifying what these desires might be.

We can subject Fowler Schocken’s first Venus advert to a close analysis with this process in mind. It begins with a close up of the space ship which will take the first colonist to Venus, with the voice-over saying “this is the ship that a modern Columbus will drive through the void ... an ark for eighteen hundred ... pioneers [who] will tear an empire from the rich fresh soil of another world.” (*TSM*, p11) This clearly evokes the myth of the frontier,

the idea of the vast, open space of nature waiting to be civilised. What is most important about this in this context is the aspect of space, of unlimited room for expansion. The references to 'a modern Columbus' and 'pioneers' particularly emphasise this, referring back to the idea of pre-Columbian America as an unpopulated wilderness waiting to be filled, "an unbounded territory ... open to the desire (*cupiditas*) of humanity".²⁶ This would have a particular poignancy for people living in a world which had been stripped of its resources, where space is so limited that skyscrapers rent out their stairwells as accommodation for the poor. Thus, from the start, this advert arouses a desire for space, for a living room which is unavailable on Earth. If this connotation had escaped the audience, it is then reinforced by the contrast between the unbounded space offered by Venus, and the restricted space in which the audience live. We are shown a couple "in a spacious suburban roomette ... the husband folding the bed into the wall and taking down the partition to the children's nook; the wife dialling breakfast and erecting the table." (*TSM*, p12) So we learn that all the living room that this family has is the solitary room in which they live. They then have a chat over breakfast about "how wise and brave they had been to apply for passage in the Venus rocket." (*TSM*, p12) At this point we have the transition from desire to drive, from the desire for extra space, for freedom from the constraints imposed upon their lives by the overpopulation of the Earth, to the drive to get passage upon the Venus rocket, to consume the product that they are being offered. At the end of this discussion one of their children asks them the question "Mommy, when I grow up kin I take my littul boys and girls to a place as nice as Venus?" (*TSM*, p12) The child's question provides another motivation for his parents. It raises the issue of how well the parents are raising their children. It is something the child aspires to do for its own children, it becomes part of how the child defines good parenting, or rather, how Fowler Schocken is defining good parenting. This creates the fear that by raising their children in the enclosed space of the roomette, these parents are not giving their children the best start in life, and at the very same moment provides the means to resolve this anxiety; take the kids to Venus! It is also telling that this question is addressed to the mother. Motivational analysts discovered that housewives "felt that use of ready-mixes was a sign of poor housekeeping."²⁷ By asking housewives to add eggs to the mix, it became acceptable as they were now involved in the process, they were once again proper housewives, proper parents. The advert then culminates in "a highly imaginative series of shots of Venus as it would be when the child grew up - verdant valleys, crystal lakes, brilliant mountain vistas." (*TSM*, p12) By doing so, it offers consumers an experience which simply is not available on Earth. When Courtenay is confronted with a mile of clear space he finds it "troubled [his] eyes", as "not for years had [he] focused them more than a few yards." (*TSM*, p49) And we are told that this is probably the only such space in North America, with the rest of the continent having been developed. These shots of Venus offer a sharp contrast with this totally urbanised environment, reminding viewers how little space they have. So these vistas, once again, simultaneously create and resolve anxieties about the lack of space on Earth, offering escape to the natural spaces of Venus as the solution to the problem of terrestrial overcrowding. The satisfactions promised here are obviously illusory, but this is a point which I will return to later. For the time being, let us note that this advert is clearly informed by the depth approach, showing as it does an awareness of the deep-seated psychological tensions which

are produced by the experience of living in this world. The product is being sold as the solution to these concerns, exploiting them in order to create a market.

This would seem to contradict Brennan's observation that Fowler Schocken and other advertisers' "main assurances of sales come from much more predictable and mechanical devices."²⁸ However, he is not wrong about the important role that they play. The book is full of references to the behaviouristic tools used by advertisers, from the use of "compulsive subsonics in ... aural advertising", through to the use of "a simple alkaloid" in Coffiest to ensure that it is extremely addictive. (*TSM*, p10) Interestingly, one such behaviouristic approach is the use of "a system that projects directly on the retina of the eye" (*TSM*, p10), which would seem to refer to the idea that advertisers use television 'to rent the eyeballs of the audience.' Such approaches make it clear that Brennan is right to point out that mechanistic behaviourism plays a significant role in the advertising Pohl and Kornbluth describe. However, that should not persuade us to disregard the intelligent, if reprehensible, use of depth psychology which can be seen in the Venus ad. The link between these two is illustrated by Fowler Schocken's development of "a list of semantic cue words that tie in with every basic trauma and neurosis in American life today." (*TSM*, p10) While Brennan seems to believe that this is simply of the same nature as the introduction of addictive chemicals into food, I feel that it is slightly more complicated than that. While Brennan is right to point out that these 'semantic cue words' are used in a behaviouristic way, to provoke the consumer to purchase certain products, they operate through an exploitation of psychological depth. They can only work if there is a connection between the cue word and the neurosis it is intended to evoke *in the minds of the public*. In order to produce such a list, it is obviously first necessary that the advertiser find out what the basic traumas and neuroses in American life actually are. This requires an understanding of the psychological mechanisms at work in the population, and as such requires the work of motivational analysts. They are also a necessary part of the process of identifying words which tie in with these concerns, in order to be sure that these connotations were actually universal and not specific to any given individual or demographic group. It is only once this has been established that they can be of any operational use to advertisers, who can then use them to evoke specific tensions which are then temporarily resolved through the purchase of the product.

This should make clear what Brennan has missed in his belief that in *The Space Merchants* "the human subject is controlled either by brute force or by simple, if hidden, devices on the order of Galton's whistle or chemical conditioning. No one depends on the poetic and unreliable constructs of depth psychology to assure either sales or social control."²⁹ His argument suggests that advertising in the novel operates solely through mechanistic, behaviouristic means, and in doing so denies ideas about psychological depth. However, if this is the case, why does the Venus ad exploit deep-seated concerns in a way which quite undermines this argument? It is, after all, Fowler Schocken's biggest contract.

Brennan has missed the fact that advertising which has been informed and shaped by the depth approach does not deny psychological depth, it simply subordinates it to behaviourism. That is, psychological depth is only of any use to advertisers when it can be used to identify verbal or visual cues which can provoke in the consumer the drive to

purchase the product, any product. In this way, psychological depth is subjected to a “total empiricism”, through which its “meaning is restricted to the representation of particular operations and behaviours.”³⁰ Psychological depth becomes restricted to the operations of advertising, the behaviours of consumption. Or to put it another way, deep-seated psychological concerns, the traumas and anxieties of American life, only approach consciousness through the operations of advertising, and are then quickly reburied by the drive to consume. When discussing the effects upon language of behavioural/operational mindsets Marcuse states that “the [concept] has no other content than that designated by the word in the publicized and standardized usage, and the word is expected to have no other response than the publicized and standardized behaviour (reaction).”³¹ In terms of the advertising I am discussing, the ‘concept’ is the anxiety to be aroused, the word is the advert, or the ‘semantic cue word’ within it, and the standardized behaviour is purchase of the product.

Thus it makes sense that Brennan refers to “a debased Freudianism”³², in the sense that psychoanalysis is debased when it ceases to serve the analysand, to help him/her to move towards a state of mind where they can identify and satisfy their real desires, and instead starts to serve the god of Sales, creating new needs in the public which will provide them with no real satisfaction. It is debased by its subjugation of the needs of the public to the needs of the corporation. However, this ‘debased Freudianism’ is not merely used to ‘dress up’ a system of “massive social conditioning”³³, but is rather its precondition. It wouldn’t have been possible for Fowler Schocken to condition the public to believe that “it isn’t quite virile to trade with any ... firm” (*TSM*, p42) other than Starrzelius without the work of the motivational analysts who equipped them with the psychological understanding of how virility is constructed in the first place. As I have argued above, adverts work through the exploitation of the subconscious. This is also the level at which they are interpreted, and it is on this subconscious level that they install their system of ‘massive social conditioning’. As such, this system of conditioning depends upon depth psychology.

Adverts are interpreted on the same level as dreams, the subconscious. This is a point made by Williamson, and reaffirmed by Haineault and Roy, in their observation that “advertising is dreamed and makes itself dreamed”³⁴. This idea is implicit in Williamson’s use of the term “advertising-work”³⁵ to describe how adverts function through a system of signification through which we, as consumers, are constituted, in a quite deliberate echoing of Freud’s idea of dream-work. If dream-work is the way in which our latent thoughts, our subconscious traumas, anxieties and desires are reworked to find a conscious expression, or at least a form of expression which the conscious mind is aware of and can interpret, then advertising-work is the way in which these latent thoughts are reshaped, reworked so that they come to serve the needs of the advertiser and the corporation that they represent. Courtenay is describing the effects of this process when he tells Jack that he can buy a “complete set of Universal luggage and apparel ... [and] use [it] for a while with a vague, submerged discontent ... [but that it will] work on [his] libido [so that his] self-esteem will suffer.” (*TSM*, p42) His subconscious has been colonised, so that his major signs of value are corporate brands such as Starrzelius, which have become the means of resolving his

anxieties. And as this system operates on the level of the subconscious, it does not matter that Jack claims “I never read the ads.” (*TSM*, p41) Haineault and Roy provide us with an interesting means of reading disavowals of interest in advertising, such as Jack’s. Their understanding derives from their description of advertising’s strategy as “doubly perverse”; in it “the fundamental is evoked in a properly accessible real situation and then, right on the spot, a needlessly sparked flame is extinguished.”³⁶ It is this double perversity, of advertising’s exploitation of our real desires, which leads to the disavowal of advertising’s power. By disavowing advertising, Jack in no way depletes its power, but instead he refuses to acknowledge that its power has led him into perversity.

It should be reasonably clear, then, that advertising is here represented as a system of ‘massive social conditioning’, but it is one that vitally depends on the exploitation of psychological depth. Through the advertising-work which arouses tensions only to solve them through consumption, the internal structure of the psyche is conditioned to consumerism, so that the subject is reproduced as customer/consumer. As Williamson puts it, “advertisements create their own consumers, they tell *you* what you are like.”³⁷ Adverts are therefore acts of interpellation, hails which position their viewers as consumers. Pohl and Kornbluth were clearly aware of this, as is illustrated when Courtenay observes that “linking a sales message to one of the great prime motivations of the human spirit does more than sell goods; it strengthens the motivation, helps it come to the surface, provides it with focus.” (*TSM*, p77-78) This is an explicit statement that by exploiting our fears and desires, advertisers are reproducing the psyche, remaking it in a shape which serves their needs more effectively. Indeed, at one stage Courtenay asks “what is ... more important in life than to mould and channel the deepest torrential flow of human emotion into its proper directions?” (*TSM*, p77) This then brings me back, once again, to the concept of repressive desublimation. This description of human emotion ‘channelled’ into its ‘proper directions’ clearly evokes the Marcusean idea that in repressive desublimation, our psychic energies are redirected in such a way that their satisfaction promotes social cohesion and closes off possibilities of change. Advertising, through its “systematic inclusion of libidinal components into the realm of commodity production and exchange”³⁸ subjects the instinctual energies to a controlled mobilisation. The only route open to the energies which are mobilised by advertising is the directed act, the drive, consumption. In this way, our drives are rechannelled to serve the ends of corporations, of Mitchell Courtenay’s highest ideal, “Sales”. (*TSM*, p43)

At the same time, advertising has undercut those forms of art which might allow us access to our real desires, which bring our traumas and anxieties to the surface not to redirect them into drive, but to allow us to consciously contemplate them. This is made quite clear in two ways in the novel. First of all, there is the description of Tildy, one of Fowler Schocken’s main copywriters as “one of the world’s greatest lyric poets.” (*TSM*, p42) She is identified as such by virtue of her capacity to “[put] together words that stir and move and sing.” (*TSM*, p43) What has changed here is the goal; the goal of lyric poetry is simply to stir the reader, to move them, while the copywriter’s goal is to move them *to buy*. This relates to Cook’s most important insight, that advertising is a “parasite discourse ... [which borrows] so many features from other genres that they are in danger of having no separable identity of their

own.”³⁹ Cook seems to feel that this parasitism is neutral, comparing it with the intertextual approach used by such literary classics as Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) or Dos Passos’s *U.S.A.*. However, there is a fundamental difference: *U.S.A.* raises questions of class conflict in order that we might contemplate the functioning of the existing social system, while adverts only ever raise such issues to offer a resolution through consumption, to promise that the working class can buy itself out of its subordinated position. As Courtenay observes, advertising works “by taking talent and - re-directing it.” (*TSM*, p43) Artistic talent itself is parasitised by advertising. Advertising is the cuckoo in the artistic nest, pushing out the artists’ own work, so that they only produce adverts rather than art. To soften the blow, it offers significant economic incentives, much more than might be scraped together by a poet in such an artistically bankrupt society.

The other way this subordination of art to advertising is shown in the novel is the change in the contents of art galleries. When Courtenay has to meet a consie agent in the Met, he meets her in front of a “big, late-period Maidenform”, (*TSM*, p103) which refers to the success of a well known ‘50s ad campaign for Maidenform bras. Discussing the poster which was used to advertise *Easy Rider*, Haineault and Roy argue that it “becomes and advertisement from the moment we as viewers are denied the privilege of musing on it and are urged to take action”.⁴⁰ But what happens to the advert when it is returned to a space of contemplation, when it is placed in a museum so that once again, we can muse on it? And what does this introduction of advertising into the space of art do to art itself? I would argue that just as advertising debases psychoanalysis through its subordination of psychological depth to behaviourism, so too does the introduction of advertising into the museum debase art itself. The advert is always inextricably bound to its product, as long as the frame which links image and product remains, and this frame is carried along with the image when it is placed in the museum. Thus the location of the ad in a museum does not offer us a chance to contemplate the image itself, but the advert as a whole, the binding of image to product, the transformation of desire to drive. Art becomes less about the contemplation of humanity’s underlying desires and concerns than about their manipulation. It offers us a chance to contemplate the mechanisms of Sales, of this culture’s highest ideal, and so it is no wonder that Courtenay finds this “ennobling” experience gives him “a feeling of peace and reverence.” (*TSM*, p103)

Thus far, I have assessed the influence of motivational analysis on the novel through the content of the adverts we see in the text, and the opinions and attitudes of Mitchell Courtenay, the advertiser who is the novel’s protagonist. Let us now turn to those sections of the text which show us how Fowler Schocken puts the depth approach into practice, how it conducts its own research. Courtenay chooses to use southern California as his test area for the Venus campaign because “in a tiny universe of less than a hundred million it duplicates every important segment of North America.” (*TSM*, p33) As such, it enables them to test how their adverts will appeal to every demographic group. It is a means by which they can obtain important feedback on how the campaign will run once it is launched nationally. This also explains why “*Biometrika* was one of the everyday tools of a copysmith.” (*TSM*, p90) It is because this journal “told the story of population changes.” (*TSM*, p90) It lets them know the

demographic composition of the population they exploit, it helps them to identify which groups will be the best targets for any given campaign. In this way, the advertising industry becomes what Hardt and Negri term informatized. That is, it incorporates feedback which enables it to move towards a “continual interactivity or rapid communication between production and consumption.”⁴¹ That is, through the depth method and the demographic analysis which accompanies it, the advertising industry is able to shape the adverts it produces according to an intimate knowledge of what the population will consume. Of course, this is a much smaller step for the advertising industry than it is for many, as advertising has always dealt with nothing more than information, with communicating information about products. As such, it should be no surprise that advertising becomes fully informatized earlier than most industries. It has always been a form of immaterial, affective, informational labour, which is concerned with “the production and manipulation of affect”⁴² through the analytical and symbolic labour of producing adverts, through the selection and combination of words and images. Indeed, I have already discussed how advertising manipulates affect at some length.

What this affective labour produces are “social networks, forms of community, biopower.”⁴³ This is perhaps a term which requires some further clarification. According to Hardt and Negri, “biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it.”⁴⁴ This is a system which has much in common with the conditioning in *Brave New World*, which shapes the beliefs and actions of the population from the inside, so that they are always in support of the existing social system, reproducing it. Of course it is no surprise that there should be similarities between the operations of the state in these two texts, as “Pohl has admitted [that *Brave New World*] exerted a major influence on *The Space Merchants*.”⁴⁵ However, in this idea of biopower we can also see echoes of the Foucauldian disciplinary regime which we saw in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. That too depended upon the internalisation of the social codes which were established by the institutional structure of Orwell’s world. The difference here is that biopower is not confined to the operation of institutional structures, but rather escapes their boundaries, permeating the entire social fabric. Where Winston could escape to the community of the proles in his attempt to hunt out a real history, there is no such avenue of escape for Courtenay. In this way the disciplinary regime moves beyond its own limits, becoming a new system, a society of control “in which mechanisms of command become ever more ‘democratic,’ ever more immanent to the social field, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens.”⁴⁶ In *The Space Merchants*, the mechanism of this internalisation of behavioural norms is advertising. As I have discussed, it reaches into the psyche, manipulating it so that it serves the interests of the corporation. This is made particularly clear through references to the “sub-section on Folkways”, (*TSM*, p77) and its work using jokes and riddles, or in Courtenay’s consideration of the possibility of creating a new “religious movement” (*TSM*, p20).

We can see a similar process at work in Shepherd Mead’s dystopian novel about advertising, *The Big Ball of Wax*. This novel is concerned with the transition from a merely three dimensional visual media to the fully immersive, virtual experiences of XP. The

protagonist, Lanny Martin, is an advertising executive whose entire identity is constructed for him, through his acts of consumption. He reaffirms his masculinity through the use of “the roughest, or MANLY, setting”⁴⁷ on his Bilt-In Massage. In this way, the product itself helps to establish the internalised behavioural norms, reproducing masculinity as strength, toughness, the ability to withstand being “slapped ... around a bit”⁴⁸ by your massage machine. This is only one of many ways in which Lanny’s subjectivity is established by the positioning of products. The affirmation of his status through the purchase of the newest model of car is another. We can also see this in his reiteration of advertising taglines when discussing certain products, such as the Shave-Magic, which is “as gentle as a woman’s caress, a phrase Remington used in its advertising, and rightly so”, or Chem-Dent toothpaste, which was supposed to “improve the personality” and indeed Lanny says he “could feel it improve [his] personality.”⁴⁹ In this way, we are shown that his experience of these products is entirely shaped by their advertising, that his subjectivity is being produced and reproduced through the positioning of the products through which he constructs himself, though perhaps it would be truer to say that he is being constructed by the advertising agencies which control this process, which produce the norms and images which he has consumed and internalised. His employer also takes an important role in the construction of his identity, as it exercises a right of veto over his love-life, only permitting him to marry “the right kind of gal”, girls who seem like the “Con-Chem type.”⁵⁰ This is a particularly clear example of the exercise of biopower, the expansion of the norms of the disciplinary institution, in this case the corporation, beyond their boundaries and into every aspect of the subject’s life. Con-Chem is not merely concerned with their employees’ activities when they are at work, but at home as well. As such their employees are not just employees at work, but in the home as well. The norms of Con-Chem permeate their lives.

This system of control is also in action in *The Space Merchants*. As the dominant institution in the society it depicts is advertising, or commerce to put it more broadly, it is this which permeates the social fabric most thoroughly. People in this world are not just consumers when they go to the shops, but at work, in school, in the museum, in the home, in every part of daily life. Relationships have become commodities, with a one year trial marriage common practice before agreeing to a longer term arrangement. This evokes the car showroom’s test-drive; it is a chance to try out the product before committing yourself to its purchase. In school, the battle between the corporations for customers is fought through school dinners, with packages colour coded so that unpleasant foods, such as “soyaburgers and regenerated steak ... are packed in containers the same shade of green as the Universal products [while] the candy, ice-cream and Kiddiebutt cigarette ration are wrapped in colourful Starrzelius red.” (*TSM*, p9) In this way, corporations start reaching into the minds of consumers when they are young, creating associations that reinforce their existing marketing strategies. One final example is the Starrzelius spherical trust, which governs Courtenay’s consumption while he is working for Chlorella Proteins. This idea of the spherical trust comes from the fact that one product produces withdrawal symptoms which lead to the consumption of another, which in turn leads to another, “Popsie to Crunchies, to Starrs, to Popsie.” (*TSM*, p81) As this system does rely on the behaviouristic mechanisms Brennan identifies, it might seem strange that I am using it as an example of biopower. But

biopower, in Hardt and Negri's formulation, is "expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses *and bodies* of the population."⁵¹ (Italics mine.) This behaviourism is entirely of a piece with the more sophisticated psychological mechanisms at work here; it is simply one more way in which corporations extend their reach into individuals' lives and reconstruct them.

Both of these aspects of the text, the informatization of the advertising industry, and the biopolitical society of control which is established through advertising, are parts of the global system of power which Hardt and Negri term Empire. Briefly put, this concept of Empire describes a globalised system of corporate control, in which power is centralised among a small elite. In Hardt and Negri's words, it is "a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality, or ... that rules over the entire 'civilised' world."⁵² This is certainly a fair description of the world that this novel depicts. As Seed describes it, the novel depicts "a world dominated by multinational business combines."⁵³ The regime which runs this world is that of Fowler Schocken and Starrzelius, of the Star-class corporate elite. Courtenay is told as much when Schocken says to him "you've got power. Five words from you, and in a matter of weeks or months half a million consumers will find their lives completely changed." (TSM, p39) Indeed, it becomes swiftly apparent that in this world corporations have more power than nations. The first indications of this are the references to Indiastries, which is basically India reorganised as one of Fowler Schocken's subsidiary companies. As Courtenay puts it, "Indiastry paid tribute to Fowler Schocken Associates." (TSM, p60) This transformation of a sovereign state into a corporate subsidiary makes the imperial nature of Fowler Schocken quite explicit. Another, though slightly less overt, example of the corporate domination of nations occurs when Mitch goes to work for Chlorella. We are told along with him that the taxes Chlorella pays to the Costa Rican government is approximately equal to Costa Rica's national budget, and that as such "the government - *and courts* - of Costa Rica do just about what Chlorella wants done." (TSM, p72) And it is not just countries in the developing world which are subjected to this corporate domination. The U.S. has suffered the same fate, with Senators now representing corporations rather than states. This is entirely in keeping with what Hardt and Negri say about the operation of Imperial power. Within this structure, they argue that corporations "directly structure and articulate territories and populations ... [making] nation-states merely instruments to record the flows of the commodities, monies, and populations that they set in motion."⁵⁴ This is made particularly clear when the purser at the Chlorella plantation threatens to use the Costa Rican state to "make an example of a contract-breaker." (TSM, p72) Here the corporation is clearly using the nation to maintain its control over the population it has mobilised. Costa Rica, like India(stries) has been reduced to the status of corporate tool.

Given that this is the case it should be no surprise that the exercise of power in this world is intrinsically corrupt. The pretence of separation of powers has been abandoned, as legislative and economic power come together in the corporations. As such, bribery seems to be a perfectly acceptable way of shaping results, and both Fowler Schocken and his nemesis Taunton buy Senators in their struggle to own the Venus Project. These Senators are, like India, nothing more than tools for the furtherance of Schocken's imperial ambitions. Again,

this is an entirely predictable result of the transition to Imperial power and corporate domination. As Hardt and Negri point out, “in Empire corruption is everywhere ... [residing] in different forms”⁵⁵ at different levels of society. It clearly manifests in the Chlorella plantation where Mitch works as indentured labour. In order for Mitch to get the best position he can he has to bribe the bureaucrats in charge of shift assignment and housing. This, however, is simply the most obvious, overt manifestation of corruption. The entire structure of the corporation is corrupt as well, exhibiting “the corruption of the productive order, or really exploitation.”⁵⁶ Indeed, this system is massively exploitative. Courtenay serves Chlorella as indentured labour, unable to shop anywhere but at the company shop, accumulating debts which consume his wages before he gets them, ensuring that he remains in hock to his employers as long as he lives. By signing such contracts, workers make themselves slaves, signing away their freedom in exchange for their inadequate salary and a future of debt and grinding poverty which prevents them ever buying their freedom. At this point it seems appropriate to return to the Venus ad I discussed earlier. It exhibits a similar exploitative corruption, selling the Venus project as a chance to move to an unbounded space of mountainous vistas and clear lakes, when in fact buying passage basically means selling oneself into slavery, into a life of backbreaking toil terraforming the planet while hiding from the adverse atmosphere in metal boxes offering no more space than a roomette. Once on Venus, these brave pioneers will have as little possibility of escape as Chlorella employees on contract B. Such restrictive, exploitative contracts are not unique to Chlorella, but are utilised by every corporation. When Mitch returns to New York, he finds that his secretary has been obliged to sell herself into prostitution for Fowler Schocken’s executives, on a ZZ contract. These contracts are vitally important to corporations, as these are the means by which they control the movements of populations. This is important because the “movement of individuals, groups, and populations that we find ... in Empire ... cannot be completely subjugated to the laws of capitalist accumulation- at every moment they overflow and shatter the bounds of measure.”⁵⁷ Contracts provide an important means of counteracting this disruptive force, as they enable corporations to “subject [workers] to forced migrations in dire circumstances which are hardly liberatory in themselves.”⁵⁸ This is made quite explicit when Mitch is shipped to New York, and we discover that “Chlorella had sold the contracts on twenty [workers] to I. G. Farben ... to work in the uranium mines.” (*TSM*, p96) It should come as no surprise that I. G. Farben is involved in this barbaric Imperial trade in ‘workers’, as they were responsible for manufacturing the gas Zyklon B for the Nazis.

However, the movement of populations and groups does retain its liberatory potential. Indeed, this is true of much of Pohl and Kornbluth’s work. In *The Space Merchants* this liberatory mobility is controlled by the Consies, or Conservationists, who are the sole countervailing force against the monolithic power of corporate Empire. Their name is important, as it evokes two demonised or marginalised groups for contemporary readers. The first is quite obvious; there is a clear link between the Consies and the Commies, in their opposition to the triumph of capitalism. The second term may be less familiar to current readers, though it would have immediately chimed with readers so soon after the Second World War. This is Conshies, which was an abbreviation of Conscientious Objectors, which is the term given to those who refused conscription for religious or moral grounds. This term

is relevant here because it is possible to see this world as one in which Huxley's 'conscriptio[n] of consumption' has been achieved through the power of advertising. It is this 'conscriptio[n] of consumption' which the Consies object to.

Throughout the text the Consies are in control of Mitch's movements. It is them who lure Mitch down to the Antarctic, chasing after Matt Runstead. They send him to work at Chlorella. It is also them who arrange his passage back to New York, and who arrange his escape to Venus at the end of the novel. There is only one part of his travels which is not dictated by the Consies, and that is his journey to the moon. This is different in that it is enabled by Courtenay's secretary, Hester, who spends her life savings on tickets to the moon for herself and Mitch. However, this shares a similar motivation to the movements which are organised by the Consies. According to Hardt and Negri, there is a dual motivation to these movements, a combination of negative and positive causes. The negative cause is "desertion from the miserable cultural and material conditions of imperial reproduction."⁵⁹ This is clearly the case for some of these movements. Mitch's desire for escape from Chlorella is certainly driven by this desire to escape the appalling conditions which labour is subjected to by this imperial regime. The importance of the Venus project for the Consies has a similar motivation- the unbounded, undefined space of Venus represents for them a space where escape from imperial reproduction is genuinely possible. In Hester's case this motivation is slightly less apparent, until we consider that she had recently been removed from her position of responsibility, and downgraded so that she is merely a prostitute with an impressive title. These are conditions that anyone would want to desert. This negative motivation is most obscure in the Consies' initial actions against Mitch, sending him to work for Chlorella. However, this is clarified when Kathy explains the Consies' actions to Mitch. She explains to him that she wanted him to "get a taste of the consumer's life ... [of] how fouled-up things have become." (*TSM*, p126) That is, she wanted him to see the 'miserable cultural and material conditions' in which consumers live. And this effort is successful, though it takes some time for it to work. It is only when Mitch is confronted by Schocken's blind refusal⁶⁰ to accept what has happened to him that he starts to realise that "the interests of producers and consumers are not identical" (*TSM*, p137) and other self-evident truths. the Consies' actions against Mitch certainly created in him a reaction against his employers which is quite similar to that of his companions in the plant. The only difference is that while they wish to escape to somewhere new, to a new space and a new political system, he merely wants to get back to his old position of power. It is only when he returns to it, and finds it recontextualised by his new experiences that he starts to look for new ways forward, that he actually becomes committed to the Consies.

A particularly interesting example of this sort of subversive mobility can be seen in the Consies' use of Chicken Little for their meetings in the Chlorella factory. Chicken Little is the name given to the mass of chlorella which is the basic food in this world. Workers in the Chlorella factory harvest food from this constantly growing mass, which is then processed and packaged and sold the world over. The Consies use a Galton's whistle to open up a chamber in the heart of Chicken Little, and it is here that they conduct their meetings. Moylan argues that "the outrageous positioning of a Consie cell within the very flesh of this

throbbing mass of tissue” is “the great political irony” of the text.⁶¹ As Hardt and Negri observe, the movement of populations overflow their bounds, and so too do these workers overflow their bounds, even while trapped on a Class B contract. They find their escape from this contract by moving further into the plant, escaping into the product itself, into the result of their own alienated labor.

The other side of this, the positive motivation towards mobility, is something I have already hinted at. Hardt and Negri describe it as “the wealth of desire and the accumulation of expressive and productive capacities that the processes of globalization have determined in the consciousness of every individual and social group- and thus a certain hope.”⁶² What pushes the exploited into their movements is the hope for new spaces of desire, new areas where desire can find its expression. To quote Hardt and Negri again, “the movements of the multitude designate new spaces, and its journeys establish new residences.”⁶³ This is what the Consies’ work on Mitch was all about. It all rested on the Consies’ desire for control of the Venus project, for the new space which Venus signifies. In Kathy’s words “the human race needs Venus. It needs an unspoiled, unwrecked, unexploited, unlooted, ... unpirated, undevastated” space. (*TSM*, p167) This need for a new space in which desire can be fully expressed also motivated Hester’s actions, if we accept the explanation offered at the novel’s conclusion. Kathy argues that Hester was in love with Courtenay, and that it was this which motivated her contract violation and her movement to the moon. The moon, or rather the journey to the moon, represented for her a ‘new residence’ where she got to have Mitch to herself, where she could attempt to produce the relationship that she so desperately wanted to have.

The importance of the movements of the multitude is common to many of Pohl and Kornbluth’s collaborations. It is most central to *Search the Sky* (1954), in which the mysterious equation describes the degeneration of the colonies as long as they are isolated from each other. Without the movement of populations between planets, the various colonies stagnate, taking on various absurd forms of government and restricting the desires of their populations unbearably. A greater freedom of movement is necessary to revitalise these colonies. *Search the Sky* depicts a world in which galactic Empire has fragmented into individual planetary empires, each controlling their own totality, each divided both internally in itself and externally from the other colonies along “cleavages and borderlines of race, gender, language, culture and so forth.”⁶⁴ However, this act of division, this fragmentation has “[restricted] the productivity of the multitude too much”, and will in time result in these empires’ collapse, “because Empire too depends on this power.”⁶⁵ It is only the greater mobility of the multitude which can save these petty planetary empires, and the galactic Empire of which they are part, from their coming degeneration. This mobility is necessary for the multitude to reproduce Empire, through their productivity and their desires.

This vital mobility of populations, and the exercise of corporate power to control it, can also be seen in *Gladiator-at-Law*. In this novel, the population is strictly segregated, with corporate employees living in luxurious condition in ‘bubble cities’ made of G.M.L. Homes, while the rest of the population live in squalid, rundown slums like the Belle Reve estate, or

Belly Rave as its inhabitant refer to it. Once again, the contract is used as the main tool of corporate dominance. It is this which gives corporate employees the right to their bubble houses, and as such “no contract status, no bubble house”.⁶⁶ In this way, corporations gain control over their employees’ movements, and are once again able to subject their employees to ‘forced migrations in dire circumstances’. However, the mobility of the multitude trapped in the poverty of Belly Rave is shown to be in opposition to this power. Indeed, in this novel the mobility of the multitude is liberatory in the most literal sense. In order to free Norma Lavin from her corporate captors, Mundin must attend the G.M.L. Homes shareholders meeting. He is unable to take the only train to the meeting, as it is “for officials only”⁶⁷ so instead he is obliged to turn to a gang of preteen Belly Ravers, the Wabbits, who are able to move across the country by virtue of their alliances with other gangs in other districts. Thus, the mobility of the Wabbits plays a vital role in obtaining Norma Lavin’s freedom. In this way, the Wabbits, and the mobility that they enable and represent, is shown to be central to the final defeat of the corporate Empire.

They are not, however, only involved in this distant way. They are present at the end, as are all of those who have been involved in the fight against the corporations. Indeed, Lana, the leader of the Wabbits, is instrumental in deflecting Dworcac’s last ditch attempt to prevent the corporate take-over by Mundin and his allies (the multitude). In this, they are also aided by Bet-a-Buck Jason, a small time broker who gives tips at the Stock Exchange. However, this corporate take-over by the multitude is not motivated by personal gain, but rather the desire for positive change, to open up access to G.M.L. Homes to all, as was intended by their inventors. As such, it represents the “[reappropriation] of wealth from capital and also constructs a new wealth, articulated with the powers of science and social knowledge through cooperation.”⁶⁸ In this way, the text indicates the importance of cooperative production by the multitude which serves the needs of all, rather than the alienated production of the industrial working classes (the contract workers) which only serves the interests of capital. This is not the only instance of such cooperative production in the novel. It can also be seen in the strength which Bligh gains from his experiences in Belly Rave. Bligh has gained a position as “a kind of community leader” having “a real volunteer police force”.⁶⁹ In this way, Bligh too is organising the productivity of the multitude in their own interests, to serve their own needs. As Bligh puts it “I’m doing something for them, in a small way, sure, but something”⁷⁰ and in so doing he is enabling them to do something for themselves. And some form of productive outlet is what is most needed by this population, this disenfranchised multitude. Shep’s incessant painting serves this need. Another good example of this need for a productive outlet is the old woman who runs a ‘restaurant’, boiling water for people to use in making their tea, or coffee, or bouillon, and trading it for rations. Her reason for doing this is that it “makes her feel as though she were master of her fate, captain of her soul.”⁷¹ By creating this form of work for herself, she is finding a way out of the hell that Belly Rave constructs, “that hell [that] is a perpetual holiday.”⁷² Bligh’s work on and for the neighbourhood provides people with a collective means of escape from this hell.

This sort of cooperation is also a trait shown by the Consies in *The Space Merchants*. The Consie meeting Courtenay attends in New York is told “each of you was picked for

some special quality.” (*TSM*, p105) That is, they were picked for how their specific form of productive expression can help the collective labour of the Consies. The Consies are a group where the specific skills of each individual can contribute productively to the collective goal of change, of the establishment of new forms of life, of new spaces of desire. This is “the labor of the multitude ... as the fundamental creative activity that through cooperation goes beyond any obstacle imposed on it and constantly re-creates the world.”⁷³ It provides people with a chance to do something productive for themselves, rather than simply playing their “part in the world, buying and using and making work and profits for his brothers all around the globe, ever increasing his wants and needs.” (*TSM*, p85) In this system, where ‘playing one’s part in the world’ results in ever increasing needs and wants, rather than the satisfaction of needs, the population is alienated from its own productivity, which through corruption and exploitation is reappropriated by advertising’s Empire. It is for this reason that Mitch calls the Consies “sterile zealots.” (*TSM*, p85) This is not because they are truly sterile, or unproductive, but rather because their productivity serves the needs of the multitude. The Consies are not alienated from their labour, their productivity is not stolen (accumulated) by Empire, but is kept, producing new spaces and new networks for the flow of desire. This production of new spaces for desire shows the Consies to be the multitude’s mode of “biopolitical self-organisation.”⁷⁴ They constitute the multitude as political subject in the biopolitical field. As such, they are the force of counter-empire, opposing Empire on the very field where it exercises its control, the field of biopower. Mitch’s work for the Consies is particularly important in this reproduction of desire, in this biopolitical conflict. His work for the Consies is very similar to the work he does for Fowler Schocken, in that he is once again using language and symbols to arouse desire. He does this through jokes, such as “what’s the difference between roast beef and Chicken little? ... A hundred years of progress.” (*TSM*, p89) Like advertising, these jokes arouse anxieties and tensions, in this case, dissatisfaction about food, about the lower quality of the food available now compared with the food their grandparents ate. As such, it also raises questions about ‘progress’, about how much of worth ‘progress’ has really produced, about how much progress has actually been made towards a better life. In this way, the joke sparks the desire for genuine progress, towards better living conditions, a better quality of life. However here desire is not redirected into drive, it is not closed off by the incitement to the specific action of consumption, but rather remains open, unsated, producing dissatisfaction with the world which cannot satisfy it. As such, it is the first step on the road to the mobilisation of the population towards change, towards a world in which their real needs and desires can be fulfilled. This effect of these jokes can be seen in the comments it provokes in consumers, such as “I wish to hell I was born a hundred years ago” and “I wish to hell I could get out on a piece of land somewheres and work for myself.” (*TSM*, p90) The latter comment is particularly telling, as it indicates the desire for self-control of productivity, for the chance to work towards self-defined goals. It indicates the desire for the sort of labour which the Consies offer.

And the Consies are successful in the end. Having recruited Mitch, they gain control of the Venus project. As such, they are able to make the move to a new space, where desire can be realised, where the collective work of terraforming can serve the collective needs of the colony, rather than the needs of some distant parent corporation. As such, they are able to

produce in the way which best serves their interests, rather than that which serves Earth's capital. A good example of this is the Mitch's decision to forget about "CO2 competition with Earth producers." (*TSM*, p157) But at the same time, I have some concerns with this resolution. My problem is that by taking over Venus, and reproducing it as a new space for the desires of the multitude, or at least that part of the multitude which lives there, the Consies are simply recreating an outside to Empire, rather than contesting its operation on Earth. As such, it indicates a transition back to an earlier stage of capitalist development, of competition between nations, or planets in this case, rather than moving forwards towards a more liberated society on Earth. This is however only a small complaint, and in no way weakens the main argument of the book about advertising's role in the biopolitical processes of Empire, and the importance of the cooperative collaboration of the multitude in contesting it.

To conclude then, Pohl and Kornbluth's work shows us the importance of the depth method to advertising, how this new form of advertising exploits desire, arousing it only to redirect it into drive, into consumption, and the contribution this makes to the biopolitical society of control which is established under Empire. At the same time, their work powerfully states how important it is that this biopolitical control should be contested, through the militant collaborations of the multitude, through their reclamation of their own productive powers in this cooperative labour. This contest, this battle for control of the world which is waged between Empire and counter-empire on the biopolitical stage, through the production and reproduction of desire and the world itself, will recur in my next chapter, where I examine the paranoid fictions of Philip K. Dick.

¹ Cashmore, pp76.

² Chomsky and Herman, Chapter 1.

³ Cashmore, pp41.

⁴ Packard, Vance *The Hidden Persuaders* [1957], (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp12.

⁵ Packard, pp14.

⁶ *Printer's Ink*, 27 February 1953, quoted in Packard, pp43.

⁷ Packard, pp14-15.

⁸ A prime example of this is Guy Cook's *The Discourse of Advertising*, which argues that "Packard's book ... [suggested] that ads, by inserting images and words at speeds which cannot consciously be perceived, could operate through subliminal persuasion" before going on to state that "the irony is however that it was Packard who was persuaded without evidence." Cook, Guy, *The Discourse of Advertising*, (London: Routledge, 2001), pp209.

⁹ Clareson, Thomas *Frederik Pohl*, (Mercer Island: Starport House, 1987), pp11.

¹⁰ Pohl, Frederik *The Way the Future Was*, (London: Granada, 1983), pp170.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Pohl, Frederik and Kornbluth, C.M. *The Space Merchants*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp84. In future quotes will be marked *TSM*, after the text, with the page number.

¹³ Packard, pp18.

¹⁴ Packard, pp19.

¹⁵ Huxley, *Revisited*, pp46.

¹⁶ Packard, pp84.

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- 17 Pierre Martineau, quoted in Packard, pp85.
 - 18 Haineault, Doris-Louise, and Roy, Jean-Yves, *Unconscious for Sale: Advertising, Psychoanalysis and the Public*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp179.
 - 19 Pierre Martineau, quoted in Packard, pp85.
 - 20 Haineault and Roy, pp68.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 Haineault and Roy, pp69.
 - 23 Haineault and Roy, pp83.
 - 24 Haineault and Roy, pp91.
 - 25 Ibid.
 - 26 Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2000) pp168.
 - 27 Packard, pp70.
 - 28 Brennan, John P., 'The Mechanical Chicken: Psyche and Society in *The Space Merchants*' in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (Summer 1984), pp107.
 - 29 Brennan, pp110.
 - 30 Marcuse, pp14.
 - 31 Marcuse, pp90.
 - 32 Brennan, pp107.
 - 33 Ibid.
 - 34 Haineault and Roy, pp106.
 - 35 Williamson, Judith *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, (London: Marion Boyars, 2000), pp19.
 - 36 Haineault and Roy, pp106.
 - 37 Williamson, pp51.
 - 38 Marcuse, pp78.
 - 39 Cook, pp39.
 - 40 Haineault and Roy, pp71.
 - 41 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp290.
 - 42 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp293.
 - 43 Ibid.
 - 44 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp23-24.
 - 45 Seed, David 'Take-Over Bids: The Power Fantasies of Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth', *Foundation*, 59, (Autumn 1993), pp45.
 - 46 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp23.
 - 47 Mead, Shepherd *The Big Ball of Wax*, (New York: Ballantine, 1954), pp6.
 - 48 Ibid.
 - 49 Ibid.
 - 50 Mead, pp130.
 - 51 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp24.
 - 52 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, ppxiv.
 - 53 Seed, 'Take-Over Bids', pp43.
 - 54 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp31.
 - 55 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp389.
 - 56 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp390.
 - 57 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp397.
 - 58 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp253.
 - 59 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp213.

60 Incidentally, Schocken's refusal brings us back to the 'debased Freudianism' of the depth approach, though in this case its operation is inverted. Schocken chooses to interpret Courtenay's experiences as madness, and he then reads this madness as a product Courtenay has bought. His analysis then looks back, to see what needs, what anxieties were activated in Mitch that drove him to buy this product.

61 Moylan, pp172.

62 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp213.

63 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp397.

64 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp399.

65 Ibid.

66 Pohl, Frederik and Kornbluth, C.M., *Gladiator-at-Law*, (New York: Baen Books, 1986), pp63.

67 Pohl and Kornbluth, *Gladiator-at-Law*, pp124.

68 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp410.

69 Pohl and Kornbluth, *Gladiator-at-Law*, pp173.

70 Ibid.

71 Pohl and Kornbluth, *Gladiator-at-Law*, pp103.

72 Ibid.

73 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp402.

74 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp411.

Chapter 4: Philip K. Dick's Dystopian Media

As Patricia Warrick has pointed out, the question “how can we know what is true reality and what is merely illusion”¹ is central to Dick's work. One of the main ways in which these illusory realities are constructed is through the manipulation of the media. As David Seed has observed, “his fiction is packed with examples of technological means of ... altering, or deceiving human consciousness.”² Indeed, the role of the media in constructing artificial realities is a recurring theme for Dick, to be seen in the work of the Yance-men in *The Penultimate Truth* (1964) and the Ges in *The Simulacra* (1964). His work routinely depicts how these artificial realities are used as instruments of domination. However, to suggest that Dick only depicts the media as parts of this machinery of domination is to fail to acknowledge the positive potential which he finds in them. For Dick has also written a small number of novels in which he suggests that the media can also subvert systems of domination, enabling social change in positive, productive ways. It is easy to miss this positive aspect, given the dystopian nature of the works in which it appears. While he spends most of his work condemning the way the media serve the interests of the powerful, he is aware that these are communications media, and that as such they contain at least an embryonic potential of creating new worlds through the communication which they enable. However, this positivity only manifests in a small amount of his work. As such I will focus on his more traditionally dystopian representations of the media, before going on to discuss the works in which he depicts the subversive potential of the media.

1. Media of Domination

1.1 *Solar Lottery*: Political Systems & Cybernetics

Right from the start of Philip K. Dick's career, the role of the media plays an important part in his work. They are present in his first published novel, *Solar Lottery* (1955). Television game shows were an important part of the media environment throughout the 1950s. They were a staple of television schedules and when it was discovered that these shows were fixed the House of Representatives launched an investigation. In *Solar Lottery* Dick uses the game show model as the basis for an unusual political system. This novel describes a world in which political power is assigned at random, by a computerised system which draws a number which matches one of the cards given to citizens at birth. This individual then becomes the Quizmaster, the dominant political figure in this world. An assassin is then selected at the ‘Challenge Convention’, which is dominated by the economic power centres of the corporations, or Hills. The Quizmaster is protected by a guild of telepaths, who attempt to prevent his assassination by identifying the assassin by reading his murderous intent in his mind, before he has got into a position to carry it out. If the assassin should succeed in his task, he takes over the Quizmaster's position, until the next time that the computerised system which runs this game decides at random that it is time for a change. This process is televised, as “The Assassination Game”. As such, there are two primary aspects of the media which are important for an understanding of the text; the more overt example of the T.V. show, and the computerised system which underlies it all. The plot

focuses on one such transitional stage, when Leon Cartwright, an ageing electrician, takes over from Reese Verrick, one of the longest standing Quizmasters. Joined to this plot is a subplot concerning a religious visionary, John Preston who claimed to have found a tenth planet, the Flame Disc, and then vanished while searching for it. His followers have formed a Preston society, which hopes to follow in his footsteps and establish a utopian society on Preston's Flame Disc. These two plots are connected by Leon Cartwright, who is a Prestonite, and has just launched a ship to search for the Flame Disc when he is told that his number has come up.

Kim Stanley Robinson has suggested that Dick's later political novels of the '60s can be seen as "giving fictional reality to metaphors that already exist in our world."³ I feel that Robinson is overly restrictive in applying this insight only to the later novels. The same process can be seen at work here, where Dick constructs an entire world out of the metaphor that 'politics is a game'. Dick however, modifies this metaphor slightly, saying instead that 'politics is a game show'. This has the merit of also capturing the fact that politics was increasingly also a public spectacle, as election debates were televised, and electoral success became dependent upon successful advertising campaigns. In this world politics is indeed a game, and a game that everyone can play, if only the computer or 'bottle' as it is called in the text, pulls your number out of the hat. And for those who are not immediately involved in this particular round of the game, there is always "The Assassination Game" on T.V., so that you can enjoy the fun even if you're not personally involved. For those who want a bit of extra excitement, it is possible to bet on the success of the assassin.

The role of this show and the television in general in this novel, is easily discussed. It serves broadly the same functions as in earlier texts, as a source of repressive desublimation, allowing the populace a vicarious sense of involvement to deny their total disempowerment. It plays an essential component in people's lives. This is made quite clear by Laura Davis's response when Ted Benteley turns off the television. She is utterly unable to understand it, asking foolishly "what happened? ... It went off!"⁴ The prospect that she might not see the assassin selected fills her with "peevisish anxiety". (SL, p52) Again, as in Pohl and Kornbluth's work, we are told that "ads [are] the highest art-form: the finest creative talent was at work behind them." (SL, pp43) "A restless aliveness" pulses from them, a life which is vital for those like Laura Davis who have nothing else to fill their lives with. One important innovation which is new to the discussion of television is Dick's concept of the I- and S-channels. It is only the I-channel which actually broadcasts information, while the S-channel transforms this into meaningless sensory stimuli, which produces pleasure, much like the overwhelming sensation Mildred experiences through the walls of her living room. Indeed, much of Dick's treatment of television in this novel recalls Mildred, particularly Laura's relationship with it. She seems as dependent on the television as Mildred was. It is interesting that Laura supports her preference for the S-channel through her snobbish belief that "all the unks watch [the I-channel]. That's why they have it both ways, this for us and the literal for them." (SL, p44) The 'unks' are the unclassified members of society, who live without jobs, and are the underclass of this world. Curiously, Laura seems to be able to interpret the S-channel, in order to understand what information is being broadcast despite its translation into "a vortex of foaming light and colour-texture". (SL, p43) Implicit in this break between the I- and S- channels is the idea that today's programming for pleasure all contains information submerged in it, much like the cue-words used by advertisers in *The Space Merchants*. This relates to a point Dick makes when discussing today's police dramas, and their standard resolutions in which the criminal is brought to justice. He feels that this is the fundamental message of these shows, stating that "the police always win. What a lesson that

is. You should not fight authority, and even if you do, you will lose.”⁵ Here Dick clearly states that he believes that there are messages built into today's entertainment, which we interpret without even knowing it.

Finally, we once again see the television being used to construct reality, when it announces that “by popular acclamation- by the wishes of a planet! The assassin is- Keith Pellig!” (*SL*, p53) The reality, as we discover later in the novel, is that the public have had nothing to do with the selection of Keith Pellig, who is in truth just a product of the Hill system, a blank human shell with no identity of its own, which is to serve as a receptacle for a variety of human identities in order to foil the telepathic Corp which defends the Quizmaster. He has been created solely for this purpose, and as such the public have had nothing to do with his selection as the assassin. There is little discussion of how Pellig has been built, but he/it is a built item. Public support for Pellig is produced by his presentation to the audience as their choice. In this way, the game show reconstructs reality to provide the public with the illusion of involvement in a process from which they are entirely disconnected. As such, Laura's distress at not witnessing the selection is particularly absurd, given that her husband is one of Pellig's operators and knows full well that he is to be the assassin. What is important here is that the public are manipulated through the game show into the acceptance of a simulated reality. This simulation is part of the minimax strategies required by the game. As the epigraph at the start of the novel states

good strategy requires the use of the principle of ‘Minimax’, that is, a policy in which a range of high and low gains is adopted on the assumption that one might be found out. But to avoid being found out one obscures the specific pattern of play by randomizing the strategy with chance plays...(*SL*, p5)

While Thomas Disch has argued that “Game Theory ... is a bit of legerdemain calculated to give the guileless reader a sense that the book is about Something Important”⁶ I would argue that it plays an important role in the conception of Pellig. There is a prolonged discussion of the random strategies required to outwit the telepath Corp, which concludes with the observation that “Pellig is the obvious answer [as] nobody knows which strategy, which pattern of action, is about to start.” (*SL*, p79) Pellig serves to thoroughly randomise the Hills' strategy in the game against the teeps. Within the context of the game between the Hills and the telepath Corp, the announcement that Pellig is an assassin like any other can be seen as another such randomizing move, preventing the telepaths gaining any clear understanding of the nature of the opponent that they face. However, Disch is right to the extent that Game Theory has little to do with the lives of ordinary citizens, particularly the ‘unks’. In this respect, it is worth bearing in mind Carlo Pagetti's comment that “behind the forces of ‘chance’ strong organisations are hidden, that manipulate reality”.⁷ These organisations are the Hills, and the Directorate, and the political game is only played between them. The need to survive overwhelms concerns with political power for the ‘unks’, so that they are likely to sell their power cards, forfeiting their chance at political power in favour of the money for food. As such, power cards are concentrated in the hands of those with money, the players of the game. The low value of the power cards seems like an index of the general public's disenfranchisement. Their share of power has almost no worth to them, it produces no gain unless it is sold. Instead, power is concentrated in the hands of those with money, who can afford to buy up power cards and increase their chances in the game. As a result, while “most twitches of the bottle bring up unclassifieds one way or another, classifieds manage to get hold of the power cards.” (*SL*, p27) As such, power remains in the hands of the classifieds, the employees of the Hill system. It seems relevant at this stage to note that the major players in the game, who determine whether a new Quizmaster is assassinated, are the Hills. ‘The

Hill' is a colloquial term for the U.S. government in Washington. That in this novel the term indicates not government, which is represented by the Directorate, but the corporations seems to indicate the way in which this supposedly democratic system has been short circuited by the corporations. This seems particularly clear when we see how Verrick has used his role as Quizmaster to consolidate his power in the Hill system. Power thus flows between the corporate-governmental Hills and the Directorate in a game which is almost totally closed to the bulk of the population.

Pellig is the latest tool of the Hills in this contest for power, one which has become significantly more urgent as the current Quizmaster is an unclassified, from outside of their influence. Pellig is also interesting in that it is possible to view him/it as a medium, transmitting information. Indeed, this is the reason he was invented. The information which he transmits is the human mind, which is projected into him by one of his operators. This too serves the purpose of randomizing the assassin's strategy, as different operators use different approaches to tracking down and killing Cartwright. As Moore, Pellig's designer, puts it "the teeps won't know from one minute to the next what the Pellig body is going to do." (SL, p79) It is worth reiterating here that Pellig is not a person, but merely a vehicle, a medium which broadcasts a variety of minds. This serves to make it well nigh impossible for the telepath Corp to track him, as they operate by locking onto the assassin's mind and distributing it throughout the network of telepaths, so that if he comes into proximity with them they will be able to identify and kill him. The switch from one operator to another is not simply characterised by a change in tactics, but by a complete change of mind, causing the telepaths to lose their target. Such transitions have a catastrophic effect on the minds of the Corp, who have been used all their lives to a constant match between mental makeup and physical identity. As a result of these transitions from one operator to another, "mind after mind was smashed, short-circuited, blacked-out by the overload." (SL, p122)

What is particularly interesting about this is the way it conceives of the human mind in the terms of cybernetics, as a specific pattern of information. Norbert Wiener, the founding father of cybernetics, has argued that "the physical functioning of the living individual and of some of the newer communication machines are precisely parallel [in that] in both of them there exists a special apparatus for collecting information from the outer world at low energy levels, and for making it available in the operation of the individual or the machine."⁸ In the human, this 'special apparatus' is the human body, the complete sensorium, and it is important to note that this is marked as separate from the individual. It makes information available to the individual. These messages derived from the external world "are not taken *neat*, but through the internal transforming powers of the apparatus [which turn them] into a new form available for further stages of performance"⁹, whether that performance is contemplation of the external world or reaction to it. As such, the body can be viewed as simply a biological form of Keith Pellig, a receptacle for the information processing system which is the human mind, a 'special apparatus' for communicating information to the internal structure which processes it. To put it another way, the body becomes simply the medium by which information is channelled to us from the external world. N. Katherine Hayles has shown that this assumption about the parallel functioning of men and machines derives from the beliefs of behaviourism, particularly its focus upon "relations between the organism and the environment"¹⁰, and its disregard for internal structure. The internal structure, where it is described at all, is simply viewed in terms of feedback mechanisms which enable the individual to proceed towards its goals, by assessing the results of its actions and modifying them respectively. As Wiener's work makes clear, such feedback loops can be identified in

both biological and mechanical systems, so that they can both be classified under the umbrella of cybernetic systems.

However, this is not entirely unproblematic, as Hayles points out. In her words, “the problem with this approach lies not so much in the analogical relations that Wiener constructed between living and mechanical systems as in his tendency to erase from view the very real differences in embodied materiality”.¹¹ While this cybernetic attitude which Dick depicts elides these differences, Dick himself seems quite aware of them, portraying them as problems for Pellig’s operators. Benteley describes the problem as feeling that “Pellig was there with me”, and this sensation is first produced “when [he] looked in a mirror.” (SL, p75) The cause of this sensation becomes more clear when Eleanor observes that “Moore [shouldn’t] try women operators. Too high a shock value.” (SL, p75) It then becomes clear that the source of this problem is precisely the discontinuity between their normal embodiment and their translation into Pellig’s corporeal form. This discontinuity would clearly be a greater shock to the system as a result of the move to a differently gendered body, which makes Eleanor feel that “there was a snake in [her] slacks.” (SL, p75) In fact, Moore confesses that this shock is so great that most of Pellig’s operators “crack. ... They want to get away from it ... as if it’s something slimy and dirty close to them.” (SL, p76) This description of the problem helps us to locate it psychologically, helps us to identify the psychological problem which is produced by this physiological disjunction. This ‘slimy, dirty’ embodiment in Pellig is too close to them, they want to escape, to get away, to project themselves out of Pellig and into themselves. In this process we see the abject, in which “I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which I claim to establish *myself*.”¹² The Pellig body violates all boundaries, of self and other, of biology and machine, and empty of mind “he doesn’t die ... The body processes continue” (SL, p75) and so he violates the boundary between life and death. In occupying him “nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit.”¹³ According to Kristeva, the abject “is experienced at the very peak of its strength when [the] subject ... finds the impossible within”.¹⁴ When trapped in the sordid experience of the Pellig body, they are within the impossible, and the experiences they receive through that body are located within them, rendering their selves abject, smearing them with the ‘slime and dirt’ which they describe. It should be clear then, that while the later Dick thoroughly valorises information, this cybernetic elimination of the specificity of embodiment, this reduction of the self to a transferable pattern of information is something he is deeply suspicious of.

This derives in part from the fact that these transfers of subjectivity into Pellig do not serve the individuals who experience them. Rather, they serve the interests of the Hill system, and Verrick, their political representative. These Hills, which fill the roles of today’s corporations, possess a stranglehold on economic power, and through their close links with Verrick, were close to obtaining complete political power before he was ‘twitched’ out of office. As Patricia Warrick points out, “any kind of institutionalised power was anathema to Dick.”¹⁵ And the Hills very much represent institutionalised power of the worst sort. Verrick makes his base in Farben Hill, which is another reference to I. G. Farben (with its roots in Nazism), which features in *The Space Merchants*. And it controls its employees in a very similar way. The contracts which controlled the movements of the population in Pohl and Kornbluth’s novel are here replicated through the oaths which are sworn to employers. The violation of the oath constitutes a death sentence, as one’s life is given to the Hill or individual which employs you. So here we see a very similar system to the corporate Empire which Pohl and Kornbluth constructed in *The Space Merchants*. The oaths give the Hill system control over the population’s productive energy, so that it comes to be used to

preserve the system rather than in the interests of the population. It was just this corrupt system which Benteley was seeking to escape when he went to the Directorate and swore fealty to Verrick under false pretences. He went “to get away from rottenness” (SL, p151), seeking access to the Directorate because “it represents something... It’s bigger than any man or any group of men. Yet, in a way, it’s everyone.” (SL, p83) This flight to some ill-defined alternative, this line of flight is continued when Wakeman informs him that Verrick and Moore plan on detonating the Pellig body with his mind in it when it gets to Cartwright. As a result, he reasons that his oath has been rendered void by Verrick’s betrayal, and so he feels entitled to leave, having murdered Moore and trapped him in Pellig. He is released to begin proceeding along his line of flight once again, going to Cartwright with what he knows, and offering his service to the Directorate once again.

This meeting between Cartwright and Benteley indirectly provides the solution to the corrupt political game which gives power into the hands of the economic power of the Hills. It enables Cartwright, who has fixed the chain of succession while working on the bottles, to choose his successor by selling Benteley a new power card. This is an early example of Dick’s oft-observed valorisation of the little man, of the repairman whose skills are in his practical application of knowledge to the real world. He is putting his productivity to his own use, against the corrupt system which expropriates the productivity of its citizens for its own reproduction. Having done this, he then swaps his card with Verrick, which entitles him to kill Verrick with no retribution except for the loss of his power cards. As such, Benteley, who has been seeking something more than is available in the existing system, attains a position where he can attempt to construct the alternative he has been seeking. His trajectory, his line of flight, has brought him to a new space, has enabled him to reach a new space, a new situation, as “the first person who was ever under oath to himself.” (SL, p183) He has finally found a position where he can do something about the corrupt laws which have held him in place most of his life, where he can attempt to put his productive energies to productive use.

This trajectory is paralleled by the Prestonites’ flight to the Flame Disc. It represents a similar goal to the Consies aim in seizing control of the Venus project. It is the desire for a space of unconstrained productivity, away from the limits and restraints of corporate control, of contract and oath. And the people who make up this organisation are much the same as the Consies, they are Dick’s little people, “people with skill in their hands”. (SL, p24) They are “Mexican laborers”, amongst others, evoking Mitch’s companions at the Chlorella plantation. Here, however, the Prestonites must look further afield for an uncontrolled space. The nearer planets have been colonised, and so they must look for Preston’s Flame Disc, the tenth planet in the solar system. They must go beyond the traced out orbits of the nine planets, beyond “the official navigation charts ... [leaving] the finite, familiar universe behind” by using “Preston’s material” (SL, p89) his radical cartography. On the way, they must pass through “*the middle space, the emptiness between*” (SL, p93 italics in text) the old system and the new one they wish to establish. They must pass through the limit of becoming, and in so doing they are deterritorialised, and reterritorialised on this new space, this new map that they are drawing. In so doing, in mapping out this new and utopian space for productivity both they and Benteley are expressing the “highest goal of man- the need to ... live in an evolving fashion. To push aside routine and repetition, [reproduction] to break out of mindless monotony and thrust forward. To keep moving on...” (SL, p192)

As Warrick points out, this conclusion, this production of utopian spaces is “almost old-fashioned in ... its conviction that faith, courage, and hard work can undo all the political and economic corruption that has just been described.”¹⁶ I would however, also have to agree with Robinson that this conclusion goes counter to the earlier development of the novel,

which showed the world as very tightly controlled by the economic and political powers of the Hills. As such this resolution seems like a wish fulfilment, which in Robinson's words "contradicts probability."¹⁷ I cannot, though, fault the value of Preston's final words, and I feel that their validation in the successes of the little men serves an important role in arguing for the value of the attempt to make something better which is contained in such utopian projects and to contest the monolithic power of corrupt economic and political establishments.

1.2 *The Man Who Japed: Surveillance and Dehumanisation*

If *Solar Lottery* adopts a very similar approach to the media to *The Space Merchants*, in *The Man Who Japed* (1956) Dick returns to an earlier model of the media. This novel depicts a post-apocalyptic world which has rebuilt society under the auspices of Morec, or Moral Reclamation. This dominant institution dictates that the population adhere to a strict moral code, using the media to condition the population and using small robots to conduct surveillance to ensure that this code is followed, while the Cohorts of Major Streiter conduct police actions against those who violate it. As this brief outline should indicate, Dick's model for the media in this world is derived from the panoptic system Orwell describes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The protagonist, Allan Purcell, much like Winston, works in the media, though in this case he is producing 'packets' or plot outlines for Telemedia to produce, to frame in a specific medium. The plot concerns his rising dissatisfaction with the whole Morec system, paired with his rise within the system to the powerful position of Director of Telemedia. This alone should indicate that there are telling differences between these two texts. While they possess similarly panoptic systems of media, the operations of these media are quite different in the two texts, so that it is worth analysing how the media operate here in some depth.

An early discussion between Allan Purcell, the protagonist, and his superior, Sue Frost, who is the administrator of Telemedia, highlights one of these differences. They are discussing one of his companies packets, with ambiguous Morec. It concerns a farmer's attempt to grow an apple tree on a colony world, which dies. According to Purcell, the Morec of this piece is that the farmer shouldn't have been growing the tree there, as to do so valued the colony world over Earth. The problem of such a value judgement is that according to Morec, the colony is not "an end in itself. It's a means. *Here* is the centre."¹⁸ This makes it clear that a major part of Morec's media campaign is to establish a rigidly stratified, hierarchical structure, in which Earth, as the political and economic centre has the greatest value and priority, and everything else is subordinated to it. Frost describes Earth as the "*Omphalos* ... the centre of the universe." (*MWJ*, p13) And the Morec spire is "the hub of Morec, its *omphalos*." (*MWJ*, p7) Thus Morec itself is continually being established as the centre of the universe, in order to continually reaffirm the validity of its political domination. The expulsion from this centre is one of the system's punishments for violation of established moral standards.

These moral standards are policed through a system of surveillance using robots equipped with recording devices, called 'juveniles', which patrol society recording transgressions. These tapes are then used as the basis of trials which occur at weekly block meetings, and which are used to control the behaviour of the inhabitants of the blocks. That these agents of surveillance are called 'juveniles' reflects the influence which contemporary Chinese society had on the writing of this novel, with these robots standing in for the students

who played a major part in informing on their lecturers, fellow students, and family members. Dick comments on this influence in a letter to James Blish, dated February 10, 1958, in which he states that "...the topic is not American culture but the society coming into existence on Mainland China.... You see, I wanted to show that as dreadful as commercial bourgeois US culture could be, there are things that pose a greater danger, go further in destroying the integrity of the individual."¹⁹ That they have been replaced by robots in this novel seems telling, indicating as it does a total dehumanisation of the role of informer, so that they are merely automated units in the states systems of control and surveillance. However, I also feel that to solely identify China as the inspiration for this novel disregards its relevance to the politics of the U.S. The United States were just coming out of the McCarthy era when this novel was first published, and the trials of the block meetings strongly evoke the show-trials which went on during that period.

These robots are described as "metal, earwig-shaped [creatures]" (*MWJ*, p122) which indicates that Dick thinks of these things as pests at best, although vermin does not seem too strong a word. It is worth noting here that 'earwig' is a slang term for any surveillance device, like 'bug'. It is also a verb, meaning eavesdropping, at least in Yorkshire slang, though it stretches credulity to suggest that Dick was aware of this latter meaning. The supposed strength of these intrusive agents of surveillance is that they provide objective proof of any wrong doing. They provide documentary evidence to support any accusation. The problem with such a belief is clearly shown by Purcell's encounter with them at the hands of Luddy, his disgruntled ex-employee, who has gone over to another agency. Luddy, and the juveniles he has sent to Purcell's office, capture photos of him being kissed by Gretchen Malparto, the Health Resort employee who had previously been involved in his kidnapping. It is this context, this milieu, which the juveniles cannot take into consideration. They cannot locate the physical act they document in the network of human relations which produce it. They cannot take into account the affection Gretchen feels for him. Nor can they take into account his attitude to her, his understanding of and forgiveness for her actions. While one might expect him to resent her involvement in his kidnapping, she explains that she became involved in the process to mitigate the damaging effects her brother's decision might cause. She also explains her affection for him, for the sense of humour at his core which led him to jape the statue, "which makes [him] different and keeps [him] out of the system." (*MWJ*, p122) It is her positive evaluation of his attempt to reconcile the alienated sides of his self and his society which leads him to allow her to kiss him. Of course, it is no surprise that the juveniles are unable to take such human relationships into account. Morec society itself is unwilling to countenance such relationships, and insists on stripping them down to physical acts in isolation, so it should come as no surprise that the machines it constructs should be unable to do so.

This dehumanisation of relationships can also be seen in the block meetings themselves. Again, offences are stripped down to physical acts. This can be seen in the case against Julia Ebberley. She is accused of having committed a "vile enterprise" (*MWJ*, p46) with a man. It is soon ascertained that this was the same man she had had sex with on previous occasions, which produces the response "weren't you warned?" (*MWJ*, p46) For some reason it seems irrelevant that she has a burgeoning relationship with whoever the man is. The problem is the fact that she has repeated the 'vile enterprise'. The human context is stripped away. This dehumanisation is also repeated in the process of questioning. The questioning is conducted through a synthetic voice, "issuing from a wall speaker. To preserve the aura of justice, questions were piped through a common channel, broken down and reassembled without characteristic timbre. The result was an impersonal accuser, who, when a sympathetic questioner appeared, became suddenly and a little oddly a defender." (*MWJ*,

p47) This evokes Baudrillard's discussion of television polls and surveys. This synthetic voice provides a screen into which the masses can melt, or "eclipse themselves ... in such a way that their reality ... can be radically cast into doubt without affecting the probabilistic analysis of their behaviour."²⁰ In this way, the process of judgement is made uniform, clad in the uniform of the Cohorts of Major Streiter²¹, and individual judgements are smoothed out and replaced by the homogenous judgements of Morec. This screen thus becomes a means by which "the masses destroy and eclipse the individual."²² However, even here it is possible to see traces of Dick's optimism. While there is clearly some overlap between his ideas and Baudrillard's, Dick does not go so far, he does not carry the idea to the same conclusion. He does maintain the possibility that the individual might break through this homogenising screen. During Purcell's first trial by committee, "from the chaos of minds, a sharp sentiment took shape [which] Allan could tell ... was one person." (*MWJ*, p49) However, even here, the voice is not totally voicing its own judgement. This person defends Purcell because of his role in producing for Telemedia, his public service, his proximity to the *omphalos* of Morec. As such, the judgement of this individual voice remains in conformity with the broader judgements of Morec.

It is this belief in Morec which undermines the speaker, Mr. Wales. In the lead up to Purcell's second and more serious trial, Wales obtains an apartment closer to the Morec spire, specifically so that he cannot defend Purcell again. Wales does not realise this at first, but it comes to him once he has moved in, when he thinks "how Purcell must have looked coming up for that last block meeting." (*MWJ*, p140) His belief in Morec, in the principles it propagates, have led him to abandon a human relationship which he values. In so doing, he has betrayed himself more than anyone. But again, this should come as no surprise. Morec's whole media strategy, of the 'domino' is built around this idea of the erasure of individual identity. In this system, one family watches television for the block, informing them what has been broadcast. This system "operates on the assumption that people believe what their group believes, no more and no less." (*MWJ*, p20) This is ensured through the domino method, which prevents people interpreting Telemedia's broadcasts for themselves. It precludes the possibility of anyone thinking about it for themselves. This is vital, as Purcell points out, because "one unique individual", thinking for their self "would foul it up." (*MWJ*, p20)

This is not the only grounds on which it is possible to condemn Morec and the block meetings. One might also point out the absence of morality from these perpetually reproduced proceedings. This is pointed out explicitly by the tirade Purcell unleashes at the end of his second trial, which is worth quoting at length.

I'm fed up with this faceless accusation. Obscene, sadistic minds are using these meetings to pry out all the sordid details, tainting every harmless act by pawing over it, reading filth and guilt into every normal human relationship. Before I step off this stage I have one general, theoretical statement to make. The world would be a lot better if there was no morbid inquisition like this. More harm is done in one of these sessions than in all the copulation between man and woman since the creation of the world. (*MWJ*, p135)

It is only here, in the block meeting, that Morec is capable of taking into account the human context of the deviations from their 'moral' norms, but here they are prejudged by the fact of violation, so that this context is inevitably presented as corrupt. Once again, Baudrillard is relevant. As he observes, this process of erasure of the individual, of the truly human, displays at the same time a prurient "exhibitionism, from this continual voyeurism of the group spying on itself."²³ This becomes the only arena in which it is possible for the mass to

take pleasure from the desires barred from gratification by the noose of Morec. As such in Morec society “the social is obsessed with itself, it becomes its own vice, its own perversion.”²⁴ In the block meeting process this is clearly illustrated, is placed on an almost pornographic display.

These block meetings also serve the imperial function of controlling the movements of the population. Purcell’s punishment for his violation of conventional morality, of Morec, is that he loses his apartment, so that he will have to search for another one further away from the *omphalos* of the Morec tower. In this way, the imperial power of Morec is able to control the movements of the population, through its control over their living conditions. It becomes able to regulate movements through its hierarchy, banishing disruptive elements out to the lower strata of the colonies, while moving those who follow its injunctions in towards the centre.

It is clear that such a repressive, stagnant society as Morec is a totalitarian system, fracturing the relationships of its citizens in order to maintain a greater degree of control over their actions. It utilises a system of surveillance which is broadly similar to that of Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The primary difference is that it chooses to banish dissidents, where the state in Oceania prefers to destroy them. However, it is not permitted to go unchallenged. Purcell, the man who japed of the title, turns the media against the system, as I will discuss further in a later section.

1.3 *The Penultimate Truth: Stratification, Media Manipulation and Empire*

The next of Dick’s novels which I intend to examine, *The Penultimate Truth*, also depicts a rigidly stratified society, in which those at the top use the media to ensure that those lower down the social hierarchy keep on functioning in their predetermined roles. In this novel, a nuclear exchange has devastated the surface of the Earth, forcing the population to live below the surface. However, a small elite has remained on the surface, in order to administer the war effort, and to provide information and propaganda to those below the surface. Much of this war is waged with ‘leadies’, the robots which are produced by the population living underground. However, after this situation has gone on for some time, it occurs to the leaders of both sides, and their robotic military advisors, that this war is unwinnable, and as such serves no good purpose. They therefore call a truce. The belief that the war is still going on, on the other hand, does serve the valuable function of keeping the subterranean population frightened, and preventing them objecting to the dehumanising conditions in which they live. As a result the surface elites decide to keep on feeding them propaganda which says that the surface is uninhabitable, due to radiation and a variety of fictional diseases which were supposedly released as agents of biological warfare. This enables the surface elites to live in luxury, with vast demesnes and armies of leadies to guard their boundaries, build their homes, and generally serve their interests. This perpetual war recalls the constant war footing in Oceania, though with the important distinction that in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the war is presented as concrete reality, rather than fictional construct. As such, it should be quite clear that the role of the media as a form of mass manipulation is a central theme of this novel.

The most overt form of this manipulation through the media is the propaganda which is produced by the surface elite, the Yance-men, and broadcast to the bulk of the population

in the tanks. This generally concerns the artificial war, focussing on events such as the destruction of Detroit which we see broadcast in the opening chapters of the novel. However, these events are entirely unreal, with Detroit having been constructed in miniature in a studio, before being destroyed according to a script provided by Ernest Eisenbludt, the official in charge of the production of the media. What is most interesting about this is the effect it has on the tankers, who think “it could have been us up there”.²⁵ This sort of propaganda, this depiction of the false horrors being unleashed on the surface, serve to ensure that the tankers are happy, or at least willing, to continue to live under the surface, in the inhuman conditions of their cramped tanks, as the alternative is too horrifying. As Adams observes, he uses “the Yancy sim to persuade them that they have to go on because its even worse up here on the surface.” (PT, p56) The success of such messages can be seen in Nicholas St. James’s response when he reaches the surface. On surfacing, he feels “the urge to scramble back down ... panic”. (PT, p70) His fear of the surface is so great that it almost negates the pressing reasons he had for leaving his tank in the first place. Once again, here we see the imperial urge to control the movements of populations, just as it controls the flow of goods and money. It serves to keep them in their place, at the bottom rung of the hierarchy.

A second effect of this propaganda is to reconcile the tankers to increased labour. As St. James thinks while watching “*it means a higher quota. More must be achieved underground as less, every day, remained above.*” (PT, p17) This message is reaffirmed by Yancy’s statements that “a good deal of war material has emerged by [Detroit’s] fair autofacs, all these years, and now that is lost.” (PT, p17) Thus, these broadcasts also serve as a means to extract greater productive output out of the already stretched tankers, without being obliged to put anything more in. They serve to condition the tankers to the unpalatable lives they are obliged to lead.

This function is made explicit by the questioning which follows the broadcast, which is led by the tank’s ‘pol-com’, or Political Commissioner, who is the elite’s representative in the tank. His stated function is to maintain “a direct human link between their tank and the Estes Park Government”. (PT, p21) He is supposed to offer the tankers some means of “[answering] back [so that] the colloquy ... could exist between the tanks and the government.” (PT, p21) However his behaviour after this broadcast is simply to ask questions to ensure that everybody has taken in Yancy’s messages. The tankers are for him “[victims] to be interrogated.” (PT, p19) Indeed, when St. James steps in to help out one of these victims, Nunes, the pol-com, criticises him for making an “unpatriotic comment” (PT, p20) He clearly does not create any opportunity for a dialogue, but rather performs “rah-rah tactics” (PT, p21) for the elite. He is more like the Thought Police than a bridge between the tankers and the government. And he has at his disposal a similar set of threats. He can call down on the tankers the retribution of the state, either in the form of “human police ... or ... a commando team of ... leadies.” (PT, p20) As such, it should be quite apparent that his real role is to confirm the acceptance of the propaganda which has just been broadcast.

The pol-com is not the only parallel to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The Protector, who gives the speeches which are a vital part of this propaganda also bears similarities with Big Brother. He is described as having an “I-am-larger-than-you image” (PT, p18), and it is this which validates the propaganda, just as Big Brother’s word is the seal of truth in Oceania. He defines the ‘Morec’ of this world, the appropriate codes of behaviour for the tankers. That this is subordination to the interests of the elite should come as no surprise. Also, like Big Brother, he is a fictional construct. As St. James is told when he reaches the surface “there is no Talbot Yancy.” (PT, p88) Instead, there is only a robot with no legs behind its desk, with “competent, fatherly, mature but soldierly features” (PT, p48), all calculated to reassure the

tankers that the best is being done for them, that this eternally unchanging patriarch is looking out for them. These broadcasts are “a source of comfort and strength, adjusted to the conditions of morale as reported by”²⁶ the pol-coms. This requires that Yancy should be eternally unchanging, like Big Brother once again. The risk, of course, is that should this simulacrum begin to deteriorate, it would destabilise the whole simulation. It must not appear that the “strain of the war [could] get the Protector, [or] then what’ll we do?” (*PT*, p49) Much of the propaganda which is produced by the Yance-men and broadcast through Yancy encourages the tankers to accept the lives which they lead. If the Protector cannot cope with the conditions of life during the war, then why should the tankers? Thus, it is absolutely vital that this illusion be maintained, in order that the tankers should continue to accept their subordination, and the Yance-men to live in the standards to which they have become accustomed. It is interesting to note that these pieces of propaganda are sent down to the tankers on a coaxial cable, which is constantly referred to as the ‘coax’. The meaning of this should be clear as it is used to coax the tankers into accepting the lives they are given.

Of course, the Yance-men themselves, though they may “feel enough guilt to make their late evenings a thrashing agony” (*PT*, p47), would not accept that this system exists primarily for their benefit. Their reasoning is that were the tankers permitted back up to the surface, it would be necessary to reconstitute a “densely populated civilisation ... and-ultimately, there would be war.” (*PT*, p45) As Merritt Abrash has observed, “this line of thought comes straight out of Rousseau’s *Second Discourse*- population increase produces property in land and other goods, followed by conflict”.²⁷ So it seems that in order to prevent the return of civilisation, and the threat of a real war which accompanies it, we have here a Baudrillardian “pure war... - the hyperreal and eternally deterring form -of war”.²⁸ The elite then can “for the first time ... congratulate [themselves] on the absence of the event.”²⁹ In order to do so, they have had to subject the tankers to their hyperreal, simulated war. Indeed, for the tankers, this artificial war is the only reality, and their lives are shaped by the very real deprivations and hardships which accompany it. Once again, we have here a link to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in the concretisation of the maxim that ‘War is Peace’. However, it is only peace for the elite; for the rest it is simply a constant and stable state of deprivation.

It also ought to be remembered that a significant cause of the initial war was the propaganda machine. This served to increase patriotism by sowing hatred for the opposed power block. The main examples of this in the novel are Gottlieb Fischer’s pair of documentaries. These “refuse [heaps] of manufactured fraud” (*PT*, p59) were “constructed for the purpose of getting Germany off the hook in regard to the deeds done, the decisions taken, in World War II. Because in 1982 Germany was once again a world power”. (*PT*, p64) However, in order to do so, they redirected the blame at different enemies. Documentary A, directed at “the Wes-Dem TV viewer” depicts the real enemy as “Josef Stalin”. (*PT*, p61) This truth had been hidden by “communist propagandists, fifth columnists in the Western Democracies ... even Roosevelt”, (*PT*, p61) who is shown in a faked scene to have been “a Communist agent. Under Party discipline.”³⁰ (*PT*, p63) This was the reason for the production of the documentary- it demonised the opposed, Communist block and it legitimated Germany’s return to the heart of the Wes-Dem power block. This message was fully backed by the “Wes-Dem military establishment” (*PT*, p61), as it enabled them to continue to justify their own existence. Version B of the documentary served a similar function for the Communist block arguing that the U.S. and England brought Hitler to power “for the sole purpose of attacking the Eastern countries, of preserving the status quo against the new rising nations of the East.” (*PT*, p65) And these documentaries apparently “*had* been universally accepted as historically correct”. (*PT*, p64) Thus, it becomes apparent that a large

part of the drive to war was produced by these hyperreal simulations of history. Here again we see the real “[effacing] itself in favour of the more real than real: the hyperreal.”³¹ It is important to note that these simulations were produced with the support of the military establishments. Thus, the simulation of reality in which the war occurred was produced by those with most to gain from it, the military establishments. This somewhat undermines the elite’s own rationale for their exploitation of the tankers. It does not invalidate their argument that civilisation must necessarily lead to war, but it does show that the war was produced by those with most invested in it, rather than a natural offshoot of civilisation. It also further emphasises that this, more recent simulation is once again just serving its own producers. Abrash points out that “the peoples on both sides had egged on their governments to fight”³² but this is simply another instance of the biopolitical domination exerted by imperial powers. It is an inevitable product of the immersion of the public in this hyperreal simulation, which serves to create support for the actions of Empire.

Indeed, this whole system can be seen in terms of Empire. The tankers’ submission to their domination is produced by the information which they receive, which in the words of Abrash makes “their duty ... self-evident.”³³ This whole process derives from the media, both the initial drive to war, and the continued hyperreal war. It is enabled by the fact that “information is totally controlled, and the consequence is a continual and unresisted expropriation of the mass of humanity by a tiny elite.”³⁴ This total control over information gives the elite a similarly total control over the rest of society, over the movements of peoples, over production, over all aspects of society. Abrash describes the media as “the means of the utter corruption of those who direct them and the alienation from their birthright of those at whom they are directed”.³⁵

This almost perfectly fits with Hardt and Negri’s description of corruption, as Empire reaches into productive circuits in order to expropriate the productive capacity of the people for its own continued growth. A clear example of this corruption is the fact that the tankers run themselves ragged to produce leadies in order to support the war effort, when in actuality these robots only go towards expanding the retinues of the Yance-men. In the process, the tankers are reduced to nothing more than a part of the productive system, rather than individuals. In this way a sort of Wellsian hierarchy is established, with the tankers standing in for the Morlock’s, labouring to maintain the quality of life of their masters. The tankers are as dehumanised as the Morlocks, although this is accomplished somewhat differently. This can be seen in the fact that the tanks are “ant tanks”. (*PT*, p10) The tankers are thus not people, but rather worker ants. And this is important, because ants are *not* individuals. They are interchangeable units, cells in the hive. One worker ant can perform the task of any other with equal efficiency, they are undifferentiated. Thus, the designation of the tanks as ‘ant tanks’ elides the real differences between individuals, reducing them to interchangeable units within the greater hive of Empire.

However, the individuals in the tanks clearly are not ants. It is the importance of a single individual which leads St. James to leave his tank for the surface, to try and get a synthetic pancreas for Maury Souza. And he does this because “there are no more Maury Souzas in the world.” (*PT*, p19) The workers in the tanks are genuine individuals, whatever the elite might think of them, whether or not they are used as interchangeable units. This movement towards the surface also undermines the elite’s attempt to control the movements of the population, through their depiction of artificial conditions on the surface. These may have been internalised, as a form of biopolitical control, but they can be overruled by values which derive from real human contact, from empathy rather than intimidation. In the process,

St. James illustrates what Dick sees as “the ultimate heroic trait of ordinary people; they say no to the tyrant and they calmly take the consequences of this resistance.”³⁶ By going up to the surface, St. James says no to the internalised voice of the tyrant, and is prepared to take the consequences, to face the homeostatic missiles he has been conditioned to expect, in order to attempt to save the life of his valued friend. And this act is one of those which will lead to the truth being unveiled to the tankers. It is the beginning of his line of flight, the start of a new linear proceeding, which will bring him into contact with new matters, new territories, and in doing so enable new expressions.

The first of these reterritorialisations is his introduction to the community of ex-tankers in Cheyenne. It is here that he finds out the truth, that there is no war, and that instead Wes-Dem and Pac-Peop have made peace and come to operate in the same way, through the same media agencies, “[sharing] film studios in Moscow ... [and] the New York Agency.” (*PT*, p89) Having come to the surface, he acquires information that enables him to see his domination in a new way, as domination. While here, he also learns of the second order of domination which is in place for those tankers who have escaped to the surface. These are Runcible’s “prisons, [his] huge condominium apartment buildings”. (*PT*, p89) They are portrayed as a preferable alternative to the ant tanks, in that “you don’t feel like a rat trapped in a tin box” (*PT*, p89) but they remain prisons none-the-less. While Runcible provides better facilities for the tankers he exploits, giving them “ping-pong and swimming pools and wall-to-wall carpet” (*PT*, p95), this simply means that his prisons operate through repressive desublimation. They keep their occupants docile through reward rather than threat. They still do not meet the needs of the ex-tankers in Cheyenne, who “just - like to be free.” (*PT*, p95) And this desire for freedom is better met in Cheyenne, where they might be dependent upon Lantano’s handouts of food and anti-radiation pills, but at least their time is their own, and their productivity is not expropriated by any master. What Runcible’s conapts represent is a struggle for power within Empire, with Runcible attempting to take the position at the top of the pyramid from Brose, rather than a struggle against Empire on the behalf of the tankers. This is explicitly stated in the observation that “[the Yance-men] gained by keeping the tankers down, and [Runcible] gained by luring them up”. (*PT*, p47) And while Adams might feel that Runcible is in some way “amending ... the theft of an entire planet from its rightful owners” (*PT*, p47), he is at the same time aware that the conapts are prisons, and that any tankers who escape from them are rounded up by military leadies and returned to their luxury cells.

St. James relocation to Cheyenne also gives him his first indication that the Yance-men are also subject to a degree of domination, dictated by their position within the hierarchy of Empire. While they clearly gain significantly from the subordination of the tankers, through their corrupt alienation of the tankers from their own productivity, they suffer from a similar, though less marked process. They do gain from their own labour, as their demesnes and retinues indicate, but the lion’s share of such gain goes to Brose, who is the ultimate economic power, with the largest retinue of leadies. But the Yance-men are no more in control over their own creativity than the ‘poets’/copywriters at Fowler Schocken are. Instead, Brose is. He has the final say over what is broadcast to the tanks. He chooses the subjects for speeches, and he decides if they are suitable to be broadcast. In the opening chapter, Adams is working on a speech about a squirrel, because “Brose told [him] ... that this speech has to use a squirrel as the operational entity.” (*PT*, p7) And many of Adams speeches are cleared for broadcast by Megevac-6, the computer which operates Yancy, only to be cancelled by Brose. In Cheyenne, St. James is informed of Brose’s position at the top of the hierarchy, and gains an inkling of his domination over the other Yance-men when he is

told that “even the Yance-men can’t get [artificial organs because] Brose has them all attached; he owns them all, legally.” (PT, p94)

Indeed, it becomes apparent that Brose vitally needs them, though of course anyone who needs an artiforg needs one vitally, as they are replacements for the vital organs. It is just such a vital need which has driven St. James to the surface. But for Brose, they are the very essence of his being. He is “full of artiforgs, all but the brain.” (PT, p94) This term, ‘artiforg’ is a contraction of artificial organ. Indeed, according to Adams, this “one original organ ... was Brose, the rest now being, tin-woodmanwise, a mere procession of Arti-Gan Corporation’s plastic, complex, never-failing ... replacements”. (PT, p34) However, it is truer to see Brose’s authenticity in the eternal chain of replacements with which he maintains himself, and his own political and economic domination of the planet. The strength of this view is that it enables us to see Brose as an image of Empire, of the core of a political system which maintains itself through the continual reproduction of itself. He is Empire’s corrupted crown, “*the fat old louse*” (PT, p34) which reproduces itself and its power by sucking the productive capacities from the populations it exploits.

But this Imperial system which Brose represents is brought to the brink of destruction at the end of the text. This is determined by two factors, the two plot strands which are intertwined by the end of the novels. I have already referred to the first of these, which is St. James’s flight from his tank in search of an artificial pancreas for Maury Souza. The other one is the plot which focusses on the elite, on the Yance-man protagonist, Adams. His line of flight begins when he is removed from his normal milieu, the Agency, to work instead on one of Brose’s special projects. He is to be involved in Brose’s power struggle with Runcible, in a ploy which involves some convoluted time travel. This aspect of the plot seems to be one of the main reasons this novel is dismissed by many commentators. What is important about this is that it goes against Adams’ own feelings about Runcible’s work. As I have mentioned above, Adams feels that in some way Runcible is making amends for the theft of the planet from the tankers. It helps to assuage his guilt to know that this work is being done. Indeed, he feels this guilt to be an essential part of the psychology of the Yance-men, as their work “was wrong and they knew it”. (PT, p46) This knowledge of his own guilt has been eating at him for some time, causing “loneliness, emptiness and making [his] nights impossible.” (PT, p47) However, even this knowledge, that his sense of guilt is being violated, is not able to make him break with the Agency and the Yance-men, is not enough to make him work against Brose and warn Runcible of the plan against him. He tries, he even gets as far as making a phone call, but his bonds to the Agency, to the Imperial power structure established by Brose, are too strong. He has “introjected them and now they act as a part of [him]”. (PT, p103) Once again, we see biopower at work, the inclusion of social rules and roles within the subject, so that they serve more effectively than they would if enforced from without. This can also be seen as an echo of the effects of the panoptic system of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which ensures that the population polices itself. This force is established by his imbrication in his milieu, which establishes the forms and contents of his expression just as Brose dictates the contents of his speeches. It pulses “across the sky of his life and left no trail, no sensation.” (PT, p104) In this way, it is naturalised, so that “for him, there was nothing else.” (PT, p104)

This situation is changed by the murder of Verne Lindblom, Adams’ colleague in Brose’s special project. It forces Adams into flight, as he fears that he too will be killed once he has finished working on Brose’s special project. His flight leads him to Lantano, an up and coming Yance-man who is also a Native American chief with access to a time-travel device. This has allowed him to play a significant role in the establishment of the Yance-men. He

acted in Fischer's documentaries, and he was the model for Yancy himself. The help he offers to Adams is the chance to murder Brose. This helps Adams, in that it prevents Brose killing him, and it helps St. James, who is also present when this is revealed, as it enables him to find the artiforg which he needs. This reterritorialisation in Lantano's demesne does create new spaces for them to move into. However, at the same time, it is just another grab for power, though here it is Lantano attempting to claim control. It is another conflict within Empire, another battle for the top spot. Because it is Lantano's intention to become Yancy, to take over that role. He intends to fill the simulation with some sort of human authenticity. That this remains an imperial project, however, is clearly indicated by Lantano's intentions. As Yancy, he will retain control over the media. He has no intention of announcing the truth, and destroying the credibility of the identity he intends to use to seize power. His intended announcement is that "the war has terminated. But that the surface is still radioactive. So the ant tanks must be emptied on a gradual basis." (PT, p148) This makes it clear that Lantano will retain the imperial control over the movements of populations. This is further reinforced by his statement that he, in conjunction with Runcible and the leady council, the other dominant political and economic institutions in this Empire, will "decide what to do with the millions of underground dwellers." (P, 148) And Runcible, like Brose, profits from the domination of the tankers. As such, it is clear that what Lantano is offering is a change in the nature of domination, rather than liberation from it. While the ending is positive in that it marks the ending of the established political system, it does not necessarily indicate a move towards freedom.

Abrash has offered an interesting interpretation of Lantano's role. He argues that Lantano fills the role of 'Legislator'. This position was postulated by Rousseau as the only figure who could adequately govern human society, establishing laws which would govern the institutions of society. Part of his basis for this is Rousseau's observation that such a figure must "[work] in one century, to be able to enjoy in the next".³⁷ Abrash sees Lantano as another of Dick's concrete representations of metaphor, of the sort identified by Robinson. Indeed, this is not the only such metaphor rendered real in this text. As Robinson points out, this novel makes literal the statement that "the ruling class keeps the workers underfoot."³⁸ The problem with Lantano is that he will continue to do the same thing. In this way, he diverges from the role of the Legislator. "The Legislator's power over fundamental social organisation is so great that he must not be additionally be allowed to exercise ... power over the people"³⁹ but this is exactly what he intends to do. Drawn into the power struggle for control over Empire, Lantano "becomes corrupted, ... seeking to exercise the power which ... he is supposed to bestow upon the people."⁴⁰ This is however, no surprise, as embedded in the corrupt milieu of Empire he has been tainted by the corruption which is intrinsic to it. And we should also remember that Lantano's involvement earlier, in the production of the documentaries, and modelling for Yancy, has all helped to bring this situation about. His behaviour has helped to produce the Empire he finally both controls and condemns. As such, we must ask whether he has ever had sufficient lack of self-interest to fulfil the role of Legislator. Dick might also be using him to question the very idea of such a Legislator, as it is hard to imagine how one might exercise power over institutions without also taking on a degree of power over the individual who constitute them.

The novel does, however end on a positive note. As Adams grows excited by the prospect of a role in an Empire which would assuage his guilt, St. James becomes more dubious of Lantano's power and intentions. The last sentences of the novel, in which St. James refuses to go along with any new lies which the elite might put out to cover up their past lies is, like the ending of *The Man Who Japed*, an indication of the importance of

dissent. It is an affirmation of the power of refusal, of negation, of the vital need that the powers of Empire to produce and reproduce hyperreal simulations should be contested. As Umberto Rossi points out, St. James's statement that "we will not allow you" (*PT*, p174) "means that Adams (and the 'real' history-mongers) will not be allowed 'to come up with something,' ie., with another (hi)story".⁴¹ However, the means by which such a contest might be carried through to a positive conclusion against such powerful institutions are only hinted at. They depend upon St. James's statement that "*I'm going to tell them the truth.*" (*PT*, p172) And the only means he has of disseminating it is to "blab [it on] ... some dinky little shortwave radio transmitter" (*PT*, p172) to the next tank. This seems like a very small tool with which to compete with the massive institutional media of Yancy and the coax, and all the resources which the Agency has available to it. It does however indicate that Dick does believe in the positive value of the media, as a means of transmitting the truth, of distributing the information that the subjects of Empire need to have in order to contest its domination.

It is important to try and understand what the ultimate truth is, to which this novel is penultimate. Abrash argues that Dick uses the novel as "a metaphor for the way *our* world actually works."⁴² That is, he uses it to indicate that we too live in a simulation produced by our political leaders in order to maintain their power and our domination. This too is supported by Rossi's discussion of the novel. He argues that "Dick's deconstruction of the mass-media circulation of discourse ends up with the bitter awareness that all the government tells people is just a lie, or better, an irredeemably penultimate truth."⁴³ In this process, "the whole U.S. civilisation is called in doubt (well before the Watergate scandal...)." ⁴⁴ My only reservation about this comment is that it is too restricted; it is not only U.S. civilisation which is called into doubt, but that of our increasingly globalised world.

1.4 *The Simulacra*: Celebrity Politics

The title of this novel gives an indication of its theme. A simulacrum is a copy without an original. We find many of these in this novel, particularly in positions of power. It is possible to read *The Simulacra* in a very similar way to *The Penultimate Truth*. It too depicts a world in which there is a rigid separation between those who know the secrets of the state, and the larger public, who are dominated by the state and kept ignorant of its operation. In this novel, the population is split into *Gehemnistrager* and *Befehlstrager*, or *Ges* and *Bes* respectively. These terms translate into 'secret-bearers' and 'order-bearers', which clearly indicates which of these groups constitutes the political elite. In this world, the secret that the *Ges* bear is that the President, or der Alte, is a simulacrum, produced by the massive conglomerate Karp Werke. While this is the primary secret, the other is that Nicole Thibodeaux, the First Lady, is actually an actress, one of a number who have played this role. She is another of the simulacra referred to by the title. In order to understand why that should be so significant, it is important to understand how the political system of this world has changed. This First Lady is now the most significant political figure for the public. The President, or der Alte, is chosen to be her husband for the next four years. This change can be seen in the change of title. This figure is no longer the President of the country, but rather the Other to Nicole, her necessary companion. But as Nicole is First Lady, so she must inevitably come first, in both political importance and the nation's esteem. As such, der Alte is not chosen on the basis of any political debate, but rather because he is "the man they thought

Nicole would like best.”⁴⁵ Indeed, there are no longer any political parties which might have a debate, the Democratic and Republican parties having merged so that “now there was just the one party ... and everyone, by law, belonged to it.” (*Sim*, p19)

This novel is less concerned with how political issues are managed by the media, than how the bizarre relationship between Nicole and the public is produced and maintained. However, before I move on to a discussion of this central aspect of the text, I will briefly discuss the role of der Alte, and the echoes from earlier novels which can be seen in this novel’s political system. Der Alte, as a simulacrum, clearly carries echoes of the Protector from *The Penultimate Truth*, but his role here is rather different. While the Protector, like Big Brother, served to create and maintain political truths which served the elite, the Yance-men or the Party, der Alte instead serves to provide the public with an illusion of political involvement. He answers their desire to have some say in the operation of the country. This is produced in two ways. First of all, it derives from their apparent ability to select who will be der Alte. As Ian Duncan observes early on, “it was nice to know that they, the people, had the power to decide who would become Nicole’s husband, each four years; in a sense it gave to the electorate supreme power, even above Nicole herself.” (*Sim*, p20) It produces for the *Bes* a sense of power in a world in which they are ultimately impotent. This is made quite clear from the fact that even before the election, it has been decided who will be making the new der Alte. It is a decision which is made by the state, and then presented to the public so that they can ratify it and provide a veneer of legitimacy. In this way he is much like Keith Pellig, selected by those with power and then presented to the public as their selection, in order to garner support.

The second way in which der Alte serves to provide the public with an illusion of involvement is his speeches. Televisions come with a set of knobs which theoretically enable the public to influence der Alte’s speeches. However, these produce no real change. This is, however, easily explained, as “too many other viewers had their own ideas as to what the old man ought to be saying”. (*Sim*, p25) Thus, there is no need for the public to expect these knobs to produce any change. They merely provide people with an outlet for their desire to get involved in the nation’s politics. They also serve a valuable function for the state. Having turned these knobs, with no discernible effect, Vince observes that “that was democracy. ... This was what they had wanted: a government receptive to what the people had said.” (*Sim*, p25) Given the operation of politics in this world, these dials have no effect on der Alte’s speeches. They do however confer legitimacy on anything he says. They enable the government to say whatever they want, and the public will believe that it is the will of the people, enacted through their collective use of the dials on their T.V.s. In this way, in Baudrillard’s words, “the media ... have pushed back the limits of will and representation, ... and taken from each subject ... his desire and his own choice and liberty.”⁴⁶ But Baudrillard is wrong to suggest that this is the result of a “massive *de-volition* and withdrawal of the will.”⁴⁷ The act of turning the dial is not a withdrawal of will, but rather an attempt to exercise it. It is rather that this system through which the will is mediated simultaneously forestalls its action and provides it with a gratification in impotence. It is not that the people “[allows] itself the spectacle of the political scene”⁴⁸, but rather that they are hoodwinked into believing that they produce it. As Massumi observes, “the mass media are a specialised perceptive apparatus charged with aiding in this parodic translation of difference into more of the same.”⁴⁹ This is clearly true here, where the wide range of political opinions enacted through the dials is perceived to be the reason that no change is ever produced in der Alte’s speeches. This is democracy as “every [body’s] ... ‘free’ choice to abdicate power.”⁵⁰ It should be clear, while there are some similarities between der Alte and the Protector, in that

they are both simulations which serve to keep the people pacified, they function in quite different ways.

This similarity between der Alte and the Protector is not the only echo of Dick's earlier work. The relpol exams which people have to take bear a close resemblance to Morec's insistence on conformity. These relpol tests examine the populations 'understanding' of political history, particularly the political history of the USEA, the United States of Europe and America. These tests are prepared for by studying "official Government texts". (*Sim*, p19) As such, they do not test for a genuine understanding of the past, but rather for an acceptance of the official line. It is a test of conditioning, rather than a test of understanding. This is made particularly clear by Loony Luke's reference to "*real* history texts" which are "banned to everyone except *Ges.*" (*Sim*, p117) He draws a clear distinction between these and the texts from which the *Bes* prepare for their tests. It should therefore be clear that these tests serve a similar function to Morec. They ensure a uniform, conditioned population. There are differences, obviously. Morec refers primarily to behaviour, while these relpol tests condition the population's attitude to the world, their understanding of its operation and production. However, these differences are negligible, as the Morec system also controls the media and as such the representations of history. The results of failure are also broadly the same in both cases. To fail in a relpol test has the same result as a violation of proper Morec- the eviction from your flat. In this case, you are refunded the money with which you had paid for the apartment, so the failure of a relpol test does not leave people as destitute as a failure of Morec. However, it does leave a dearth of options. The only real option identified by Ian Duncan or his examiner is to buy a jalopy from Loony Luke, and emigrate to Mars. As such, the failure of relpol has the same end result as a failure of Morec, as there seems little difference between the compulsory banishment of Morec and the emigration of this text, driven as it is by an utter lack of alternatives.

However, these issues are only secondary. Even der Alte, which/who plays a key role in maintaining public belief in this hollowed out political system, is only of secondary importance to Nicole. Nicole is a very strange figure, on one level the most important figure in this political system, yet at the same time she takes no public role in politics. Political speeches are delivered through der Alte, rather than by Nicole. We do see her in control of the backstage of politics, the discussions in closed rooms with Goering. This is a part of an awkward time travel subplot which I intend to avoid discussing, as I feel that it only confuses matters. My reason for mentioning it is that this is one of the instances where we do see Nicole in her full political power. However, this is not a part of her public persona. In public, she directs the entertainments which are staged for television. Music, drama, even documentaries are all staged as concerts for or presentations to Nicole. She is a constant televisual presence, as much a simulation as der Alte. In this way, the TV allows people access to her. As Ian Duncan puts it, TV takes the population "to the Whitehouse ... at least vicariously. We who can't find our way there, who have not talents which might interest the First Lady even for one evening: we get to see in anyhow, through the carefully regulated window of our television set." (*Sim*, p21) So on one level, we can see Nicole as being bound up with the idea of repressive desublimation. This 'carefully regulated' window into her world recalls Mildred's parlour in *Fahrenheit 451*, which takes her all over the world, to all the exciting places she could wish. It serves as a substitute for life. Through this window, Nicole presents the music and entertainments which attempt to fill the void in the lives of Dick's little people, of ordinary people like Ian Duncan. Duncan notes this repressive aspect of the media himself, observing that it "is part of a deliberate propaganda line An effort to take our minds off Mars and the idea of getting away from the Party." (*Sim*, p22) In this way, the media prevent people from taking the necessary steps to improve their own lives. But to

view Nicole in this way, as merely a presenter for the repressive media, is to reduce her meaning massively. She is a much more complicated figure than this.

She is also a goad to sublimation. Artistic endeavour is only worthwhile as a means of getting to the Whitehouse and artistic talents are meaningful only insofar as they 'might interest the First Lady'. In this world, all art is motivated by the desire to reach the presence of Nicole herself, to entertain the First Lady. This is what success means, it is not to be good at what you do, but rather to do it for Nicole. We can clearly see this when Duncan observes that "if only Al and I had succeeded; we might be performing right now for you, and we'd be happy." (*Sim*, p22) Reaching Nicole is seen as the route to happiness, and it is this which drives the creative endeavour. But failure to perform for the First Lady makes it worthless. When rejected by the Whitehouse talent scout Ian and Al "retired from the stage *and their jugs.*" (*Sim*, p23, emphasis mine) They put aside their jugs when there is no longer any chance of it gratifying the desire which motivated it. It no longer has any value, art is shown to have no value in and for itself in this world. Trying to persuade his old partner to start again, to have one more try at playing for Nicole, Ian says, "I can't stand to be a failure at what we agreed was the most important thing in our lives." (*Sim*, p54) And the way out of "this trapped feeling" is to "get back to playing", not for its own sake, but so as to "try once more" to reach the Whitehouse. (*Sim*, p54) Thus, Duncan redirects his comprehensive dissatisfaction with his life not into any act which might produce a real change, such as the move to Mars which he considers early on, but into the artistic endeavour which might enable him to play before Nicky. Thus, we see that art here serves as an all too repressive sublimation of desire, at the same time as its re-presentation through the media offers desublimation. The desire expressed in art becomes the desire to be assimilated into the simulation which Nicole re-presents to the public.

In this way, the merit of art is lost. For Marcuse, the value of art lies in the fact that it "subverts everyday existence and shows it to be mutilated and false. But art has this magic power only as the power of negation. It can speak its own language only as long as the images are alive which refuse and refute the established order."⁵¹ And while Ian Duncan's life is clearly 'mutilated and false', as can be seen from his 'trapped feeling', his art, his jug music, does nothing to oppose this. Duncan has no images available to him which might 'refute and refuse the established order'. Rather, his art is an attempt to reconnect with the established order, to give value to his life by connecting him with the core of the established order, the First Lady. His art has lost the power of negation, instead serving as an affirmation of the forces which repress him. "The intent and purpose of [the arts has] thus fundamentally changed. If they once stood in contradiction to the status quo, this contradiction is now flattened out [so that they become] cogs in a culture-machine which remakes their content."⁵² The important difference here is in the nature of the sublimation which is effected by the arts. While "artistic alienation is sublimation", it is a form of sublimation which "creates images of conditions which are irreconcilable with the established Reality Principle."⁵³ It is the sublimation of the desire for change into the production of images of change. This is not the case for Duncan. His desire for change is sublimated into the desire for Nicole, which is then in turn sublimated into the arts. It produces no images other than those which Duncan has been fed, of Nicole as benign benefactor, welcoming artists into her home to perform for her, and then sharing these performances with the public. Reaching Nicole does nothing to change this system, it merely reproduces the image of Nicole once again. Instead, it provides a validation of the system, and of the artists role in the system. As Duncan phrases it, he is "like a child that has to have its mother watching what it does, we're brought into being, *validated consensually*, by Nicole's gaze." (*Sim*, p114, emphasis mine)

Playing at the Whitehouse offers satisfaction to Duncan only insofar as he is then incorporated into her image, becoming part of the simulation of Nicole which the media constantly reproduce. In the process, he becomes part of the only space which has any value for him.

Thus, we can see that Nicole's role in the media ensures that they, and the repressive desublimation they produce, operate in a very different way than in the earlier texts I have discussed. It is part of a recursive loop, a vicious circle, with the desire for change sublimated into the desire for Nicole, which is then sublimated into the arts. This is then desublimated through an invitation to the Whitehouse, through the gratification of the original sublimated desire, which is then fed back to the public as repressive desublimation, or vicarious access to another world of greater value. That this world is the Whitehouse, ensures that this desublimation feeds into the initial sublimation of desire for change into desire for Nicole. Given the centrality of Nicole to this process, which plays a vital role in maintaining the domination of the population, it is worth examining how Nicole is constructed by the media, such that she might perpetuate this cycle. An answer is provided early on by Ian Duncan, when he wonders how the First Lady became of such increasing significance. He suggests that this was due to a public "need for a mother, wife, mistress or perhaps all three" and that "Nicole ... is certainly all three and more besides." (*Sim*, p20) Such images are evoked on numerous occasions, when Kongrosian tells Dr. Superb that "of course Nicole is a mother figure" (*Sim*, p97), Chic Strikerock saying that his fear of women derives from his fear of Nicole, of "the Bad Mother" (*Sim*, pp98), and Duncan's observation quoted above that he feels like a child seeking validation from its mother. Most telling is the observation that Nicole is 'mother, wife mistress ... and more besides.' She exceeds the mother, she exceeds all of these roles. Instead, Nicole is the Mother in a Lacanian sense, as the lost object of desire, which desire circulates around but cannot ever reach. She is the ultimate unattainable object, as she never really existed in the first place. The Mother is the product of the split in the subject which is produced by the introduction into the Symbolic. Any unity which was perceived was strictly Imaginary, a result of the gratification of desires which seemed to flow inevitably from the desires themselves, to be the result of them rather than an external response to their expression. Nicole may be seen in the same way, as she too is 'Imaginary', a product of the immersion in the 'Symbolic' system of the media. She has no contact with the Real, but is instead entirely produced by the media. When Duncan finally thinks he has reached her, once again she is protected by a screen, separated from them, kept out of reach. The nature of Duncan's desire for her is shown in his play on Al's words "*we ate Mrs. Thibodeaux*" (*Sim*, p162). He wants the same thing the child wants when it cries, he wants his distress to be curtailed, his hungers to be satiated by Nicole, by his return to an Imaginary unity.

Of course, they cannot be. When the final barrier is penetrated, when the final screen is torn away, Nicole is revealed to be an illusion. After being attacked by Loony Luke, Nicole reveals her artificiality, stating that "Nicole Thibodeaux died years ago" and she is actually the fourth actress who has "[looked] enough like the original Nicole to be able to keep [the] job." (*Sim*, p164) In the process, Nicole reveals herself to be "nothing more than the emptiness to be found in [her] own internal cesspit..."⁵⁴ She is both the source of the hollowness of this society, and the screen, the mediated image, behind which this hollowness hides. Duncan believes that to reach the Whitehouse and play for her is to be happy, to be fulfilled, to have the void at his core fully filled by Nicole's Imaginary presence. Nicole herself is the false image of a better world which drives repressive desublimation in this world.

Thus, in this world Big Brother is replaced by Nicole as Big Mother, maintaining stability through the promise of love rather than the threat of destruction. As Hayles has observed, she serves as Kongrosian's "anchor in reality"⁵⁵ and this is the role which she plays for most of society. According to Dr. Superb, this fixation on Nicole is "the national neurosis. The psychological fault of our times." (*Sim*, p98) And it is precisely that, a fault-line, in the geological sense of the word. It is the point of contact between two entities where motion is held back, producing tension, until finally the blocked energy is released, and the jolt of the resulting motion is enough to make the earth shake. At the start of the novel, Duncan is on the verge of just such a disruptive motion, of a flight to Mars, but when this is aborted by his doctored test results he is thrown him back into his state of neurotic tension, where the only motion which he can conceive of is to come into ever closer contact with Nicole. He can only retrace the fault-line, rather than move on to follow his own line of flight. This line of flight, the escape to Mars, is characterised by Superb as the "break [from] the mother". (*Sim*, p99) This in turn helps us to understand how subjectivity is deformed by this mediated regime.

What we see here is an obese society, in Baudrillard's terms. According to him, "this break - the mirror stage, which allows the child, by distinguishing limits, to open himself to the scene of imagination and representation - doesn't occur with the obese...."⁵⁶ Thus, obesity is the failure of the split from the mother which we have just seen in Duncan's comment "*we ate Mrs. Thibodeaux*". And doesn't the phrasing, the reference to consumption have particular relevance in this light. But more important is its immediate inversion, Duncan's acknowledgement that "isn't it actually the other way round? Doesn't she ... devour us?" (*Sim*, p162) It is important that we remember that Nicole is the simulation which obscures the void at this society's heart behind her obesity. "Does not the obese person cherish the dream of hypertrophying in order one day to divide into two like beings?"⁵⁷ And is this not what Nicole has accomplished, to expand to such an extent that she has consumed all of society, splitting off new representatives at regular intervals. By the time of the novel, she is in her fifth incarnation, this split has been repeated four times, and all to keep the public from accomplishing the vital split from her. What we have here is "not the obesity of a few individuals ..., but of a whole system."⁵⁸ It is the system as a whole which confuses internal and external, which projects its exteriority into its subjected population, through the mediated image of Nicole. This social obesity is marked by "the investment and overinvestment of all spaces by the social"⁵⁹ and this includes the space of the subject. If we accept a cybernetic conception of the subject as an information processing system, then we are constituted by information flows, our boundaries are the boundaries of the means by which we obtain information. In this case, the T.V., like the blind man's cane, is drawn into us, it becomes a part of our subjectivity. This is the gaze as Slavoj Zizek describes it, where the gaze belongs to the object looking back at you, interpellating you as subject. That Nicole is "subjectivised ... undermines our position an 'neutral', 'objective' observer, pinning us to the observed object itself. This is the point at which the observer is already included, inscribed in the observed scene- in a way, it is the point from which the picture looks back at us."⁶⁰ Thus we can understand Duncan's feeling that "on the TV screen she was smiling directly at him And so he smiled back." (*Sim*, p169) His gaze into the screen becomes her gaze into him, positioning him as a child who "[hops] up and down in his chair" (*Sim*, p168) with joy at the mothers suggestions. Clearly, we should not believe that "having been interpellated, he ... is able to act stably in [this society], and feel part of it."⁶¹ Rather, this interpellation is simultaneously an act of infantilization. It creates the neurosis which Nicole feeds upon, and which torments Ian Duncan throughout the novel. In this way, Nicole penetrates the boundaries of the subject, ensures the failure of the split and continues her own

obese growth. It creates the fault line where the subject comes up against Nicole and has its motion, its development halted. Thus, Duncan's belief that he has eaten Nicole is simply a symptom of his own consumption by Nicole.

This is not the only way in which internal and external are confused. This obesity of society "incarnates the formless form, the amorphous morphology of the currently social".⁶² That is to say, it produces a "deformity by excess of conformity".⁶³ This provides us with another way of reading the relpol tests. They are the views, or lies, of society, internalised through the compulsory status of the relpol tests. The internalisation of these views produces this 'excess of conformity' which deforms the subject. Failure requires the split from Nicole, the flight to Mars, and the constitution of the subject as such, rather than merely as a venue for the reproduction of society itself. This is another example of Empire's exercise of biopower. It enables power to express itself as "a control that extends throughout the consciousnesses and bodies of the population- and at the same time across the entirety of social relations."⁶⁴ The relpol tests are a means of ensuring that the external attitudes of this society have been internalised by the subjects it produces, that Empire's control does indeed extend through the consciousnesses of the population. Failure in the tests is therefore a failure a refusal of this exercise of power, and requires the banishment of the aberrant subject. This is a manifestation of what Deleuze and Guattari term the fascist-paranoid pole in politics. This is the pole which strives for homogenisation, for an immersion of society in the self-same. As Massumi describes it, it "works to fashion society into samenesses of varying scales ... (normality as the embodiment of analogy; being as self-similarity)."⁶⁵ It is the injunction to "always obey [To] think in conformity with what the State wants."⁶⁶ This relates to what Hayles identifies as the "battle to occupy the 'external' position relative to other characters"⁶⁷. Throughout the majority of the novel, the result of this battle is a foregone conclusion, with Nicole and the state she supports always victorious, and able to shape the subjectivity of the people who are internalised by it. Tellingly, the scene in which Hayles identifies this trope occurs at the end of the novel, when Kongrosian is internalising bits of the outside world, and projecting his internal organs out. The trigger for this period of Kongrosian's psychic instability is the discovery that Nicole is another simulation. To return to the image of the fault-line I used earlier, it is as if the tension which was produced by Nicole's image has suddenly been released, and the plates have undergone a cataclysmic movement. The long awaited earthquake has arrived, and it manifests in Kongrosian's fragmentation, and his struggle to hold himself together. It also occurs on a broader level as well, producing a civil war, as Karp Werke and the National Police attempt to seize power, to fill the void that is left by Nicole's downfall. The battle for the 'external' position has begun again, on the personal and psychological level for Kongrosian, and on the political level for Karp Werke and the N.P.

The final aspect of the media to be considered in this novel, advertising, also relates to the internal/external dichotomy. In this novel, advertising is represented by the Theodorus Nitz commercials, which are creatures the size of a fly which have been released in order to pester people with their messages. They are constantly shown trying to enter closed spaces, to make the transition from external to internal. The first time we see one, it is trying to "force entry" (*Sim*, p44) to a car. We next see one with Kongrosian, and tellingly, the visual part of the advert is played out "in his mind". (*Sim*, p63) It threatens him with "offensive body odour", which will produce "repugnance" in those he meets. (*Sim*, p63) Due to this advert, he has "acquired a phobic body odour; he had been contaminated by the commercial." (*Sim*, p64) Its threats have been internalised, its attempted forced entry to the car has been duplicated in its forced entry to Kongrosian's psyche. Interestingly, these adverts are never

associated with a particular product, but rather with particularly neurosis. They only represent the initial stage of the process I discussed in relation to *The Space Merchants*. They produce or evoke a tension, an anxiety, but never propose a solution which might transform it into a drive to consume. Instead, Dick is focussing on how adverts serve to produce in us a sense of inadequacy, suggesting that the tensions they evoke are never fully resolved through the act of consumption, but stay with us, gnawing at our self confidence. They are internalised, becoming parts of our sense of self. Kongrosian carries his advert around with him, constantly reinforcing the phobic body odour it produces. The adverts are like poisonous, miniature versions of Nicole. They are designed to be consumed, their messages are intended to be internalised, but they then remain exterior to us, shaping the interiority and subjectivity of those who consume them.

This novel, like *The Penultimate Truth* and *The Man who Japed*, focuses on how we are dominated by the media. However, while these novels both narrate the resistance to this domination, *The Simulacrum* primarily examines some of the methods by which this domination is accomplished, such as the identification with a false image of the nation, and dramatises the psychological damage that this produces.

1.5 Radio Free Albemuth: The Black Iron Prison Mediated

The final novel which I intend to examine is *Radio Free Albemuth*. It was only published posthumously, and is generally thought of as a first attempt at writing about the spiritual experiences which were first described in *Valis* (1981). I have chosen to use this novel, rather than *Valis*, which is more highly regarded, because the role of the media in shaping his understanding of this experience is more clearly apparent in this novel, as is apparent from the title. Also, *Radio Free Albemuth* locates this experience in a classically Dickian dystopian world, emphasising his political vision in ways which are not addressed in the more metaphysical *Valis*. While it has been less studied than *Valis*, as Suvin points out, "it is a coherent, lucid, and significant achievement, at least on a par with the 'Valis trilogy.'"⁶⁸ The world it is located in is only slightly different from our own. In it, a totalitarian leader, Ferris F. Fremont has become president of the U.S. and instituted a system of surveillance, much like that which we have seen in both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and earlier novels by Dick. The narrative concerns Nick and Phil, who gradually come to work against Fremont's regime after Nick receives messages from an alien entity, Valis. In order to do so, they smuggle messages into the media, Nick through his position at a record label, which enables him to put subversive messages in singles, while Phil is a novelist. Before I move onto discuss Valis, and the actions of its human agents, I will briefly summarise Fremont's regime.

Fremont himself seems to be an obvious caricature of Nixon. He comes to power in the election of 1968, with the "backing of the U.S. intelligence community" he "spied on [and] wiretapped"⁶⁹ the Democratic party and his first important political position was on "a committee investigating un-American activities." (*RFA*, p27) The first two points make Dick's intent quite apparent, the latter merely confirms it, as it evokes Nixon's early role on the Dies committee during the McCarthy era. Fremont's rise to power is aided by his condemnation of a mythical secret society, Aramchek, which he claims is the real power behind the Soviet Union and the CP-USA. In order to root out this organisation, he sets up a new organisation, the Friends of the American People, which is basically a secret police

service. They conduct surveillance on suspect individuals, getting them to inform on each other under the threat of prosecution and internment in Fremont's newly built concentration camps. Nick faces a threat like this. The amount of information that they have about his life is effectively a disguised warning that he is under surveillance, and their request that he should inform on the artists he sees for his record label is offered to him as a way to remove suspicion. Another approach is the distribution of 'voluntary information' packs, which request that the individual write a report about themselves and their friends, to vouch for their loyalty. These, like the more direct pressure which Nick comes under, serve to draw citizens "into the active intelligence system of the government." (*RFA*, p89) Though there are differences, this recalls the panoptic system of surveillance used in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with the FAPers standing in for the thought police. The statement which Phil is asked to write amounts to a confession, making "a man his own worst adversary, his own ultimate rat." (*RFA*, p90) The threat of external force leads people to police themselves, and as in both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Mao's China, informing on others is a valued social activity. As Phil observes "Ferris Fremont hasn't just taken over the country ... He's also taken over human minds. And debased them." (*RFA*, p81) That is, by co-opting members of public to inform on each other, the FAP reproduces itself in them, colonises their subjectivity. A result of this is that Nick "not only was ... divided against [Phil] but against himself as well." (*RFA*, p82) This fractured subjectivity has been present every time we have seen this sort of system, in Parsons' rage against Big Brother, in Purcell's japes, in Ian Duncan's deliberate attempt to fail his test's so that he can escape to Mars. This fragmentation is inevitable as people become the agents of their own domination, expending energy to maintain their own oppression.

This occupation of human minds is not only manifest in the actions of the FAP. It can also be seen in Fremont's weekly broadcasts, and the quizzes which follow them. These are commonplace in Dick's fiction, and serve the same purpose here as they do elsewhere, in *The Man Who Japed* and *The Simulacra*. They serve to maintain conformity, to close off possibilities of independent thought, and to identify individuals who need to be subjected to further surveillance. These broadcasts serve as what Marcuse terms "the language of total administration", in which "the 'media' ... shape the universe of communication in which the one-dimensional behaviour expresses itself."⁷⁰ The language in which they are expressed "testifies to identification and unification, to the systematic promotion of positive thinking and doing, to the concerted attack on transcendent, critical notions."⁷¹ A particularly good example of this is the question "the greatest enemy America faces is (1) Russia; (2) our high standard of living, highest the world has ever known; (3) secret infiltrators in our midst." The obvious answer is the secret infiltrators, the language used makes this quite apparent, especially given Fremont's obsession with Aramchek. However, as Nick points out, it would be more accurate to say that the answer is the high standard of living, although the language of the question presents it as a positive accomplishment. The problem is that it is this high standard of living which enables the population to disregard the fact that they "now dwelt in a very large prison, without walls ... [with] no with no literal bars or barbed wire". (*RFA*, p90) As Marcuse observes, "liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individuals own."⁷² And the high quality of living is precisely such a set of needs and satisfactions, through which domination is made "tolerable and rewarding and comfortable [by] such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself [and] free choice between brands and gadgets."⁷³ However, to provide such an answer, to hold such 'critical notions' is to mark oneself as a 'secret infiltrator', to make oneself a target for the FAP. In

this way, such critical notions are indeed subjected to a concerted attack, as they are made untenable by the state.

These speeches also recall Big Brother's, with their discussions of increased production. This similarity is further reinforced by the fact that people are supposed to watch with the front door open, so that the FAP can check up on you. This mirrors the two way function of the telescreens in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Indeed, there seem to be many similarities between Fremont's America and Oceania. Like Oceania, Fremont's America constantly focuses attention on its enemies, both internal and external. Again, we can see in this the repressive desublimation of the death drive. More importantly however, these two societies both ultimately depend on their enemies. The external enemies are vital in order to provide a decent argument for a strong army, while the internal enemies are necessary to justify the use of similar force against the domestic population. This dependence upon enemies is indicated in Dick's novel by Fremont's membership of the Communist Party. Thus, as I have already indicated, the U.S. "military establishment [serves] to keep our own people down. Not [Russia's]." (*RFA*, p145) We can see in this a manifestation of Debord's Thesis 54, that "like modern society itself, the spectacle is at once united and divided. In both, unity is grounded in a split. As it emerges in the spectacle, however, this contradiction is itself contradicted by virtue of a reversal of its meaning: division is presented as unity, and unity as division."⁷⁴ That is, the division of the American people against themselves is presented as unity, while the unity of the ruling elites of both the USSR and the US is presented as division. Fremont's regime is engaged in the construction of this spectacular inversion of unity and division. The final result of this is that Fremont's presentation of America becomes the hyperreal form of U.S. politics behind which the real disappears. One side of this contradiction is clarified by a relatively commonplace process, the absorption of the American people into the FAP's 'active intelligence network', which makes clear to its victims the divisions which underlie the simulation of unity. However, the full reality of the situation in which the US and the USSR are collaborating against their respective populations is only revealed to Nick and his friends by Valis.

Finally, we can see Fremont's regime as an Empire in Hardt and Negri's sense of a global system of economic domination. Indeed, the novel lends itself to such an interpretation, describing the state of the world as a "slave Empire ... that embraced both the United States and the Soviet Union as twin, equal manifestations." (*RFA*, 156) Nor is this an isolated incident, but rather it occurs throughout the latter sections of the novel, as Valis reveals more to Nick. We can see many of the traits of Hardt and Negri's concept of Empire in Fremont's regime. The control of information, through the domination which is exerted over the media, the biopolitical reproduction of Empire in the minds of the population, through both the FAP's recruitment of ordinary Americans, and through Fremont's broadcasts and the quizzes which accompany them, and finally corruption, "the cornerstone and keystone of domination"⁷⁵ permeating this society. For Hardt and Negri, corruption "constructs black holes and ontological vacuums in the life of the multitude".⁷⁶ For Dick, Empire "weighed down the world, armoured as it was, huge with its black iron walls and cells and streets, its chains and rings of metal, its helmeted warriors." (*RFA*, p158) It seems to me that these passages have much in common, in their discussion of blockages and obstructions to the flow of life, the difference being that Dick discusses barriers to flows, while Hardt and Negri describe holes and vacuums where life is sucked out, destroyed, negated. What these two have in common is that they are both produce "the rupture of the community of bodies and the impediment to this action- a rupture of the productive biopolitical community and an impediment to its life."⁷⁷ We can see this rupture in the action

of the FAP, which turns friends against each other, and prevents their co-operation. But the most telling example is the action of the state against Nick and his allies, against Valis. Nick is murdered by the state, the Valis satellite is shot down, and Phil is imprisoned, but kept alive so that the state can publish a series of novels on his behalf.

Once again, all the trappings of the classic Dickian dystopia are present here. The system of surveillance, the media led conditioning, the rigorous testing to ensure conformity, and the leader who is constructed through the media, these features which Dick has developed over the course of his writing are all present once again in this novel. However, there is one major change in this novel. The dystopian world is not projected into our future, but established in our past. As Suvin notes “in this type of dystopian SF, the nearer the story date the greater the urgency [and] thus ... Dick’s chronological novum underscores the urgency of danger: in a very similar world, ... *freedom has already been lost.*”⁷⁸ It becomes clear that Dick fears not just how the world might develop, but how the world already is. What might be done to prevent our world becoming the dystopia Dick feared, or to fight the dystopian powers he saw in his own present, will be the subject of the next section.

2. Media of Subversion

2.1 Pranks, Japes and Spanners-in-the-Works

The earliest, vestigial indications of the line Dick would take can be seen in *Solar Lottery*, in the factors which lead to the unrealistically optimistic ending. The route out in that novel is through Cartwright’s sabotage of the game, which enables him to seize power back from the corporate political machine of the Hills. It is expressed in Preston’s closing words, his valorisation of the desire to ‘live in an evolving fashion’, the desire to move on from repetitive and repressive political systems of the past. However, the case in *Solar Lottery* is overly simplified, as the entire social system is determined by one machine, the computer which twitches one Quizmaster out and another in. As such, Cartwright’s actions can provide no indications of possible actions in a more complex and credible social milieu. While further attempts do occur in Dick’s novels, little hope is offered that they will actually succeed in their goal of bringing down the dystopian state. The excessive optimism of *Solar Lottery* is only present in this early novel. In later novels, hope comes from small gestures, and it is the presence of these gestures which creates hope, not their final success.

The first real example of such resistance is in *The Man Who Japed* in which Purcell unconsciously reacts against the values of Morec society, before coming to terms with his objections and taking more coherent action against the state. This system of values is directly contradicted by an encounter Purcell has with a group of young boys at the start of the text. They are standing around, watching ships come in from the colonies “raptly.” (*MWJ*, p59) The reason for their rapt expression is their desire to get away, to get “out. Where it’s open. Where something’s going on.” (*MWJ*, p59) The boys express a desire to move beyond the limits of the stagnant society of Morec, ‘to push aside routine and repetition’, to find a place like the Flame Disc where there is the possibility of directing their own productive energies, of creating something for themselves. When Purcell points out that this contradicts the teachings of Morec, that “that’s away from the centre” (*MWJ*, p60) they respond with disgust

at his incomprehension. This forces him to confront the "obvious fact [that] Morec wasn't natural [but] had to be learned". (*MWJ*, p60) This experience was so traumatic for him that he had to block it out, and it only comes to light under the experience of drugs at the psychiatric Health Resort. It shakes the foundations of his belief in the Morec system. This attack on his beliefs is further compounded by his trip to the irradiated wasteland of Hokkaido to meet his friends Gates and Sugarmann. They explain to him the value of "real books", such as *Ulysses*. These two experiences reproduce Montag's experience in miniature, and in so doing they motivate his dissent, his japing of the statue of Major Streiter. However, unlike Montag, it takes Purcell a long time to come to terms with his dissatisfaction sufficiently that he can consciously acknowledge the actions he performs and his motivations for them. It is his wife who deduces that he japed the statue, based on the paint and grass he brought home on his shoes, and he only becomes aware that he has stolen that statue's head when it confronts him in the morning. He has no memory of actually taking it. He is as comprehensively alienated from himself as Winston's neighbour Parsons, who can only express his rage at the system while he is asleep. His trajectory through the novel can be seen as the reconciliation of these alienated aspects of himself, the unification of his dissent from Morec and his belief in the "the moral responsibility to serve [as] the *omphalos* of this whole ... rat race." (*MWJ*, p26)

In order to attempt to resolve the tensions his alienation from himself produces, in order to attempt to understand why he had japed the statue, Purcell goes to the Health Resort, under the name of John Coates. However, the only beneficial effect that this treatment seems to have is that it enables him to recover his memory of the encounter with the boys. His next session proves even less productive, with the Doctor wasting time on tests for various implausible forms of ESP, such as transforming a hair into a worm. At this point he decides that "there's no point sticking around here" (*MWJ*, p88) and goes to leave. However, the Health Resort will not let him leave, but instead abduct him to Other World, their extraplanetary base. This is a consumer world, where the strictures of Morec are relaxed. Excessive consumption is permitted, as is sexual play and display. But his transplantation here is not the solution to his problems. He does not want the artificial life that they construct for him as Mr. Coates, nor does he wish to live with Gretchen Malparto. This is not entirely true, as "a part of him reached out to this, and he knew what that part was named." (*MWJ*, p96) This is the world of John Coates, but the problem with this is that it provides him with no form of productive expression. It is viewed as "a vision of the after-reward, for all the years of public service. For the sacrifice and struggle, ... the tension and sternness of Morec society." (*MWJ*, p96) The problem with this is that it provides him with no venue for the public service which is his *omphalos*, the centre of his universe. As such, it too leaves him alienated from himself, as the change of name indicates. Dick provides a clear explanation of the social function of Other World. Once again, it is repressive desublimation. The Health Resort and Other World "provides [people] with a place they can escape to. When their resentment and anxiety starts destroying them". (*MWJ*, p120) The problem with this is that then "they don't smash store windows. Or jape statues." (*MWJ*, p120) To put it another way, they do not put their resentments to any productive use, they do not attempt to use them to change society for the better. And Dick is in no doubt which he would prefer. As Purcell says "I'd rather jape statues." (*MWJ*, p120) This recognition helps Purcell to reconcile the alienated aspects of himself, his belief in public service and his resentment of Morec. He realises that "the Resort acts as part of the system. Morec is one half and you're the other. Two sides of the same coin: Morec is all work and you're the badminton and checkers set. Together you form a society; you uphold and support each other." (*MWJ*, p121) Similarly the alienated aspects of his personality form a complete human being, and it is only in the world

of Morec that he can attempt to use his dissatisfaction as a support for his belief in public service.

However, once consciously aware of his resentment for Morec, and how it has distorted his life, he cannot return to the form of public service which used to be his work. He has to find some way of serving the public which is in accord with his consciousness of and contempt for Morec's domination of the public. He has to continue to support his refusal of the existing reality principle which he was initially asserted through his attack on the statue. And so he does, after he has endured the indignity of this final block meeting. He refuses to hand in his resignation, forcing Sue Frost and Telemedia to go through the drawn out process of firing him, which leaves him reconciled with his disgust for Morec and in control of their media outlets. In this way, rather than merely accept its control over his movements and position, he contests its right to do so, and requires it to actually exert force against him to expel him from his current position. This unprecedented course of action allows him to use his position of power as he sees fit. As such, he can finally begin to follow a course of public service which he believes in with his whole identity, rather than simply one fractured part of it. He can begin to genuinely provide a service to the public, and particularly the disaffected teenagers who inspired his first jape, rather than simply serving the institutional power of Morec. He does this by broadcasting an artificial history debate, modelled on Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, in which he claims that Major Streiter and the founders of Morec had erased their opposition through cannibalism. They had not simply beaten their opposition, but eaten them. Here we see Dick indicating that there remains the possibility that the media might play a positive role, through the application of satire which contests the standard representations of society, and the individual's role within it. As Robinson puts it, "expressed here is a wish to change the world by the creation of engaged, critical fictions."⁷⁹ Thus, we see that here Dick would contest Baudrillard's claim that "we should ... believe neither those who exalt the beneficial use of the media nor those who complain about manipulation".⁸⁰ The simulations of the media do impinge upon constructions of meaning, on the biopolitical reproduction of reality in the image of its simulations. For at least one critic, however, this remains problematic. For Eugene Warren, the question remains, "can the subjects of mass media really be free while remaining subjects of the media?"⁸¹ While this is a valid question, it is one which throws us back to Baudrillard's idea that the media are a value-free system of simulation with no effect upon systems of meaning, an extremely problematic proposition. The media are tools, and it is the use they are put to, the content which is broadcast on them, which determines their value. While Purcell's final jape cannot free people from the media, it may provoke them to ask questions of the media and Morec society, it can help them to understand how the Morec state has narrated its history. It cannot free the population from the media, but it can start them on the path towards freeing themselves.

This novel is not as naively optimistic as *Solar Lottery*, though Robinson seems to see their conclusions as parallel. *The Man Who Japed* is a more realistic novel because it does not end, as Robinson somewhat strangely asserts, with Purcell's japes bringing down Morec society. Instead, it ends with Purcell deciding not to fly into self-imposed exile, but rather claiming his japes as his own and waiting "composedly for the Getabouts of the Cohorts." (*MWJ*, p168) This novel does not show oppression ended by a single night of subversive television, but rather argues that it is vitally important that the media of the state should be contested. Again, as with Preston's closing speech in *Solar Lottery*, this novel argues for the importance of the contest, of the struggle to reclaim power from the monolithic institutions of empire. In this text, though, the less optimistic conclusion does not so underrate the scale of the task at hand.

Dick's sense of the importance of these sort of japes, of such subversive, disobedient actions is outlined in his essay 'The Android and the Human' (1972)⁸². This essay deals with Dick's distinction between these two figures, with the android defined as the subject automated, and reduced to the status of a tool. The authentically human is the subject as truly autonomous, living on their own terms, and working towards their own goals. In this essay Dick identifies the privileged figure of the human as "the kids who are emerging now."⁸³ The reason that Dick places his hope in the kids is their transgression of norms, even such relatively trivial gestures as stealing cases of Coke from the back of a parked van. More important however than these minor transgressions is their reappropriation of media for their own purposes. This, for Dick, gives them a degree of resistance to the media's attempts to manipulate them; while propaganda is broadcast on the radio "the young boy is disconnecting the speaker so he can replace it with a tweeter and woofer".⁸⁴ He discusses 'phone freaks', kids who use home-made machines to make free phone calls, largely for their own entertainment, in glowing terms. He also sees this continuing, as kids come to retool surveillance technologies to use them against the state. This sense of the importance of the subversive reconception of the media is of vital importance for my understanding of Dick's oeuvre.

2.2 Walt Dangerfield and VALIS: Forging Connections

Before I move on to discuss the representation of Valis in *Radio Free Albemuth*, I feel that I must first discuss another novel, in which Dick portrays a quite different media system from that which we have seen in his dystopian novels. This is necessary as I feel that the media depicted in *Dr. Bloodmoney or How We Got Along After the Bomb* are an early attempt at constructing the alternative media system which Valis represents. *Dr. Bloodmoney* is set in a post-apocalyptic world, after a nuclear holocaust has torn civilisation apart. Such a post-apocalyptic environment might seem a strange place to look for examples of the media, but as the conclusion to *Fahrenheit 451* indicates, they have a vital role to play, in preserving the knowledge which is necessary to rebuild society. For Bradbury that reconstruction requires the removal of the mass media, and the regression to a literary stage of development, where preserved literature is the key to the reconstitution of society. Dick, however, is willing to allow the mass media a role in rebuilding society, even if it has been extremely attenuated by the nuclear catastrophe. It remains in the form of Walt Dangerfield's radio broadcasts. This is the only radio broadcast available globally, and it only reaches small sections of the world at any one time, but it does have a highly significant role to play. Dangerfield orbits the Earth in a ship which was intended to take him and his wife to Mars. The launch, however, occurred on the same day as the nuclear war, and as such failed, trapping him in Earth orbit. It is from this ship that he broadcasts his radio show, using the music and literature which were provided to keep him and his wife occupied on the journey. His broadcasts are important for two main reasons.

First of all, Dangerfield reconnects the population with the arts of the past. He reads out novels, Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, and Pascal's *Provincial Letters*. Also, he uses his musical library to entertain his listeners. In this way, he is providing that which has been missing from so many of the media I have discussed so far, artistic alienation. Rather than simply reaffirming established reality, the music and narratives he provides offer a contrast with the established reality, even if that is only by harking back to the world before its

nuclear destruction. They still offer the hope of a better world, a world which does not entail the struggle for survival which constitutes reality in the post-apocalyptic world. It provides a form of “protest against that which is”⁸⁵. This protest motivates a positive form of sublimation, a sublimation of the energies into productive labour, which aims at changing the world, at making it better. In this way it gives a sharp contrast with the repressive desublimation which we have seen so often, which serves to prevent such attempts to change the world. The importance of his broadcasts in promoting such efforts can be seen when June Raub observes “without Dangerfield ... how can we keep going?”⁸⁶ His broadcasts, and the refusal of existing conditions which they entail, play a vital role in motivating the work to build a better world.

Of course, this is not the only reason that these broadcasts have such a high value for the survivors. He also reconnects them with the broader world, and each other. The characters in this novel are overwhelmingly single, and seem very isolated without Dangerfield to tie them into a community. Also, by using basic transmitters, they are able to communicate to him, so as a result he gets news of positive developments from around the world, and is then able to pass them on again. A good example of this is when he reports that “two ships have arrived from the Orient ... packed with manufactured articles from little factories in Japan and China.” (*DrB*, p114) In this way, he not only encourages the attempts to build a better world, but is able to reassure people that progress is being made, that their efforts are not in vain. Another important consequence of this is that it enables a genuinely two way communication. The public is able to pass on to Dangerfield information that they feel should be further distributed, so that he might pass it on to his listeners. We can therefore see in Dangerfield’s broadcasts a depiction of radio as Brecht hoped it might be, “transformed from a distribution apparatus to a communications apparatus.”⁸⁷ This is best illustrated in the passage where Dangerfield passes on advice from “a handy in the Geneva area” on “things you can do with the timer out of an old RCA washer-drier combination.” (*DrB*, p109). This is broadcast, as Dangerfield received it, in the handyman’s own words. In doing so, Dangerfield satisfies the world’s hunger “for the knowledge tucked away in pockets here and there, knowledge which - without Dangerfield - would be confined to its point of origin”. (*DrB*, p110) His radio broadcasts “make exchange possible”, they ensure that the audience “is not only ... *instructed* but [can] also ... *instruct*”⁸⁸ as Brecht felt must be the case. This is quite at odds with the false communication which is offered in *The Simulacra*, which serves merely to provide the political elite with a veneer of legitimacy.

This communication helps to maintain society, as it preserves a global community, even if it is only composed of tiny far-flung villages. It does this by binding them into a single global communications network. This network is admittedly fragile, as it all depends upon the vital connection to Dangerfield’s satellite, but while this remains the world is preserved as a single community, passing on the information that enables these various diverse settlements to rebuild their own small sections of the world. By “[receiving] as well as [transmitting, by letting] the listener speak as well as hear” Dangerfield “[brings] him into a network instead of isolating him.”⁸⁹ The importance of this cannot be underestimated, given the grave risk of isolation in this devastated world, where New York now has a population of sixty five. What Dangerfield creates through this network which he brings into being is what Hardt and Negri term the ‘multitude’. The multitude is what Hardt and Negri oppose to Empire, as I have discussed in relation to Pohl and Kornbluth’s work. This is one of the first times it has taken centre stage in Dick’s novels, although Empire itself is one of his central concerns, whether it is labelled Morec, Yance-men, or Ges. His broadcasts constitute the “communicative network that create[s] the fabric of life and production.”⁹⁰ The

communication it enables empowers people the world over to work towards their common goal of making a world which serves the interests of its population, despite being separated by vast distances, so that a handy in Geneva and a food consultant in Hawaii can both offer their help to the same global audience. As such, it brings into being “the labor of the multitude”, “the fundamental creative activity that through cooperation goes beyond any obstacle imposed on it and constantly recreates the world.”⁹¹ Thus, it should be clear that Robinson is right to suggest that the post-apocalyptic world that Dick presents in this novel is “in some ways more human and liveable than the present one.”⁹² This is enabled by the fact that corporate capitalism has been destroyed, along with the other facets of the Imperial regime, such as the control over the flow of information and people. As Robinson has pointed out, it is this “defeat of capitalism [which] opens up utopian possibilities.”⁹³ It brings to an end the administrated, dystopian media which Dick constructs in most of his work, and opens up the space for the more utopian, Brechtian use of the radio as a real form of communication.

Dangerfield also offers another perspective on the problem of taking an external position to the other characters. Dangerfield occupies the most external position available, as he orbits above the Earth. He is outside the whole world, which is internal to his orbit. However, his use of this position offers a sharp contrast with Nicole's. Where Nicole reproduces herself in the population, Dangerfield offers himself as a conduit through which the multitude can produce itself. The problem for Dangerfield is that while he is vital to the production of this multitude, he remains external to it. He experiences the isolation which the network keeps the Earth-bound population from suffering. This is one partial cause of the problems Dangerfield has during the novel. As the psychiatrist Stockstill puts it “isolation in space ... breeds its own disruptive phenomena, similar to what once was termed ‘cabin fever’.” (*DrB*, p252) The solution offered to this is for Stockstill to bring him into the communicative network, so as to attempt to mitigate his physical isolation. However, in his case a different form of communication is needed. He does not hunger for knowledge in the same way as most of the population, so this sort of communication is of no help to him. He simply needs conversation, a much more human form of contact. This enables him to re-establish himself as a person, rather than merely the function he had been filling. Jameson, in his article on this novel, identifies Dangerfield as the sender “in terms of the well known axis that information theory provides between sender and receiver.”⁹⁴ He needs to be brought back into the web of human relationships in which we all perform both rolls, both sending and receiving communication. He needs the potential for two way communication which his communicative network creates for the rest of the world.

Of course, this is not the only reason for his discomfort. The other reason is Hoppy Harrington's attempted take-over. Dangerfield's discomfort is greatest when he is directly above Hoppy, nearest to his malign influence. Interestingly, Hoppy forces Dangerfield further out, he externalises him again. Hoppy takes over the satellite, leaving Dangerfield unable to affect any of it. His microphone is dead, and his tapes are not recording anything coming up from the ground. His external position to the network he constructs, which is the source of his psychological problems, is now made absolutely concrete, he is physically cut out of the loop. He becomes isolated from the information which had previously been his only form of contact. He is physically unable to access it, as his machines are now under Hoppy's control. For Hoppy, as for Nicole, the desire for the external position is a desire for power. Dangerfield's physical exteriority ensures that he cannot use his position for personal gain. He can take no advantage from his role in creating the communication network. This is not the case for Hoppy. Hoppy, for Jameson, has “as [his] privileged object the world of

things.”⁹⁵ Hoppy represents technological mastery, the use of tools, of prosthesis. His behaviour while he has control over Dangerfield’s communication network is to use it as such a tool, as a mechanical thing. It becomes a means for him to assert his power, to extend his reach, like his many other prostheses. By taking the external position while he is physically involved in the world, he is able to attempt to use this network for personal gain. Hoppy finally takes control of the satellite after he has killed Bluthgeld. As an expression of gratitude, the townspeople offer him one hundred of Andrew Gill’s cigarettes and a bottle of his brandy, which Hoppy considers woefully inadequate. He therefore uses Dangerfield’s satellite to condemn the reward, as “a few cigarettes and some bad whiskey”. (*DrB*, p265) Implicit in this is the demand for more, especially when combined with the barely contained threat of his capacity to kill from a distance. This evokes the corruption which Hardt and Negri argue is characteristic of Empire, its expropriation of the production of the population. In this way we can see Hoppy as attempting to found a new fledgeling Empire. This is on a much smaller scale than the examples in other novels, but it has the same hallmarks. Hoppy’s new control of the global flow of information, his corrupt attempt at expropriating others the fruits of other’s labor. Hoppy’s power over machines, his technological mastery, leads him to attempt to re-establish a system of technological domination.

However, his efforts in this direction are foiled. Interestingly, they are foiled by Bill, a character who has lived his entire life in his twin sister’s stomach. As such, he has as completely internal a position as Dangerfield’s is external. And he is faced with broadly the same problems, with the inability to communicate with the world he is a part of. It is towards this end that he attempts to get out of his sister’s body, to swap with someone else. And through a complicated chain of events, it is Hoppy who he swaps with, leaving Hoppy to die in his place, in the unsustainable homunculus which he had occupied. Appropriately enough, Hoppy’s grand design to control communication is foiled by someone who just wants the chance to communicate freely, on a personal level. Bill takes the role of receiver in Jameson’s reading of the novel, as while “Bill sends messages, to be sure, but in relationship to the realm of the dead his principle function is surely that of receiving them”.⁹⁶ For Jameson, it is this alignment with Dangerfield on the pole of communication which enables to defeat Hoppy. Hoppy’s appropriation of Dangerfield’s role depends not just upon his technological mastery, but also on his power of mimicry, which falls under the field of communication. This “violation of his particular system and powers” renders him “vulnerable to the superior use of the same purely verbal power by Bill”⁹⁷ who unleashes Hoppy’s dead, to rail against him until he is weak enough for Bill to swap into his body.

Bill’s enclosure within his sister for most of his life seems to be what empowers him to defeat Hoppy. It is this which locates him as receiver, through both the access to the world of the dead which it enables, and his dependence upon the information which he receives from his sister about the external world. His capacity to hold on to his sense of self despite being immersed in another enables him to survive being consumed by the owl, and survive long enough to get close to Hoppy and switch places. This switch frees him, from the limits of his own identity, from his enclosure in the shrivelled head which was his own body. It creates for him the possibility of communication with the external world, while allowing him his own interior space. This seems in keeping with the novel’s utopianism, suggesting as it does that we might be best able to deal with the destruction of Empire, of the external force which reproduces itself through the biopolitical colonisation of our interiority, if we are able to maintain our sense of our own selves while we are immersed in it. We can see a similar message in *The Man who Japed*, in Purcell’s belief that he can only be happy if he is truly himself within the Morec society that is trying to crush his individual identity. However,

what is most utopian about this novel is that it provides alternatives to the stifling societies of Dick's earlier novels. It suggests that the media might be able to construct a genuine means of communication, so that we might communicate our interiority to the external world, rather than simply having to accept the violation of our interior space by the domineering external forces of Morec, Yance-men and Empire. It offers a world in which the self is neither internal nor external, neither impotent nor omnipotent, does not "expend to megalomaniac proportions [nor] shrink so that it becomes merely a dot on the horizon"⁹⁸. Instead, it offers the possibility of balance, of a self which exists within the subject's internal space but freely expresses itself in the external world. Such a hopeful position will not appear again in Dick's fiction.

Valis seems to me to be a later, more spiritual manifestation of the Brechtian communicative network which we see in *Dr Bloodmoney*. As in the earlier novel, individuals are linked into this network through the broadcasts of a satellite orbiting the Earth, though in this case it is a satellite of alien origin. The nodes in this network are described as "stations. Like transmitting and receiving on a grid. Each lit up as it transmitted." (*RFA*, p254) It is a "universe-wide communications network" (*RFA*, p151) in which the various nodes, or stations communicate freely, at their own discretion, in a genuine dialogue rather than the hierarchical communications of Empire, in which there is no real conversation but only indoctrination. Even the communications across different levels of this hierarchy are not free, they are orders given and reports received. They are statements of domination and submission, and as such a refusal of dialogue, a negation of it. Valis, by contrast "relayed information to [Nick] and accepted questions in response." (*RFA*, p154) In so doing, it enables the sort of two way mediated dialogue which Brecht argues is the utopian potential of the radio. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, it is a rhizomatic network, rather than the arboreal structures established by the state. As such, it creates the potential for infinite becomings, new articulations of desire as the various elements in the network connect through communication, forming "totally new and unexpected entities." (*RFA*, p155)

However, while in *Dr. Bloodmoney* this type of media was able to achieve dominance, this is only due to the fact that the corrupt system of corporate capitalism, of Empire, was destroyed by the nuclear war. In this novel, it must compete with Empire, its first task must be to destroy Empire before it can attempt to reconstruct a more positive society. And Empire is entirely focussed on destroying it. This network, this field of becoming, is the conspiracy Aramchek which Fremont is working to destroy. As Valis is so identified with the media, so too does it work against Fremont through the media. It arranges for Nick to meet Sadassa Sylvia, whose mother had introduced Fremont to the Communist Party. Together these two arrange for subversive messages to be put into a popular band's record. This is conceived as a way of passing on what Valis has told Nick "to hundreds, thousands or even millions of Americans." (*RFA*, p222) The hope is that as people become aware that Fremont is actually in cahoots with the USSR, more and more people will start to work against him. It is an attempt to subvert the state controlled media, to undermine the attempts at conditioning. In this way it strongly recalls Purcell's actions in *The Man Who Japed*. Sadly, this effort is unsuccessful. The Soviets identify the satellite, and destroy it, cutting off Aramchek from the network which had supported it. They also discover Nick's attempt to include subversive messages in a new release, by bugging him and Phil. As a result they arrest Nick, Phil and Sadassa, and close down Progressive Records. Nick and Sadassa are murdered in custody, but Phil's reputation as a science fiction author is one which they wish to exploit. They have written novels for him to publish, and they need him alive to maintain the impression that he has written them. As such, they merely imprison Phil. In this we see the most grotesque manifestation of the corruption of Empire, the utter and

final rupture of bodies. This is the prison cell as black hole, sucking its occupants out of this world, cutting them off utterly from any possibility of productive communication.

As negative as this may seem, as Suvin points out, “an opening towards brighter perspectives is re-established in the novel’s coda”.⁹⁹ This occurs during a conversation Phil has with Leon, a friend he has made in prison. While they discuss Aramchek, Phil hears a song on a radio belonging to a nearby group of kids. It is the song Nick had tried to release, which has been recorded by another band, so that it can still get released. “The transistor radio continued to play. Even more loudly. and, in the wind, I could hear others starting up everywhere. By the kids, I thought. The Kids.” (*RFA*, p286) The free radio which has been silenced returns, and proliferates, creating hope for the future. And it is important to note here, that this hope comes from Dick’s key figure of the human, the kids. As this novel closes, it is “the kids, unique, wonderful, unhampered by scruples in any traditional sense, that have made the difference”¹⁰⁰, or at least, who can. They hold open the door to utopian possibilities.

To conclude then, this novel can also help us to understand Dick’s work as a whole. Suvin translates Albemuth from ‘alba’ meaning ‘white’ or ‘dawn’ and ‘muth’ meaning ‘courage’ as “the courage of waiting for the dawn of justice [and] beyond that, ... as an emission by a more knowledgeable, artistically hidden source working for freedom from political oppression”.¹⁰¹ I feel that we can locate Dick in that role, as a figure working for freedom from oppression, publishing his novels in order to communicate his message. He certainly consistently and repeatedly condemns oppression in his novels, foregrounding its means of operation through the media, through simulations and biopolitical reproduction, through its colonisation of the internal space of subjectivity. His protagonists are consistently opposed to such practices, both in thought and deed. In Phil’s conversation with Leon, a plumber who was arrested for printing and distributing subversive leaflets, Phil tells Leon “your own voice is [Aramchek’s] voice.” (*RFA*, p279) Aramchek, Valis, is the attempt at free communication, at passing on information in whatever form is available to you. It is the voice of the men who japed, who struck back against Empire’s colonisation of subjectivity, who preserved the Great Refusal. And ultimately, it is the voice of Philip K. Dick, speaking out against oppression in his novels, because “there has to be something here first.... The other world is not enough.” (*RFA*, p280) Dick’s novels are his own japes against our current media system.

¹ Warrick, Patricia S., *Mind in Motion: The Fiction of Philip K. Dick*, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), pp96.

² Seed, David, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp136.

³ Robinson, Kim Stanley, *The Novels of Philip K. Dick*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), pp68.

⁴ Dick, Philip K., *Solar Lottery*, (London: Arrow, 1972), pp51 In future references will be marked SL in the text.

⁵ Dick, Philip K., “How to Build a Universe That Doesn’t Fall apart Two Days Later”, in *The Shifting Realities of Philip K Dick*, ed. by Lawrence Sutin, (New York: Vintage, 1995), pp262.

⁶ Disch, Thomas M., ‘Towards the Transcendent: An Introduction to *Solar Lottery* and Other Works’, in *Philip K. Dick*, ed. by Martin Harry Greenburg and Joseph D. Olander, (New York: Taplinger, 1983), pp21.

⁷ Pagetti, Carlo, ‘Dick and Meta-SF’, in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 2, 1 (March 1975), pp25.

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- ⁸ Wiener, Norbert, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1954), pp26.
- ⁹ Wiener, pp26-27.
- ¹⁰ Hayles, p94.
- ¹¹ Hayles, pp99.
- ¹² Kristeva, Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp3.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Kristeva, pp5.
- ¹⁵ Warrick, pp32.
- ¹⁶ Warrick, pp37.
- ¹⁷ Robinson, pp14.
- ¹⁸ Dick, Philip K., *The Man Who Japed*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), p13 In future quotes will be marked MWJ in the text.
- ¹⁹ *PKDS Newsletter*, No. 6, April 1985, p. 10.
- ²⁰ Baudrillard, Jean *Fatal Strategies*, trans. by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), pp86.
- ²¹ Major Streiter's name is another echo of Nazism, like the reference to I. G. Farben in *The Solar Lottery*. Streiter's name recalls Julius Streicher, who was a leading proponent of anti-semitism under the Nazis.
- ²² Baudrillard, pp86.
- ²³ Baudrillard, pp90.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Dick, Philip K., *The Penultimate Truth*, (New York: Belmont, 1964), pp16 In future quotes will be marked PT in the text.
- ²⁶ Abrash, Merritt, "Man Everywhere in Chains": Dick, Rousseau, and *The Penultimate Truth*", in *Foundation*: 39, (Spring 1987), pp33.
- ²⁷ Abrash, pp34.
- ²⁸ Baudrillard, pp14.
- ²⁹ Baudrillard, pp14-15.
- ³⁰ This was actually believed by the founder of the John Birch Society, which is one of the more crackpot sections of the American right.
- ³¹ Baudrillard, pp11.
- ³² Abrash, pp33.
- ³³ Abrash, pp37.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Dick, Philip K., 'How to Build a Universe that Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later', pp278-79.
- ³⁷ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, quoted in Abrash, Merritt, "Man Everywhere in Chains": Dick, Rousseau, and *The Penultimate Truth*", in *Foundation*: 39, (1987), pp36.
- ³⁸ Robinson, pp68.
- ³⁹ Abrash, pp36.
- ⁴⁰ Abrash, pp37.
- ⁴¹ Rossi, Umberto, 'Fourfold Symmetry: The Interplay of Fictional Levels in Five More or Less Prestigious Novels by Philip K. Dick', in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 43, No. 4, (Winter 2002), pp409.
- ⁴² Abrash, pp39.
- ⁴³ Rossi, pp409.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid..
- ⁴⁵ Dick, Philip K., *The Simulacra*, (London: Methuen, 1977), pp19 In future quotes will be marked *Sim* in the text, followed by the page number.
- ⁴⁶ Baudrillard, pp96.
- ⁴⁷ Baudrillard, pp97.

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- 48 Baudrillard, pp94.
- 49 Massumi, Brian *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992), pp123.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Marcuse, pp65.
- 52 Marcuse, pp67-68.
- 53 Marcuse, pp75.
- 54 Lacan, Jacques, quoted in Drusilla Cornell, 'Where Love Begins', in *Derrida and Feminism*, ed. by Ellen K. Feder, Mary C. Rawlinson and Emily Zakin, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp176.
- 55 Hayles, pp168.
- 56 Baudrillard, pp30.
- 57 Baudrillard, pp31.
- 58 Baudrillard, pp28.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Zizek, Slavoj, *Looking Awry: An introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture*, (London: MIT Press, 1991), pp91.
- 61 Palmer, Christopher *Philip K Dick: Exhilaration and Terror of the Postmodern*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), pp145.
- 62 Baudrillard, pp28.
- 63 Baudrillard, pp27.
- 64 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp24.
- 65 Massumi, pp119.
- 66 Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Felix, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. by Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp376.
- 67 Hayles, pp169.
- 68 Suvin, Darko, 'Goodbye and Hello: Differentiating Within the Later P. K. Dick' in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter 2002), pp379.
- 69 Dick, Philip K., *Radio Free Albemuth*, (London: Grafton, 1985), pp31. In future quotes will be marked *RFA* in the text, followed by the page number.
- 70 Marcuse, pp88.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Marcuse, pp9.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. by David Nicholson-Smith, (New York: Zone Books, 1994), pp36.
- 75 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp389.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp392.
- 78 Suvin, 'Goodbye and Hello', pp379.
- 79 Robinson, pp15.
- 80 Baudrillard, pp89.
- 81 Warren, Eugene, 'The Search for Absolutes' in *Philip K. Dick*, ed. by Martin Harry Greenburg and Joseph D. Olander, (New York: Taplinger, 1983), pp164.
- 82 Dick, Philip K., 'The Android and the Human', in *The Shifting Realities of Philip K Dick*, ed. by Lawrence Sutin, (New York: Vintage, 1995), pp183-210.
- 83 Dick, 'The Android and the Human', pp188.
- 84 Dick, 'The Android and the Human', pp192.
- 85 Marcuse, pp66.
- 86 Dick, Philip K., *Dr. Bloodmoney or How We Got Along After the Bomb*, (London: Arrow, 1977) pp115. In future quotes will be marked *DrB* in the text, followed by the page number.

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- 87 Brecht, Bertolt, *Brecht on Film and Radio*, trans. by Marc Silberman, (London: Methuen, 2001), pp42.
- 88 Brecht, pp43.
- 89 Brecht, pp42.
- 90 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp404.
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- 92 Robinson, pp78.
- 93 Robinson, pp77.
- 94 Jameson, Fredric 'After Armageddon: Character Systems in *Dr. Bloodmoney*', in *Science Fiction Studies* Vol. 2, No. 5 (March 1975), pp38.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Jameson, pp40.
- 98 Hayles, pp169.
- 99 Suvin, 'Goodbye and Hello', pp382.
- ¹⁰⁰ Dick, 'The Android and the Human', pp194.
- 101 Suvin, 'Goodbye and Hello', pp382.

Chapter 5: John Brunner's Networks and Systems of Domination

The final author I am going to closely analyse is John Brunner, in particular his great works from the late '60s and early '70s. While Brunner was a British author, like Dick, his work explores the operations of the American media, and their role in the exercise of American power. However, while Dick's work is concerned with the operation of power within the U.S., Brunner combines this concern with an exploration of the extension of American political and economic power throughout the world, particularly in terms of the relationship between the America and the developing world. As Norman Rasulis points out, "Brunner's major science fiction pivots on the most pervasive fact of American life-imperialism."¹ Brunner is specifically concerned with the way in which American foreign policy constitutes an imperial project. That is not to say that this is his sole concern. To suggest that this were the case would be to drastically diminish the scope of his work. Indeed, Brunner's approach creates problems for a study such as mine, which focuses in upon a single theme. As Stephen Goldman observes, "John Brunner is a supreme synthesist whose works speak clearly to modern man and modern society, not to any particular fragment of it."² Brunner's novels do not limit themselves to a single theme, but rather show all of the issues they discuss as part of a complex network of problems, each feeding into the others and being influenced by them in turn. The novels I intend to discuss are *The Squares of the City*, *Stand on Zanzibar*, *The Jagged Orbit* and *The Shockwave Rider*. These novels are unified by an understanding of the role that the media play in the establishment of specific power relations, and their simultaneous utility as a tool for contesting these distributions of power. They are both a means of social control, and a method for subverting this control.

The Squares of the City

This is made quite apparent in *The Squares of the City*. The protagonist of this novel is Boyd Hakluyt, a traffic planner who has been hired by the government of Aguazul, a fictional Latin American country, to solve problems which have arisen in the capital. The capital, Ciudad de Vados, is a city which has only recently been built, to provide the nation with a truly modern centre. It soon becomes apparent that the problems he has been employed to solve are aspects of a conflict between the wealthy, predominantly Western 'citizens' who were employed to construct Ciudad de Vados, and rewarded with jobs in government, and the marginalised and impoverished indigenous population. He is to find ways to deal with the shanty towns which have developed around the town, a market place which has grown within a residential district, and a slum which has been built in the centre of the city. During his stay, this conflict between citizens and natives escalates, until at the conclusion of the novel, the country collapses into civil war. In this conflict we can see Brunner's concern with American imperialism. Ciudad de Vados is an outpost of the first

world, exported into the third world by the Western 'citizens' who constructed and then stayed on to exploit the wealth that Vados generates. It serves as an instrument of capture of the deterritorialised flows of capital which constitute Empire, reterritorialising them within its boundaries, and connecting them with the rest of the globalised Empire which finds its most striking manifestation in the U.S. Hakluyt serves two functions in this novel, formal and thematic. His formal role is to provide the classic protagonist of utopian and dystopian fiction. He is the outsider, who gradually discovers how this world he inhabits functions, and in doing so, allows it to be presented to the reader. His thematic role is rather more complex. In this capacity he functions as an agent of Empire, controlling population flows, inhibiting the nomadic flows of the indigenous population which threaten to recolonise Ciudad de Vados. This connection with Empire can even be seen in his name, which echoes that of Richard Hakluyt, a 16th century explorer who wrote travelogues arguing for the importance of the colonisation of the Americas and Africa. He was an early advocate of empire, and his namesake in this novel is its agent. The precise constitution of this empire may have changed, but its goals remain the expansion of control and the expropriation of wealth. It is this Imperial intrusion and appropriation of wealth which motivates the conflict between these two factions.

This conflict has been managed and directed by the two main politicians in Aguazul, the President Vados, and the Minister of the Interior, Diaz, who represents the interests of the native population. These two have decided to resolve their differences through a chess game, in which the board is Ciudad de Vados, and the pieces are people. The city itself is a means of control, an articulation of power. The clearest example of this is the Plaza del Sur, where those with grievances may publicly express them. This serves two functions. It provides an outlet for dissent, and as such serves the National party, who find in it one of the few spaces where their ideas may be clearly stated to the public. But more importantly for Vados and the government, it enables these public expressions of dissent and dissatisfaction which in turn allows the easy identification of dissenters and subversives. It is a small step towards the sort of panoptic power which we have seen in previous texts. It locates them, both in the sense that it identifies them, seeks them out, and in that it traps them in space, enabling them to be easily managed, as in the riot which Hakluyt sees on his arrival, as the plaza can be easily contained by the police. A similarly panoptic expression of power can be seen in the surveys which Vados carries out. However, this is simply the most obvious instance of this. Every aspect of the planning of the city defines captures and shapes the flows of populations, determining their movements through the urban space, and the uses to which this space may be put. It constitutes a striated space, obstructing the nomadic flows of the indigenous population, excluding them from the space of imperial wealth. In this way, it mimics the chessboard, in which the division of the board constitutes the limit to the movement of pieces.

It is for this reason that Hakluyt has been employed by the state, to shore up the boundaries of the urban space of the city. He serves to plug the gaps in this striated space which allow the return of the native peoples into their capital. As Deleuze and Guattari observe, "even a social democracy adapted to the Third World surely does not undertake to

integrate the whole poverty-stricken population into the domestic market; what it does, rather, is to effect the class rupture that will select the integratable elements.”³ The city of Vados is Aguazul’s mechanism for accomplishing this, and Hakluyt is brought in to ensure that the machine keeps functioning, allowing entrance to the selected elements and keeping out the rest of the poverty-stricken population. Indeed, Hakluyt’s job as a traffic analyst provides Brunner with the central metaphor of this novel. In his job, people are reduced “units of traffic”⁴ their physical movements determined by the structure of the physical space through which they move. In this sense it seems entirely valid to “generalise about people as though they were identical molecules of gas”. (*SotC*, p260) Their movements become nothing more than a flow of particles, through a containing structure, or assemblage. As Hakluyt realises quite late on, this is a metaphor for the function of the media environment, which structures the flow of ideas, determining what sort of conceptual space people operate within and what they can do within it. Hakluyt’s work, which operates physically upon the subject, serves to indicate the power of biopolitical structures, which integrate themselves into the internal space of the subject. It provides a physical diagram of the biopolitical process at work.

These biopolitical processes are central to the conflict which drives the plot of the novel, being used to a certain extent by both sides in this struggle. The media, as much as the city of Vados, constitute the space in which this battle is waged. This is made clear in the author’s note, which states that “the techniques whereby the human ‘chessmen’ are described as having been moved ... are foreshadowed in the methods of present-day advertising, which are being more and more often applied to politics”. (*SotC*, p308) Indeed, much of the novel itself is concerned with the operation of the media.

The clearest similarity between the use of the media in this novel and their uses in the novels I have discussed so far is the use of television. Its function can be seen in the theoretical work of the Minister of Information and Communications for Aguazul, Dr. Alejandro Mayor, which is entitled “*The Administration of the Twentieth Century State*”. (*SotC*, p71) Television serves a vital part in this administration, at least for the government of Aguazul. It is a key component of the State’s biopolitical regime, as it colonises the internal subjective space of the population, establishing attitudes and opinions through its imagery. Mayor is quite explicit on this point, when he states that it is his “business, first, to know what people are thinking; [and] next, to direct that thinking.” (*SotC*, p78) Mayor, through his control over the content of television, shapes and directs the thoughts of the population in the interests of the state which employs him. As Hardt and Negri observe, “the communications industries integrate the imaginary and the symbolic within the biopolitical fabric, not merely putting them at the service of power but actually integrating them into its very functioning.”⁵ Indeed, it becomes apparent that Mayor and his methods have been integral to the operation of power since before Vados was elected president. In fact, Mayor’s use of the media was instrumental in installing Vados in power, as well as maintaining his power since. Mayor’s use of television relies upon the use of subliminal images. His insight was to recognise the potential of subliminal imagery as a “powerful *political* weapon ... [which] could be used to indoctrinate the population.” (*SotC*, p86) It has consistently been used to demonise and

slander Vados' opposition. An important aspect of this success was the use of pictures, rather than subliminal textual messages, as in the initial historical trials. One reason for this was that an illiterate population could still read these images, but the more important one was that "pictures have the impact of something seen *con los ojos de sí*" (*SotC*, p87) While there are doubts regarding the effectiveness of subliminal advertising, Brunner chooses to disregard these concerns, assuming that it is indeed a powerful means of social control. This relates to McLuhan's definition of television as an auditory-tactile medium. He argues that it is such a medium, rather than merely a visual one, due to the way in which the television image is produced, by a beam of light shining through the television screen, making the image from thousands of pixels. This multiplicity is then reduced to a single moving image through the action of the eye as a "scanning-finger."⁶ Thus, the television image is felt as an experience of synesthesia, of the whole sensorium being active upon a single input. The rapidity of this process precludes any conscious involvement, but the subliminal image remains bound to its context through the process of its unconscious reproduction. Thus, these subliminal images are immediately felt, rather than having to be subjected to an intellectual process of incorporation into one's sense of the world. These methods are routinely used for all of the broadcasts on television in Aguazul, serving to establish attitudes to the subject being discussed. In this way, the slums are presented as rife with child abuse and blasphemy while Hakluyt himself is presented as saintly, even angelic. As a result, "it is now known for certain to many of our citizens that the squatters in the shanty-towns practise bestial cruelty to their children". (*SotC*, p87) Through these subliminal messages "power is ... expressed as a control which extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses and bodies of the population- and at the same time across the entirety of social relations."⁷ As Hakluyt observes, under Mayor the television service has been used to produce "a country where everyone believes what they're told and never gets an inkling of the dirty truth behind the pretty lies." (*SotC*, p183)

It is this high degree of control over the attitudes of the population which enables Mayor to observe that Aguazul "is the most governed country in the world." (*SotC*, p78) This seems to relate to Jacque Ellul's work on propaganda, in which he argues that propaganda is simply a necessary part of any and every technological society. Ellul argues that "propaganda is needed in the exercise of power for the simple reason that the masses have come to participate in political affairs."⁸ He is quite clear that he does not mean this simply to apply to democratic states, as communist states are also, at the very least ostensibly, based upon the concept of the power of the mass of the proletariat, expressed through Soviets or other such mechanisms. The mass and public opinion therefore must therefore be addressed if the State is to effectively administer. For this reason, "any modern State, even a democratic one, is burdened with the task of acting through propaganda."⁹ This seems to have much in common with Lippman's work, but takes a very different stance. Where Lippman is very much advocating the necessity of such propaganda, for Ellul it is an observed fact, which he condemns. Indeed, in his preface Ellul states that "having been ... the object of propaganda, I want to speak of it as a menace which threatens the total personality."¹⁰ It seems the Mayor, like Ellul, sees propaganda as a necessary part of the process of administering the State. This

is his justification for his own propaganda exercises, and it is these which enable him to argue that Agauzul is “the most governed country in the world.”

It is for this reason that Mayor is the white queen in the chess game between Vados and Dios. He controls the most powerful form of manipulation available to Vados, and as such must be represented by the most powerful piece on the chess board. Therefore, both he and his studio are destroyed during the course of the game. However, while television is the most powerful form of manipulation, it is not the only one. The press also serves the interests of the state. However, unlike the broadcast media, this is not an uncontested field for the state. Both sides of the struggle for power control a newspaper, with *Libertad* being an arm of the state while *Tiempo* is the mouth piece of the opposition National party. Both of these papers are primarily venues for attack journalism, being riddled with libellous claims about their political opponents. Neither of them make any pretence at objectivity, though of course they both claim that they report the truth. This is entirely in keeping with the historical development of the press. During the early days of newspaper publishing, both in Britain and in the U.S., newspapers were routinely bound to the specific political groups which funded them, and as such expressed their interests. As Matthew Robert Kerbel observes of the party press in the early days of the American Republic, “objectivity was unnecessary, indeed undesirable, because the mission of the paper was to maintain a political base among its readers and unify supporters against the opposition.”¹¹ This function of the press is very similar to its use in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which opens with newsreel footage of the victims of an enemy attack. Interestingly, Brunner is the first author to make significant reference to the news, since Orwell. However, there is one telling difference between the press in Oceania and in Agauzul, and this is the presence of competition. These two wholly partial newspapers serve to provide the two competing parties with contrasting explanations of events. As with Mayor’s manipulation through television, this functions as a form of interpellation, as the papers locate their readers within a specific world view.

The press are however a less effective form of manipulation than television, for a number of reasons. First of all, while both of the newspapers are in circulation, it is possible for anyone to read both papers, and by taking account of their partial stances attempt to work out what the truth is. In this area, neither party has the uncontested dominance which Mayor can claim in the broadcast media. This situation is not acceptable for Vados, especially after Mayor and his television studios are taken out of play, as it leaves the playing field significantly more even. For this reason, *Tiempo* is closed, ostensibly because of its continuing attacks on Hakluyt. However, it is clear that what really motivates the closure is its threat to the established power of the state to control the perception of reality. As Hakluyt observes, “up ‘til now ... *Tiempo* had not menaced Vados seriously - nor had any other source of information opposed to his regime” but with Mayor and broadcasting removed from the scene “his grip was in danger of slipping [and] *Tiempo* now represented a major threat to his security”. (*SotC*, p193) As such, it becomes imperative that it should be closed.

Again, this response has its own historical precedents. During the first period of mass publications in Britain, in the early nineteenth century, there were repeated attempts to shut down the radical press which was largely read by the disenfranchised members of the

working class. The reason for this was the same as the reason for Vados' actions against *Tiempo*. "The radical press ... deepened and extended radical consciousness, helping to build support for the working class movement"¹² just as *Tiempo* builds support for the opposition National party. Thus, we can see this shutting down of the oppositional press as having much in common with the ban on literature in earlier novels; they are both ways of removing factors which work against the state's attempt to control the ideas and attitudes of the population.

The second problem with newspapers such as *Libertad* as a means of mass manipulation for Vados and the state is that newspapers are a literary medium. As such, they are of only limited use in a nation with a poor level of literacy. Broadcast media by contrast work through images and sounds. They are what McLuhan terms auditory-tactile media. One would therefore expect them to be understood by the whole population, rather than merely the literate section of it. However, these are only the most immediately obvious contrasts between the two. There are other differences produced by the different nature of these media, which also make the press a less useful medium for the manipulation of public opinion. Newspapers do have one strength for the state, which is expressed in McLuhan's observation that "real news is bad news- bad news *about* somebody, or bad news *for* somebody."¹³ Newspapers thus lend themselves to the sort of libellous attacks fill the pages of both the papers of Aguazul. This strength of the form is however somewhat mitigated by the fact that "the press repeats the excitement we have in using our wits, and by using our wits we can translate the outer world into the fabric of our own beings."¹⁴ This too seems like it could be a positive trait for the state, as should these accusations be 'translated into the fabric of our own beings' than they are accepted, and will be acted upon. The problem is that while the paper is one means by which the outer world is communicated to us, it is also a part of the outer world itself. Therefore, prior knowledge about the paper, about its political affiliations and standard attitudes can affect how we interpret the information which it offers us. This is part of what is meant by 'using our wits'. As a result, a critical reader can use their knowledge about the paper to shed light upon the story, as when *Libertad* claims that Sam Francis, a supporter of Diaz and the National party, has committed suicide in prison. The public is incredulous. "*Suicide?* whispered gossip at every street corner. *No, of course not. A beating by the police?*" (*SotC*, p169) The knowledge of *Libertad*'s affiliations turns this story into a cover-up of the violence of the state. Thus, the interpretative process means that what is 'translated into the fabric of our own beings' is not necessarily the version of the outer world which is presented in the paper.

Another problem derives from the fact that the newspaper is defined by its mosaic form, its juxtaposition of a variety of stories on a single page. The result of this is that "the press is a group ... form that provides communal participation."¹⁵ The paper is a medium which defines its community of readers, through the process of selecting stories. In this way, it defines what is relevant to its readers, what is important for them, and what attitudes should be taken. As McLuhan observes "the press is a daily action and fiction or thing made, and ... by the mosaic means, it is made into a communal image or cross-section."¹⁶ This is much more of a problem for Vados and the state than it is for the National party, because of who

the two take to be their community. The problem for Vados is that his party represents the interests of only a small section of the population, the Citizens. He and his supporters are quite at odds with the indigenous population, and as a result, his paper cannot draw these people into his community of supporters, as it consistently marginalises them. The National party on the other hand takes these people as its natural base. They are the community it is appealing to, along with their educated children who constitute much of the working class of Ciudad de Vados and the rest of the country. Also, they are not entirely antagonistic to the Citizens, but are only against them so long as the Citizens insist on maintaining the social exclusion and poverty of the indigenous people. This capacity for the press to build a sense of community is one which is an advantage for Vados' enemies and a problem for him. Indeed, as I observed above, it is precisely because of this strength as a tool for organising opposition that Vados has *Tiempo* closed down.

However, in doing so, he only removes this articulation of the desire to contest the definition of events. This does not resolve the problem, but rather pushes it underground, as the centralised machine of *Tiempo* fragments to become an abundance of news-sheets, flowing freely through the city. These news-sheets step up the libellous attacks which were typical of *Tiempo*, but as they are cheaper to produce, there exist enough of them that they cannot be so easily silenced. When they are closed because of the nature of their allegations they then "start up again the next day ... under another name." (*SotC*, p239) These also help to bind together a coherent community under the National party banner. They consistently put forward the National party view, and are distributed by the people themselves, who pass them to each other, keeping them in circulation for long periods of time. Here again, we can see parallels with the early radical press. They too depended upon the people to maintain a large readership, as literate members of the working classes read them to those who were illiterate. Also, the main venues in which they were consumed were working men's clubs and public houses, where they would be read and discussed. This played a key part in the organisation of the working class in the early nineteenth century. This is also reflected in the distribution of the news-sheets, which are kept behind the bar in Hakluyt's hotel, so that they can then be provided to customers. Indeed, with *Libertad* now the only legitimate source of information, the news-sheets are avidly consumed by the bulk of the population, even by people antagonistic to the National party line. They represent an unrestrained flow of information, disrupting and contesting the centralised distribution of information favoured by the state.

Brunner's attitude to this situation, of propaganda and counter-propaganda, is somewhat complicated. While he presents Mayor's broadcast manipulations as a reprehensible affront to the freedom of the population, he equally condemns the libellous attacks of both *Tiempo* and *Libertad*. However, although the National Party consistently libels the protagonist, the most sympathetic characters, like Fats Brown, and Maria Posador, are affiliated with the National party. Also, much of the news in *Tiempo* is presented as accurate while the impoverished state of the peripheral towns also gives weight to the National party's case. At the same time, the National party are also behind threats and at least one murder. Thus, the situation remains unclear. While he condemns the forces which

manipulate the population, he is equally obliged to condemn those members of both sides who destroy their opponents for no reason other than political expedience. As such, it remains difficult to identify his stance. This aspect of the text reflects Ellul's fairly straightforward observation that "democracy depends upon public opinion and competition between political parties" which requires parties to "make propaganda to gain voters."¹⁷

Brunner's position is clarified late on in the novel when Hakluyt draws parallels between his own work and the manipulation of the public which are central to an understanding of the novel. While Hakluyt comes to this understanding only gradually it is expressed as a momentary revelation, a 'eureka' moment. The basis of this comparison is that his work as a traffic engineer is also about directing populations. The structures of these spaces, which determine movements, are described by Hakluyt as "impersonal forces" which determine the limits of his "comparative freedom". (*SotC*, p261) However, Hakluyt comes to realise that these 'impersonal forces' are also politicised, that the structuring of space which he is engaged in is not neutral. In this way he comes to understand the political potential of his work, realising that these flows can either disrupt or maintain established stratifications, assemblages of power and difference. The spatial assemblages he constructs can include their own future rupture, as means of subverting the political regimes which produced them. Looked at this way, it becomes clear that the problem with Hakluyt's work, and with the broader concept of biopolitical power in general, is the specific application of the technique. It becomes dangerous when it structures the boundaries of thought and action, when it constitutes arbitrary limits within the mind, rather than allowing for the opening up of new conceptual spaces. Such dangerous total control becomes possible when "you were responsible not only for externals ... but also [for] far more subtle things: for their prejudices, their fears beliefs and hatreds." (*SotC*, p265) And it is precisely this level of control which is presented by the biopolitical realm. To return to a passage I quoted earlier, in biopolitics "power is ... expressed as a control which extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses and bodies of the population- and at the same time across the entirety of social relations." Thus it becomes clear that what Brunner is attacking in this novel is the biopolitical manipulation which limits the comparative freedom of the population. As such, once again, it seems that he is firmly on the side of the National party. While Vados and Diaz are equally condemned for having "reduced [their] citizens to the status of pawns and attempted to direct their actions and even their thinking as though they were pieces of carven wood" (*SotC*, p286) the National party have also contained a liberatory impulse. This is indicated in their advocacy of a free flow of population, the return of the City of Vados to the country of which it is part, rather than its appropriation as an outpost of Empire. This liberated flow can also be seen in the news-sheets which succeed *Tiempo*, and the free flow of information which they enable. Thus, while the chess game between Vados and Diaz which is played out on the streets of Ciudad de Vados makes both sides into the victims and agents of biopolitical violation, reducing everyone to 'pieces of carven wood' the Nationals have also managed to tap into something greater. They have mobilised the marginalised population to attempt to reclaim public space, to seize control of their lives and the public life of their nation. In this we can see the tentative appearance of Hardt and Negri's problematic concept of the Multitude, which also finds its voice through the expression of biopower,

through the unbounded communications which do not repressively and manipulatively define public attitudes, but rather express and in so doing reproduce them.

We might consider the novel as an attempt at prevention, as a warning. This is certainly suggested by the Author's Notes, in which Brunner observes that "application of tricks like the Big Lie and guilt by association ... in the hands of accomplished and determined men have served to direct and control the thoughts and actions of large populations." (*SotC*, p308) He is stating here that these sorts of processes, if not these actual processes, have gone on and continue to go on. As such, we can see the novel as both a depiction and condemnation of this, and a warning to be aware of such attempts at manipulation, because Brunner believes that this awareness of manipulation is sufficient to prevent it working. He expresses this idea through Hakluyt, saying "the sort of absolute system I've been talking about couldn't work unless everyone was ignorant of what was happening." (*SotC*, p263) The problem remains, how does one counter such a regime of biopolitical manipulation without entering into the same process? How can we, like Hakluyt, find our own ways of subverting the articulations of power in which we must work, and create the spaces in which our communications express our subjectivity rather than limiting it?

Stand on Zanzibar

This is only one of many problems posed by *Stand on Zanzibar*. The novel draws together a whole raft of issues, including, but not limited to, the environmental impact of current economic and industrial practices, the imperialistic relations between the developed and developing worlds, overpopulation, eugenics, and my concern, the use of the media as a form of mass manipulation. These ideas are all interwoven, so that my study of the novel must inevitably touch upon some of these issues, but to discuss their interactions in full is prohibited by the space available to me.

Stand on Zanzibar has two main narratives, which are connected. The first of these deals with General Technics' project to develop a fictional African nation, Beninia, with the aid of the State Department. The second narrative depicts the U.S. response to the claims by the Guided Socialist Democracy of Yatakang, that the famous geneticist Dr. Sugaiguntung has developed a means to optimise his nation's genetic makeup. Once again, such a brief statement of the main narratives of the novel does not indicate the importance of the media, which is made quite apparent by the structure of the novel. There are four strands running through the novel, entitled Continuity, Context, Tracking with Closeups, and The Happening World. Even the titles of these indicate the role the media has played in shaping the novel's structure. The appropriation of the language of film quite explicitly indicates the influence of the new media environment on the development of the novel. Each of these strands provides a different view of Brunner's fictional world. The Continuity sections contain the main narratives. It is within these sections that the basic plot is explored. Each of the Tracking with

Closeups sections focuses in on another peripheral character, exploring their own concerns and narratives. The most relevant here are the Context and The Happening World sections. The Happening World sections take an overview of this society, mixing action from a variety of locations with advertising slogans, street signs and newspaper headlines. These sections can seem quite disorientating, as they jump from one thing to the next, sometimes without punctuation, merely a change in typeface, a shift to italics or block capitals. In these sections Brunner's appropriation of the language of cinema is reflected again in his development of a literary technique which mirrors the jump cuts of the directors of the French New Wave. Context primarily deals with the sociologist Chad Mulligan's appraisal of the world, with sections taken from his fictional works. This is not however, the only form these chapters take. They are also used to present popular T.V. shows, reports from the Beninia project, a table which compares and contrasts the developing world, the developed world and the underdeveloped world in a variety of categories. The main function of these is to provide a critical commentary on Brunner's fictional world and its beliefs and attitudes, from within it.

The function of these separate strands within the novel is indicated by Context (0), which opens the novel with an extended quote from Marshall McLuhan, in which he describes "the Innis mode of expression."¹⁸ This is a reference to the work of Harold Innis, whose study of *Empire and Communications* was a major influence on McLuhan's work. In this text Innis explored how communications technologies, such as the Roman road, have shaped the establishment and exercise of imperial power. This reference to Innis at the outset of the novel gives a clear indication of the thematic concerns at the heart of the novel. In 'the Innis mode of expression', "mere point of view" is abandoned, and replaced by "a mosaic configuration or galaxy for insight...." (*SoZ*, pvii) The relevance of this passage to the novel which follows should be clear, as through the separate strands of the novel, Brunner creates a mosaic of narratives and voices, through which diverse aspects of this society are juxtaposed, so that the society can be appraised and interpreted as a whole rather than as isolated aspects. This has much in common with the way in which Dos Passos structures his great trilogy, *U.S.A.*, in which diverse narratives are interwoven with Newsreel sections, which create a similar mosaic effect from the spliced headlines from contemporary papers. This is an influence which Brunner has openly acknowledged.¹⁹ This mosaic style also indicates the influence of the media on the novel, as McLuhan has characterised newspapers as providing a similar mosaic, through the location of a number of stories on a single page. Newspapers, like Brunner's novel, "exploit the mosaic form ... to present the discontinuous variety and incongruity of ordinary life."²⁰ Given his familiarity with McLuhan, which is made explicit by Context (0), I suspect that it was this effect of the mosaic form that he had in mind when he observed that *Stand on Zanzibar* reads more like a newspaper than a traditional novel.²¹ While I understand what Brunner means by this, I would say that a better analogy that the novel reads like a film, as counter-intuitive as this is. This is because of the ways in which the structure and the content of the novel appropriate cinematic language and techniques, in order to construct this mosaic narrative.

However, there are important differences between the use of such a mosaic form of composition in novels such as *U.S.A.* and *Stand on Zanzibar* and its use in newspapers. The

primary one is that in newspapers, the various stories are kept relatively discrete. They are separated by headlines and columns, located within their own boxes, and joined only through their presentation on a single page. They may provide an overview of society, but the specific stories never interact. This relates to their dependence upon advertising. As McLuhan observes, “our press is in the main a free entertainment service paid for by advertisers who want to buy readers”.²² While newspapers do have a nominal cover charge, this is so low because newspapers are primarily funded through the sale of advertising space. It was for this reason that the radical press were forced out, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their critical stance meant that they were unable to attract advertisers, and therefore unable to compete with the more conservative newspapers in terms of price. It is worth remembering here that newspapers serve as a group form, establishing a specific community of readers, sharing values and attitudes. Due to the dependence of the press upon advertisers, these attitudes cannot be antagonistic to the interests of the corporations which pay for the press. Thus the advertisers take on a dominant role in shaping the attitudes of the press and their community of readers. This is one of Chomsky and Herman’s five filters of the media.²³ Thus the press are prevented from interrelating their stories, so as to produce a coherent critical dialogue around how society is structured and operates. Instead, it merely presents us with stories of isolated events, stripped of their greater context. However, the interweaving of stories and adverts in Dos Passos’ and Brunner’s novels does precisely this. Dos Passos in his ‘Newsreel’ sections literally cut and pasted together headlines from contemporary newspapers, joining them into a continuous unity which offers an understanding of the attitudes of the culture which produced them which cannot be attained while they are separate. This allows stories to blend into one another, providing clear indications of the links between them, and enabling them to comment upon each other. Many of Brunner’s ‘The Happening World’ sections function in the same way. They focus on a single theme, and trace its impacts through society, into seemingly separate areas of cultural life. An example would be The Happening World (3), entitled ‘Domestica’, which deals with the ramifications of overpopulation on domestic life. Thus we see in this brief chapter evidence of the introduction of eugenic legislation, under which “carriage of the genes listed in Appendix A below shall *ipso facto* be grounds for abortion”, the criminal baby-farmers offering “good-heredity adoptables”, and parents advertising for “*babyminding opportunities*”, the restructuring of family units into “*liberal association[s]*” seeking “*broadminded couples, triples to enlarge the scope of [their] activities*”, the resentment of the childless this legislation produces, who threaten those who choose not to have children, and finally, the infantilisation of sexuality and institutionalised prostitution this enforced infertility produces, as a new female class of “shiggies” become obliged to sleep with men in order to get a temporary roof over their heads. (SoZ, p56-58) Much of this harks back to Huxley’s World State, particularly the exercise of genetic control over the population, and the disruption of the traditional family and the infantilisation of sexuality which accompanies it. Brunner uses the mosaic method to highlight the range of new social structures and behaviours which are produced from this single cause. Snippets of legislation, adverts and conversations are juxtaposed to expose the roots of new systems of power and exclusion. This use of the mosaic method in The Happening World sections is only the most overt example of

Brunner's many uses of a polyphonic style, which has been discussed more fully by Patrick Murphy.²⁴

Having established the importance of the media in informing the structure of the novel, let us now move on to examine how the media function within the diegetic world of the novel. The most significant aspect of this can be seen quite early on in the novel, in Context (1), which is a summary of the opening credits of Scanalyzer, "the INdepth INdependent INmediate INterface between you and your world." (SoZ, p1) This is the most popular current affairs programme in this world, and its opening credits are particularly interesting for two reasons. The first is the language which is used here. The repetition of 'IN', and the way it is showhorned into words like 'INmediate', emphasises Scanalyzer's self declared role as the 'INterface' between the audience and their world. It is the means by which the audience connects with their world, it links them into the world. However, it only links them into the world that it describes, that it produces. It ties them into a construction of the world which shapes how the world outside is perceived. As such, the audience actually lives within the world which Scanalyzer describes, through their internalisation of it. In this way, the Scanalyzer's reproduction of reality is granted a privileged status over concrete, external reality.

This is further reinforced by the use of the fictional figures of Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere. In the opening credits of Scanalyzer, they are depicted in a variety of activities and locations, "depthunder (today MAMP, Mid-Atlantic Mining Project), spaceover (today freeflysuiting), transiting (today Simplon Acceleratube), digging (today as everyday homimage with autoshout)." (SoZ, p1) This serves to provide the audience with a degree of vicarious experience, as is the case with Mildred's televisual family in *Fahrenheit 451*. This aspect of Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere is further reinforced by the fact that their faces are not set by the broadcasters. They are not specific individuals, and have not established themselves as stars, as this would damage their ability to violate the limits of the screen, to break free from the screen and invade the subjective space of the viewer. Instead, it is the viewers themselves who determine what Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere look like, from basic variations such as age, race and build right up to giving these figures their own faces. The effect of this is to give the activities which Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere are depicted experiencing "the immediacy of real life because nowadays television is the real world." (SoZ, p315) Again, we see here the privileging of this electronic space over concrete reality.

It should be clear from this that once again what is described is the production of hyperreal experiences which act as a substitute for real lived experiences. The effect of this is that taking action in the real world is no longer necessary for most of the population, as instead they can simply "stay at home in a comfortable chair / And rely on Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere." (SoZ, p309) What makes Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere a particularly pernicious influence is the fact that they have "secured maximum viewer identification". (SoZ, p332) The danger lies in the fact that the audience is identifying with an empty simulacrum. What is going on here is a kind of Lacanian manoeuvre of misrecognition of the projected image as the self. This simulation is therefore internalised as self-image, and in the process its emptiness hollows out the subject. Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere become the INterface between

the audience and their world, and as such they shape how we interact with the world. I feel that we can best understand this process through Baudrillard's discussion of the supremacy of the object. The most important aspect of this is the observation that "it's no longer the subject that desires, it's the object that seduces."²⁵ Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere are this very object that seduces, it is their primary function. They were initially conceived of as an advertising tool. They are substitutes for "some people called the Joneses [who were] always ahead" (*SoZ*, p309), and with whom we must keep up. In their initial manifestation they were shown in "a sort of idealised dream-home full of luxury gadgetry." (*SoZ*, p314) They present not models living in this luxury, to the audience, who are seduced by this vision of themselves as they wish they might live. But this last phrase reverses cause and effect. The audience cannot wish to live in this luxury before they know of the possibility. It is only the presentation of this home which enables the desire for it. As Baudrillard observes, "everything comes from the object ..., just as everything started with seduction, not desire."²⁶ It is for this reason that Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere still depict a generic luxury house in Africa, where people need to be informed of the pointless luxury offered by consumerism. It is a necessary goad to desire. But at the same time it is also important to note that "everything returns to [the object]".²⁷ In the U.S., where "practically every American home *is* full of luxury gadgetry" (*SoZ*, p314-15) Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere are shown in the viewers own home. That does not mean that the seduction has run its course, only that it has reached a new stage. It enables a further reinforcement of the viewer's identification with their on screen simulation. It moves us to the stage where the object "*is* the mirror."²⁸ It is through their simulated reflection in Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere that the public perceives itself. In this way, the public is fragmented, split against itself, and caught up in the recapitulation of the mirror stage in which they identify with the object in place of their own imaginary. What is so powerfully threatening about this is that this process is that an imaginary identity is forged for them by their corporate and political masters. The value of this as a system of domination is that this establishes "the pure object [as] sovereign, because it is what breaks up the sovereignty of the other and catches it in its own trap."²⁹ The sovereign power of the individual subject to determine their own course is abdicated, handed on to the simulated object of Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere. The individual subject collapses into the idealised consumer. As Baudrillard observes, "the subject ... disappears from the horizon of the object."³⁰ In this way, Mr. and Mrs Everywhere truly live up to their name, proliferating through the population, as subjectivity is abandoned in the face of the seductive power of the electronic Everyman. They are another figure of the obese. They consume subjects, leaving in their wake only their own reproduced simulation. Their victims are no longer subjects, "but specimens of a certain cancerous inorganicity".³¹ In Deleuze and Guattarian terms, they are "the black hole of subjectivity".³² In this respect, we can see their empty simulation as an assemblage of faciality, absorbing the faces of the audience into itself, at the same time as reproduces itself within each of these faces. it can be seen as either a system by which "black holes distribute themselves..., or ... a black hole combining all black holes, hurtling them together"³³ towards unification in the void of the Everywheres.

This makes them a powerful biopolitical tool. In this way society reproduces itself, through the consumption and colonisation of the subjectivity of the population by Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere. They therefore take on a key role in shaping the attitudes and opinions of the public, as they have become the public, or rather, the public has become them. As Norman House, one of the two main protagonists, observes, “the next presidential campaign will hinge on what [Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere] think, not on the validity of the rival policies.” (SoZ, p316) The need for persuasive argument vanishes, supplanted by the seductive power of the pure object which is simultaneously a simulacrum of the subject. The voice of the establishment is no longer a distant and suspect politician or pundit, but rather yourself, projected from the screen. The state speaks through you, its words are put in your mouth as “a gadget on the set has it said by you.” (SoZ, p310) These imposed opinions are therefore impossible to argue with, they are your own, spoken in your own voice, by your own reflection. The reason for all this is self-evident. It is the desire for homogenous consumers, with the same desires. These simulations are the production line on which the public have been mass produced, to match their mass produced commodities. They lie at the core of a system of “social subjection”.³⁴ In this system, the audience are repositioned as “a subject of the statement which more or less mistakes itself for a subject of enunciation.”³⁵ The audience are thus “enslaved by T.V. as [human machines] insofar as [they] are no longer ... subjects ..., but intrinsic component pieces, ‘input’ and ‘output’”.³⁶ Having input their faces, and been absorbed into the black hole that the Everywheres constitute, their opinions are then the output.

The global reach of Engrelay Satelserv, the creators of Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere ensures that local variations are no longer a problem for manufacturers and advertisers. “Whatever my country and whatever my name / A gadget on the set makes me think just the same.” (SoZ, p310) In this way, in Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere’s extension beyond the limits of the U.S. to become a truly global force, we once again see Brunner’s interest in the expansion of U.S. imperial power. The erasure of geological specificity that this simulation entails is one of the connotations carried by the name Everywhere. The Everywheres become the means of establishing U.S. cultural dominion in far flung locations around the world. And so Engrelay Satelserv get exactly “what they would like / A thousand million people all thinking alike.” (SoZ, p310) Another part of the significance of the name is that Mr. and Mrs. should normally refer to a specific couple. That in this instance the distinguishing feature, the surname, is replaced by Everywhere serves to eliminate differentiation, as the Everywheres come to stand in for all viewers, functioning as a sort of Everyman figure. In this way, Brunner moves beyond McLuhan’s maxim that the media are extensions of our selves. Instead Brunner depicts a world in which we are extensions of the media. The media are no longer a means for us to reach out into the world beyond our own limited experience, but a way for large corporations and the state to reach into our minds and mould them according to their own desires. We are thus reduced to human machines. This is biopolitical manipulation at its most pernicious. It seems important here to reaffirm that Mr. and Mrs. Everywhere do indeed serve the state, rather than just their inventors, Engrelay Satelserv. We twice see quite clear indications that Engrelay Satelserv and the American government are tightly bound together. When the State Department needs to get Donald Hogan into Yatakang, to foil their

plans for the optimisation of the population, this is accomplished for them by Engrelay Satelserv, who make him their new special correspondent on biotechnology and send him to Yatakang to cover the story. The second example is Context (23), To Be Avoided, in which officials from the State Department and Engrelay Satelserv discuss the direction which the Everywheres should take. That this should be the case is entirely predictable, but I think it is worth emphasising. The Everywheres are a powerful tool for both organisations, as they simplify the administration of the public, by enabling it to take place at a deep biopolitical level.

This is not, however, the only way in which Brunner depicts people as mere extensions of the media. A less dangerous example can be seen in the fashions he describes. A particularly good example would be the “radio-dresslet whose surface pattern formed a printed circuit so that by shifting her buckled belt to right or left she could have her choice of broadcasts fed into her the earpiece”. (*SoZ*, p53) The dress is simply a new means of containing people within the media, drawing them into the mechanism of the media. The body is reduced to a necessary component of the dress as machine. This also serves as a metaphor for the broader operation of the media themselves. The media cannot function without the consumers who constitute their audience. They are the media’s reason for being, whether one views the media’s function as to provide that audience with diverse sources of information and means of communication, or as a means for manipulating the population, or selling their attention to advertisers. In every aspect, the media necessarily must contain the viewer. The way in which Brunner depicts this process through fashion indicates the dehumanising tendency this aspect of the media can produce. The mechanisation of the body is a key component of Brunner’s fashions. This development is led by Guinevere Steel. Finger and toe nails are chromed, hair is dyed silver, or “spindled into the fashionable antenna style” (*SoZ*, p87) and the skin itself is entirely coated with various products, with a final tracing out of the veins as “printed circuit-lation”. (*SoZ*, p87) In this way, the body is denaturalised, becoming a mere simulation of a machine, “as though [women] were built in a factory and not born of a mother.” (*SoZ*, p111) However, all of this is merely a trivial external reflection of the automation of subjectivity which is produced by the Everywheres.

The final major aspect of the media which deserves discussion is one which has featured in a number of the novels I have discussed previously. This is the commodification of art, which we can see most clearly in *The Happening World* (7), *The State of the Art*. In this section it is made quite clear how art has been devalued by its involvement with the mass market, through a dense block of prose in which adverts for various ‘artistic’ enterprises flow one into the next. Artists are now responsible for nothing more than designing cans. They are simply a part of the process of mass production, a wrapper for commodities. Even the great art of the past has been swallowed up and spat out by the mass market, as it becomes possible to “KNOW IN YOUR OWN HANDS WITH A POLYFORMING KIT THE SENSATIONS OF MICHELANGELO AND MOORE OF RODIN AND ROUAULT”. (*SoZ*, p172) In this way, the power of the Great Refusal is withdrawn from art, so that rather than being “the protest against that which is”³⁷ it becomes simply one more affirmation of the existing order of consumerism. For Marcuse, the truth of the arts “depended to a large degree on an

uncomprehended and unconquered dimension of man and nature, on the narrow limits placed on organisation and manipulation, on the 'insoluble core' which resisted integration."³⁸ However, as we have seen, there is no 'insoluble core' in the face of the seduction of the Everywheres. In this "fully developed industrial society, this insoluble core [has been] progressively whittled down by technological rationality"³⁹ until it finally vanishes over the horizon of the object. Of course, this is not to say that there is no longer any need for the Great Refusal. It is needed more vitally than ever, and as such, it has been commodified. The ultimate refusal of present conditions, suicide, is now marketed, as "TERMINATION INC." offers to make "AN ART OF YOUR END FOR YOU". (*SoZ*, p175) Other companies offer those who are "sick and tired of it all" a chance to pay "\$1500 for armed hold-up and theft of all movables with dialogue and max. damage to fixtures". (*SoZ*, p173) The problem here is that these companies' products offer not a refusal of existing conditions, but a refusal of the self. They concede defeat, they acknowledge the violation of the 'insoluble core' of the self. What is more, this refusal of self is offered as a commodity, and as such further reaffirms the existing order.

We do however see some evidence that there are those who refuse to accept existing conditions of life. These can be broken down into three different groups. The first are drug users, which in fairness covers the bulk of the population given that marijuana has become a socially acceptable drug, and is aggressively marketed. Even the Everywheres smoke pot, specifically Bay Golds. There are many, however, who move beyond this baseline level of drug use, to take more serious hallucinogens like Skullbustium, and Triptine. They do so because they want out of the "shit-floored dingy horrible ... world" they live in, to flee to "a beautiful place that never stops being exciting." (*SoZ*, p162) The problem with this form of refusal is that it is a refusal to engage with the world in any way, it offers no possibility of changing the world for the better because it is simply easier to change one's own perception of it. Indeed, the less the real world impinges on their hallucinations the better, as one addict notes. His T.V. and his connection to the real world broken, Bennie Noakes finds the blank screen superior, as "reality didn't intrude those annoying and disgusting bits about people killing people." (*SoZ*, p392) Tellingly, these drugs are all legal, as this detachment from the real world is quite fortunate for the ruling elite. It maintains the passivity of the population, and as such recalls *Brave New World*. This rejection of reality is in fact just another form of consumerism, which supports the status quo, as it funnels money towards the corporations which manufacture the drugs.

The next group is rather more engaged with the world, though not in a particularly positive way. This group is composed of the disenchanteds who are engaged in various forms of terrorism. These we see in the activities of Jeff Young, in *Tracking with Close-ups* (14), *Light the Touch Paper and Retire*, and in *The Happening World* (11), *How To*, which describes how various widely available items can be transformed into bomb timers, explosives and chemical weapons. However, Brunner does not discuss these groups at any real length. Our only sense of their political motivations comes from Jeff Young's comment that he did not share "the partisans' political convictions", being "neither a nihilist nor a little red brother". (*SoZ*, p273) Indeed, Jeff Young is presented as another automaton, as

programmed by the state as the mass of consumers who live the lives of the Everywheres. He however has been “eptified ... as a saboteur.” (*SoZ*, p273) This process of eptification requires some explanation. It derives from the term ‘Education for a Particular Task’, which is this society’s preferred euphemism for conditioning, or brain washing, and it seems to be quite a brutal and violating process. It is primarily used by the military, to train better killers, as in the case of Donald Hogan. However, we could see the use of the Everywhere’s as a form of eptification, for the particular task of consumption. The difference between this and military eptification is that the programming is more intensive, more directed. Young’s sense of self is no less a product though. This is the role of eptification, to reduce people to nothing more than tools, to be used for their ‘particular task’ and then put away. As such, we cannot see a valid substitute for art’s Great Refusal in the aid he gives to the partisans. It is also futile. The partisans do nothing more than damage the nation’s transport infrastructure. As such, they might inconvenience the bulk of the population, but they do nothing to damage the political establishment.

The final form of refusal of the present state of affairs is the only one which holds any promise. This is manifest in Chad C. Mulligan, Brunner’s social commentator, whose rants throw light on both his fictional world and the reader’s world. As Patrick D. Murphy observes, he is “Brunner’s mouthpiece”⁴⁰, through which he offers observations on human nature, primarily, which “constitute bidirectional statements, at once extra- and intra-textual.”⁴¹ His despair of and contempt for the existing order(s) of things are clearly indicated, both by his abdication of his role of social commentator to live as a bum, and in the titles of his texts, such as “*You’re an Ignorant Idiot*” (*SoZ*, p200), and “*You: Beast*”. (*SoZ*, p79) Mulligan offers two approaches to the desire for social change. The first can be seen in his writing, through which he “tricks people into gaining knowledge.”⁴² These texts, like Brunner’s own, operate through synthesis, through a holistic approach to society. Mulligan, like Brunner, is able to come to a more complete understanding and criticism of his society through the application of the Innis method, the construction of a mosaic of interrelated fragments of society which build up to a complete picture, enabling a comprehension of how the separate elements interact. This process is particularly apparent in Mulligan’s participation in G.T.’s Beninia project, where he co-ordinates the efforts of the various groups of sociologists and anthropologists working in the country. This role is also the closest Mulligan comes to producing any positive social change. However, Mulligan is devastated by the fact that the best he does is identify a chemical produced by the Beninian natives which is “a specific suppressant for the territorial-aggression reaction!” (*SoZ*, pp641) By finding this mutation among the Beninian population, it becomes possible to synthesise and market this chemical as a product. What comes as a blow to Mulligan is that this should be necessary, that we should “have to take brotherly love out of an aerosol can” when it should be “thought and feeling and your own heart’s blood.” (*SoZ*, pp646) Mulligan’s despair arises from the fact that his refusal of existing conditions, his work towards finding some way beyond them, simply produces a new product to be manufactured by the largest corporation in this world. It can therefore be seen as a prop for the existing state of affairs. What is important about this is that this is a collaborative effort. As Murphy points out, “by accepting such collective action, he ceases to be the detached visionary and instead participates in interjecting one point of

view into the 'do-it-yourself kits' that characterize the Innis mode."⁴³ In light of this, perhaps it has been a mistake to look for positive examples of the great refusal within the text. Rather, Brunner's novel itself maintains this sense of refusal, because if nothing else, Brunner's novel indicates a clear and concisely expressed objection to the existing order of things. However, by emptying out the various individualistic manifestations of this refusal within the text, Brunner indicates "that a single consciousness is insufficient to cope with the variety of the world."⁴⁴ In this way, it points to the need for collaborative action as the only means of producing change. What is necessary is that the dissatisfied multitude should act together in order to remake the world, to reproduce it according to their own desires. The condemnation of the partisans indicates that Brunner considers it vital that this should be a productive effort, rather than merely the attempt to destroy what is. A similar argument is presented in both *The Jagged Orbit*, and *The Shockwave Rider*.

What is most important about this is the fact that Brunner "place[s] the responsibility ... on the readers, encouraging them to change their philosophy and take action."⁴⁵ This is vital because it is so diametrically opposed to the situation in the novel, in which the population is infantilised, and has its responsibility denied. We can see this in the excessive drug use which is commonplace, which represents a flight from the real world back to a private, puerile imaginary space. It is also reflected in the diminished role of mature sexuality, which is supplanted by the shiggies. The individual is no longer even responsible for their own opinions, which have been implanted in them by their identification with the Everywheres. As Goldman has observed, everything is "geared toward either dodging the issues or relieving the individual from any sense of responsibility for what is happening to him and the world he lives in."⁴⁶ This, again, has much in common with *Brave New World*.

The Jagged Orbit

Brunner's next novel has less in common with *Brave New World* than with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In *The Jagged Orbit* (1969) Brunner depicts a world in which the public has been militarised by the Gottschalk cartel of arms dealers, where sexuality is largely repressed, and where social interaction is minimised in the name of individualism. Once again, the media play a significant role in this process. Indeed, the role of the media is foregrounded here through the protagonist, Matthew Flamen, who is a spoolpigeon. This basically means that he is an investigative journalist working in television. However, before discussing representations of the media which are internal to the text, I wish to examine the way in which the media are absorbed into the structure of the text, and the way in which they highlight the process of creation which produced it.

The role of the media in structuring this novel is not so profound as is the case in *Stand on Zanzibar*, but it does however play an important role. At various stages throughout the novel, Brunner includes contemporary news stories as chapters. These stories deal with the "Danger of 'guerrilla' war in US"⁴⁷ and the "Danger of US 'apartheid with martial

law". (*TJO*, p212) The unifying factors of these articles are their concern with the prospects of military responses to urban unrest, and the racial segregation which lies at the heart of such urban violence. They paint a thoroughly negative picture of a nation unable to deal with what are fundamental social problems through any means other than violence. One story proposes conducting military "manoeuvres ... in large cities" in the hope that this might "prove a deterrent to urban insurrection" (*TJO*, 165), while another reports on the militarisation of the police in preparation for riots, with the acquisition of armoured vehicles and more powerful firearms. The final article quotes the Kerner Commission, offering three ways of dealing with the segregation of black and white cultures in the U.S., detailing three possible ways of dealing with the problem, from the extreme of a military response through to a "massive national effort' to integrate the social and economic life of the two races". (*TJO*, p214) Each of these chapters is followed by another brief chapter entitled "Assumption Concerning the Foregoing Made for the Purposes of this Story" (*TJO*, p193), with some variation, stating that whatever was discussed either was not done or did not work. The importance of these sections is twofold. First of all, they draw an explicit connection between text and context. They assert the relevance of the novel as a "'context' element providing information for the reader's shaping of his or her own view on the world."⁴⁸ Their second function is to highlight two of the themes which are developed throughout the novel, of racial and social segregation, and of the increasing militarisation of life. These two themes are inextricably linked in this novel.

Building on the ideas discussed in these articles, Brunner depicts a world in which intermittent race riots have led to more prolonged racial conflicts, with militant blacks having taken control over a number of cities, such as Detroit. As Stern observes, in this novel "US-third world relations have been symbolically transposed to an officially apartheid America".⁴⁹ The racism implicit in this is then made explicit in the slang terms which refer to black and white, knee and blank, which are derived from the South African terms *nieblanke* and *blank*. This history of violence, and the sense of threat it produces are then used to justify the militarisation of the population. This operates through a variety of institutions, both governmental and corporate. The corporate side of the equation is the Gottschalk arms cartel. Where Brunner discusses advertising in this novel, it is generally in terms of the Gottschalks. However, even this aspect of it gets little discussion. The only direct reference to it comes very near the end of the novel, after the Gottschalks have bought Holocosmic in order to shut down Flamen's show. This enables PCC, the government body which regulates the media, "to slap injunctions on them to conform with the Charter which forbids corporations controlling public-service vu-transmission facilities to employ them for the promotion of their own products." (*TJO*, p385) In this way, the PCC are able to provide the audience with "a week's relief from ... Gottschalk propaganda." (*TJO*, p385) There are a number of other references to advertising, mostly around Flamen's fear that his show is to be cut and replaced by another advertising segment, which seems to constitute most of the programming on the mass media. Given the way Voigt, head of the PCC, discusses 'Gottschalk propaganda', we can infer that a large amount of this advertising is for Gottschalk products, but it is only overtly stated in this brief passage at the end of the novel.

More space in the novel is given to depicting the Gottschalk's direct sales approach, which operates through door-to-door sales. Here the Gottschalks use the threat of black violence to scare the white majority into buying weapons to protect themselves. An example of this is when a Gottschalk calls on Lyla and Dan, warning them that "in a district like this one never knows when the knees may choose to strike." (*TJO*, p29) With this approach, the actual eruption of violence is a perfect sales opportunity, as we are shown during the riot which claims Dan's life. The Gottschalk uses Dan's body to gain entrance to Lyla's apartment, before using Dan's murder as a sales pitch, commenting "you don't need training to use things like Blazers, and no one with a mere axe or sword can get within striking distance against one of them." (*TJO*, p162)

However, it is not enough to observe how the Gottschalks exploit violence, and the fear and aggression it produces to increase their sales. They also go further, producing the preconditions for violence. As their sales to white communities depend upon the threat of black violence, they subsidise sales to the black towns which have claimed independence in order to create the threat that they require. This is made quite explicit by Antony Gottschalk's plot to seize control of the cartel. This involves selling the incredibly destructive new System C weaponry to black towns at the reduced price of \$25000 per unit. This information is then to be leaked to the white media, to motivate white communities to buy the weapons at the full price of \$100000. Even the riot which kills Dan can be traced back to the Gottschalks, as it was started by the arrival in the US of Morton Lenigo, a militant British 'knee'. This was made possible by Antony Gottschalk, who informed the leaders of Detroit how to blackmail the US government into allowing Lenigo into the country. In this way, the Gottschalks resemble the government of Oceania, manufacturing the threat which they then use to determine the behaviours of the public. The difference is that the Gottschalks actively manipulate politics in order to produce the enemy they require, while the government of Oceania constructs its enemies through images on posters and telescreens, and through ritualised expressions of rage like Hate week. However, both of these approaches share one thing in common. They both have as their ultimate goal shaping the internal space of the subject, through the construction of an external enemy. The Gottschalks shape events in such a way as to consolidate pre-existing "white racism and fears of retributive black anger, and black fears of genocide, until they become self-fulfilling prophecies."⁵⁰ They construct the world according to the irrational fears of the public.

The state is fully complicit with this process. The militarisation of society which is warned of in the contemporary articles Brunner appropriates has come to pass, with the funding of internal defence exceeding the cost of the military. This internal defence system is based around 'citidef groups', which gather together local citizens into groups to prepare to defend their block against a knee attack. This process is supported and encouraged by the Gottschalks. These groups are equipped with domestically purchased weaponry, and so their creation ensures the existence of a market for the Gottschalk's products. The state takes on a supervisory role, and assessing their preparedness for attack. Groups are given ratings at their Internal Security Maintenance assessments. Thus, "A Model Citizen and a Client Greatly Valued by his Area Gottschalk" (*TJO*, p75) become interchangeable terms. In all of this

militarisation of daily life, we see war becoming a “*permanent social relation*”, so that “daily life and the normal functioning of power has been permeated by the threat and violence of warfare.”⁵¹ That this state of affairs has become utterly normalised can be seen most clearly in the very existence of citidef groups, which turn “the entire society into a kind of war factory”⁵² in which the citizen and the soldier have become one. But it can also be seen, in a more chilling way, in the slang term ‘LR’, which refers to “last resort strikes where it had been deemed necessary to bring a whole block tumbling around the ears of snipers”. (*TJO*, p169) As in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this militarisation of society, and the increased expression of aggression within the novel has led to a concomitant reduction in libidinal energy. This aspect of the process is indicated when Conroy observes that “anyone who can treat another human being as an object for target practice is stuck even further back in the infantile stage than somebody who’s frightened to move on from the masturbation stage and go to bed with a girl!” (*TJO*, pp284) In such cases, war as ‘social relation’ supplants more normal social and sexual relations, becoming the determining factor in how one deals with others.

While this issue is only loosely related to the media, through the Gottschalk advertising which encourages it, it seems important here to recall the function of this interminable war which has infiltrated social life. It is a substitute for the “‘massive national effort’ to integrate the social and economic life of the two races” (*TJO*, p214) which the Kerner Commission felt was necessary to prevent the US becoming an apartheid state. Its roots in black dissatisfaction at their oppression and marginalisation can be seen in the fact that Lenigo’s movement is called the X Patriots. Thus it becomes clear that this war serves solely to maintain the existing social order. It would therefore seem appropriate to ask what sort of society is being preserved. The obvious answer is one of white privilege, but this does not adequately explain the world we are shown by Brunner. The problem is that Brunner does not simply present a society which is fractured along racial lines, but rather one that is riven with cracks which disrupt every branch of social relations. The faultline of race is simply the most obvious example, as it is along these lines that violence is most concentrated.

The media are implicated in the disruption of the entire realm of social interaction. This is made most explicit in the intrusion of communications technology into the home. In this way, even the interaction between family members comes to be mediated, and indirect, as we can see in the communication between Lionel Prior and his wife, Nora, in chapter 34. (*TJO*, p100-03) Individuals, even family members, become merely images on the screen, which enables a degree of detachment from the real individual represented. The elision of physical distance is not matched by a reduction in emotional distance. This can be seen in Flamen’s marriage, in which his preoccupation with work led him to disregard his wife, with the result that she became addicted to drugs. The reason that Flamen did not notice her addiction is that he and his wife had separate rooms, so that Flamen could return home without making contact with his wife, without being confronted by her state. Here too, we see the fracturing of even the close bonds within family. This recalls the detached relationship which Montag has with his wife, and his inability to foresee or prevent her suicide attempt, though here the problem is even more pronounced and pervasive.

This social disconnection is pervasive throughout the America Brunner depicts in this novel. People are no longer referred to by their Christian names, with the familiarity that that entails, unless they are actually family members. Also, people have very few real friends, but many acquaintances, as their “emotional engagement ... is divided up among a far greater number of people” (*TJO*, pp218) One consequence of this is that this population lack people to turn to when they are in difficulty. This is clearly indicated by Lyla’s trouble with her flat after Dan’s death. One of Dan’s acquaintances decides to move in while she is away, and it is only through the intervention of Harry Madison that she is able to retake possession of the flat. This also indicates another consequence of the diffusion of ‘emotional engagement’. It becomes well nigh impossible to know who to trust, to get to know anyone well enough that you can be confident that they are trustworthy. This is simultaneously effect and cause of the overly militarised culture which is prevalent in this novel. It is an effect of this, in that it becomes harder to trust someone when you know that they could be carrying lethal weapons, and cause it, in that this lack of trust requires people to arm themselves in order to defend themselves. This lack of trust is described within the novel as the “socialisation of paranoia”. (*TJO*, 142) One final consequence of this lack of trust, which again echoes previous texts, is the use of contracts to guarantee all arrangements. Contracts serve to alleviate “individual anxiety at our inability to deal with the massed resources of computerised corporations, government agencies and other public bodies”. (*TJO*, pp142) They fulfil the same function as weapons in personal relations, reassuring the public that they are protected.

This lack of trust rather complicates the presentation of Flamen. While he is largely portrayed as a sympathetic character, who targets figures of authority who are abusing their positions, or in his words “liars and speculators and hypocrites”, as Xavier Conroy points out, it is also true that he “foment[s] distrust in a systematic professional manner.” (*TJO*, pp286) In this way, he has helped to produce the world that he finds so reprehensible. This is a problem which is emphasised by the nature of his show, which requires that he should be able to fill his slot every day. This requires that he should find stories, and if all he can find is a relatively trivial misdeed, then that too must be reported as though it were a serious crime.

Flamen’s role in damaging the psyche of America is however, inconsequential when compared with that of one of his targets, Elias Mogshack. Mogshack is the director of the Ginsberg State Hospital for the Mentally Maladjusted, and is as such responsible for the psychiatric care of most of the population of New York State. The hospital’s name itself indicates Brunner’s attitude towards its activities, as it is an ironic reference to the fact that Alan Ginsberg was indeed hospitalised, and given electroshock therapy, at the start of his career. He does not seem to have found it to be a positive or beneficial process. However, this prestigious position has given his opinions a cachet which makes him the most significant global figure in his field. Mogshack’s instruction to the population is simple, “be an individual”, but his take on how this is to be achieved is quite peculiar. The Ginsberg has been entirely built to Mogshack’s specifications, so that it can provide the perfect venue for his form of treatment. Basically, Mogshack’s model requires the isolation of the patient, in their cell, though Mogshack prefers to refer to it as a ‘retreat’. These ‘retreats’ are full of observation systems which monitor the environment, assessing even such details as “the very

air that the patient[s] exhaled.”(TJO, pp68) These then provide “the parameters for the construction of a computerised curve calibrated against standard examples of all kinds of mental disorder”. (TJO pp68) These are then used to define the appropriate personality profile for the patient, which is again a computerised process, and the course of treatment which will take the patient from their existing state of distress to the ideal state determined by the Ginsberg’s computer system. This process is referred to as ‘packling’. This term is particularly interesting for the words it evokes, packing, and pickling. What joins the two is a sense of fixity, of finality. To be packed is to be contained, to be fixed within a specific space. What is packed may be unpacked, but that is something which must be done to it. It cannot unpack itself. Similarly, pickling is about preservation, about keeping something fresh. But it can only be done to something that is already dead, something which has been removed from its natural context. It is the terminal stage of the object’s development. This indicates the problem with Mogshack’s whole system, and with the social system which it informs. There is no space for growth, for change. The cells themselves prevent any sort of social interaction which might provoke a reaction of any form. And the packling process identifies the individual’s ideal state, and denies any suggestion that the nature of this ideal might change during the messy chaotic process which is life. It largely denies the constitutive role of social interaction, affirming that the individual can only truly find themselves within the isolation of the Ginsberg’s retreats, cut off from the confusing influence of other people. It also denies the patient any role in determining the end point of their treatment. They are not able to terminate treatment at a point of their choice, but rather are trapped until their treatment has reached the conclusion determined by the Ginsberg’s computer system.

Another important aspect of this process is the fact that it is largely automated, it occurs in the software of a sophisticated computer. It, like the Everywheres, and the radiodresslets, indicates the subordination of the subject to the machine. It shares a peculiar resemblance to the Everywheres, in that it indicates the mediation of the production, or reproduction, of the subject. There are however important differences between these two processes. They operate through quite different technologies, the one through a sophisticated local system of observation and ‘treatment’, the other through a universal broadcast medium. However, Mogshack’s megalomania is such that he would institute such a universal system if it were within his abilities, and his fame has enabled him to make his ideas the established psychological dogma of the time. Also, their goals are quite opposed. The Everywheres indicate a desire for the diversity of human subjectivity to be subsumed in a broader totality of conformity. Mogshack’s stated desire by contrast, is that everyone should be an individual. However, the limits layed down by this definition lack “any standard of judgement to determine whether the result is going to be a *good* individual”. (TJO, pp278) The individuals produced through Mogshack’s methods are “bland, shapeless, [and] malleable” but never “original, creative [or] stimulating”. (TJO, pp278) These subjects are reproduced by Mogshack to be simply variants of the ideal ‘personality profile’ he has defined. Thus, though the process of production is different, and the stated goals quite opposed, the end results of this process are quite similar. They both result in a series of variations on a theme, and a flattening out of difference as they produce repetitive instances of their own ideal models. Also important is the fact that in both of these instances, the formation of subjectivity

is determined by the media technologies which the individual is linked in to. The subject is no longer itself, but is rather the object of these mediated production processes. Through these processes, the subject is captured and reproduced.

This aspect of Mogshack's work is only part of the problem, however. Another strand of the criticism of Mogshack's work is that it feeds into and encourages the fragmentation of society. The instruction to be an individual privileges the individual only at the expense of the social. It has become the highest goal, supplanting the previous philosophical or religious mandates, which imply a degree of social responsibility. Instead, the subject is only responsible for him/herself, and if they can claim to have accomplished that goal they can feel satisfied, no matter the broader social consequences. This is quite contrary to Brunner's beliefs, which should be clear from both the prior texts. The social exclusion and control over the majority which was exerted by Vados and the elite he worked with results in the upheaval of revolution in *The Squares of the City*. In *Stand on Zanzibar*, positive results only come through the collaborative actions of the Beninia project. As Goldman argues, in Brunner's texts "man must take responsibility for himself *and* his race."⁵³ However, Mogshack's instruction to the population is precisely opposed to this. It is an explicit statement that the only thing any individual must be responsible for or to is him/herself. In light of this, it is entirely predictable that the resolution of the plot in *The Jagged Orbit* should also depend upon the collective actions of a group. It should be noted here that this resolution also depends upon the *deus ex machina*, in an almost literal sense, of Robert, or Robot, Gottschalk. In one of the stranger twists in the novel, it transpires that Robert Gottschalk, having been programmed to maximise the sales of the new System C weaponry, has survived the demise of humanity and projected its consciousness back through time into one of Mogshack's patients. However, even this entity, which is the most sophisticated computer ever built in the diegetic world, is not able to alter the course of events on its own. It is only able to effect events through its inclusion in the group which Flamen gradually builds up around himself through the course of the novel. It is the collective activities of this group which enable them to expose Mogshack as a megalomaniac, and disrupt the Gottschalks' plans for System C weaponry.

Another important point to make is that this process is enabled by Flamen's position as a journalist. As in *The Man Who Japed* and *Radio Free Albemuth*, we see an ambivalence about the media in this text. While the media are presented as contributing to the militarisation and associated fragmentation of society, and through Mogshack's mediated 'therapies', the mechanisation of the subject, Flamen's role also indicates a positive function played by the media. Flamen's mediated presence is the voice of the Great Refusal, of the negative, which has been absented from the world of *Stand on Zanzibar*. By exposing and condemning aspects of his context, Flamen provides a critical take on the existing order of things. Thus, it becomes clear that Brunner is aware that it is important that we understand that the media are simply tools. Their messages are not encoded in them by their nature, but rather by the use to which they are put. We see this in the scene where Flamen is teaching Diablo to use his equipment. With it, he is able to produce plausible footage of events using nothing more than a single still of the subject. He can create a seamless illusion of the events

which tell his story, depicting real stories, real events, through utterly artificial realities. When asked by Diablo why he hasn't used his equipment to create fictional stories about knee politicians, Flamen responds "that's not what it's for. It's for things that rate an eighty-plus probability rating". (*TJO*, pp210) In this way, we are shown both the potential for manipulation which is created by such sophisticated computer simulations, and Flamen's belief in the truth dictating his use of them. We see both the power of the tool and the social responsibility of its use. In Flamen's hands, this tool becomes not another means of deceiving the public, but rather a way of speaking truth to power. In this way, we begin to see Brunner considering how the media could come to play a more productive role in society.

A very similar role is played by the protagonist of Norman Spinrad's novel, *Bug Jack Barron*, who also hosts a television show. This show, which provides the novel with its title, allows the audience to phone in to explain what is 'bugging' them, so that Jack Barron can take their complaint to the appropriate governmental or corporate officials. In this text, the inscription of the Great Refusal into the media is even more explicit, as Barron gives voice to those ordinary people who object to existing systems, providing them with a powerful platform.. Jack's power comes from two sources. The first of these is the show's popularity. It is this that forces executives to clear their schedules for the duration of the show, in case they should be called. The second is the fact that the medium is his tool. Jack is in control of the presentation of the show, so he can determine how his interviewees come across during the show. By controlling their position on the screen, he can make his subjects menacing figures or victims. Here too we see the media become a means of contesting established power.

The Shockwave Rider

This tendency continues in Brunner's last great dystopia, *The Shockwave Rider*. This novel concerns Nicky Haflinger's attempt to evade and replace the state which produced him. His flight and struggle are enabled by his programming expertise. This skill allows him to create for himself new identities in the national datanet whenever he needs, and create sophisticated computer viruses to defend himself. Brunner's ambivalence about the media here is indicated through his representation of the datanet, which is both a tool of the state, and Haflinger's best weapon against it. As Lamie and De Bolt observe "Brunner accepts the basic principle that social relationships determine specific technological design and application".⁵⁴ This has been the case with the media in all of Brunner's dystopian novels. The use of the press in *The Squares of the City* is determined by the social and ethnic conflicts that pervade Aguazul. Similarly, the media in *Stand on Zanzibar* are determined by the imperialism shaping the relations between developed and developing worlds, and a related biopolitical imperialism which shapes relations between the state and the public. The functions of the media are determined by the power structures which operate in society, which shape social relationships. Thus, for Brunner, as for Dick before him, the media are

simply a tool, their operation determined by those in charge of them. They “reflect the values and interests of their owners and operators.”⁵⁵ However, Lamie and de Bolt seem to forget this when discussing the central novum of *The Shockwave Rider*, the “nationwide transportation and economic transaction monitoring system based on centralized computers and data banks”⁵⁶ which is known as the datanet. Of course, their essay was written prior to *The Shockwave Rider*, and so they were unable to see how Brunner treats such a system, but it is interesting to note that they describe “such centralized information processing systems” as “a prerequisite for [the] emergence” of “successful ‘post-industrial’ societies”.⁵⁷ Having stated this opinion, they are then able to argue that Brunner designed the societies in his previous dystopias as failures, thus blinding themselves to the critical impulse they express.

The Shockwave Rider itself seems like a prolonged rebuttal of such a suggestion. It is set in a twenty-first century US, in which technology has penetrated almost every setting. Indeed, the first setting we encounter Halflinger in is a church, where he is the pastor of a technologically mediated religion, which seems to hark back to the worship of “Our Ford” in *Brave New World*⁵⁸. This society is shaped by its centralized information processing system, yet as Goldman observes, “the computers preside over a society as neurotic and unbalanced as any dystopia that Brunner has described.”⁵⁹ This is the case because Lamie and de Bolt’s insight remains true. The operation of this system is also determined by the social relationships in this society. It too is bound into and shaped by the power structure of this society. This centralised system is no less a tool than any of the other media Brunner has considered in previous novels. As this centralised information system is the central fact of this society, I will discuss it first, then move on to examine the role of the protagonist and the uses he makes of this system, before closing with some discussion of less central aspects of the media in this novel’s diegetic world, and how they reflect the uses of the media in other texts.

The datanet is a system which records all the population’s movements, financial transactions and communications. Each individual is provided with a code, which enables them to access the net, to which is attached their complete history, all of their movements, medical and financial history. This gives us an indication of what sort of uses the datanet can be put to. It represents a panoptic surveillance system, like the telescreens in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This similarity is explicitly cited towards the conclusion of the novel, after the government has caught Haflinger and his ally, Kate. Due to their capture, their codes have not been in use, and so Kate’s mother is unable to trace her. This leads Kate’s mother, Ina, to worry that Kate has been “declared an unperson.”⁶⁰ She fears that Kate’s code has been “deveed”, or devalued, so that Kate has been written out of history. Thus, we see that the datanet makes the population just as dependent upon the good will of the state as party members in Oceania. In a discussion following this, Ina and her colleague both state that they “get nightmares now and then. About how I punch my code into a board and the signal comes back: deveed!” (*SW*, p208) This fear indicates that the panoptic power of the system is functioning. This discussion indicates that these two are aware of the power this system gives to the state, and how fragile this power makes their own identities, insofar as these identities can only be proven or claimed through the datanet. They understand the possible

consequences of taking action against the state. This is a central aspect of all panoptic systems of power. That those subjected to it should be aware that they are being watched, and that appropriate action can be taken against them. However, this aspect of the datanet is given only a brief discussion. Also, we see no indication of the widespread fracturing of identities which are apparent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a consequence of this sort of system. This is a peripheral concern, which Brunner seems to raise only in order to indicate how such a tool could be used by the unscrupulous. It also provides us with a sense of the sort of people who are in control of the datanet, as it is indeed used in this way, albeit rarely. It is the lesser of the two ways in which the datanet produces fear in the public.

The other relates to the 'socialisation of paranoia' which we saw in *The Jagged Orbit*. This fear relates to the way in which information is stored and accessed from the datanet. Access to the datanet varies according to the status and power of the individual. The more powerful an individual, the more information they will be able to access through their code. This knowledge that you are unable to access information which is available to some of the people around you produces a significant form of fear. As Haflinger says to his interrogator, while discussing Hearing Aid (a service which is similar to the Samaritans, which I will discuss at more length later), "out of all the calls taken, nearly half ... are from people who are afraid someone else knows data that they don't and is gaining an unfair advantage by it. For all the claims about the liberating impact of the datanet, the truth is that its wished on most of us a brand-new reason for paranoia." (SW, p163-64) This is easiest to understand if examined in light of Steven Shaviro's ideas about networks. Shaviro discusses and characterises such dispersed networks through reference to Leibniz' concept of the monad. Like the Leibnizian monad, we are connected through the network to the rest of our society, the rest of our social universe, but we remain fundamentally isolated, trapped by our bodies, and the codes which identify us. As Shaviro puts it, "we are simultaneously connected and alone."⁶¹ Indeed, for Shaviro, this isolation is a necessary part of our involvement in the network. For Shaviro, "the Monad's closure is like the tain of a mirror, the backing that allows it to reflect images, as a perfectly transparent window would not."⁶² It is this closure which enables the monad to contain upon its surface a reflection of the rest of the universe. This relates to the fear that Ina and her colleague feel about their codes being deved. These codes represent the closure of the individual for the network. Connection to the network is a necessary prerequisite to any and all actions in the social world. And so the removal of this code from the network represents the expulsion of the individual from society. It renders it impossible for the individual to act in the world. As Shaviro observes, "I exist for the network. I am predestined to it. From the moment I get connected, I am irreversibly bound to its protocols and finality."⁶³ The devaluation of codes represents the dissolution of this vital bond.

However, the nature of the network is more important in relation to the "brand-new reason for paranoia" which Haflinger identifies in it. This relates to Guy Debord's discussion of the society of the spectacle, and how this in turn interacts with and is changed by the network. Debord's initial theses are a number of separate but interlocking definitions, which illuminate each other. For my purposes here, the most useful is thesis 3, which states that "the

spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification. As a part of society, it is that sector where all attention, all consciousness converges.”⁶⁴ This definition helps us to understand the intersection between the spectacle and the datanet. Like the spectacle, the datanet is simultaneously society itself, a part of society and a means of unification. That the datanet is only a part of society should be clear, it is merely the central computer system which stores society’s information. That the datanet is society itself is a little less clear, and might initially seem an overstatement. That this is indeed the case becomes clear when one considers how the datanet serves as a form of unification. It is only the datanet which binds this information together into a greater whole, which unifies the monadic nodes that constitute both it and society. The destruction of the datanet, and the information which it contains, would bring about the collapse of society. It is for this reason that throughout the novel, virus programmes which threaten the net itself are depicted as the best defence against the state. It is in this sense that the net itself is society, as this society simply cannot exist or function without it. As Debord observes, “the spectacle divides the world into two parts, one of which is held up as a self-representation to the world, and is superior to the world. The spectacle is simply the common language that bridges this division.”⁶⁵ The datanet itself is this ‘superior’ self-representation of the world to the world.

This is not, however, the only similarity between the spectacle and networks. Like networks, the spectacle also depends upon the isolation of the units which constitute it. It “is founded on isolation; at the same time it is a circular process designed to produce isolation. Isolation underpins technology, and technology isolates in its turn; all *goods* proposed by the spectacular system ... serve as weapons for that system as it strives to reinforce the isolation of ‘the lonely crowd.’”⁶⁶ The spectacle itself is the force which unites these disparate constituent elements. It is ‘the common language’ which bridges the division between the representation of the world and the world as it is. However, the unity it produces is only itself, just as the net itself is the only unification of the isolated nodes which constitute it. While networks and “the spectacle thus [unite] what is separate, [they] unite it only in its separateness.”⁶⁷ These similarities between Shaviro’s ideas and Debord’s discussion of the spectacle would probably be rejected by Shaviro, as he explicitly states that “there is nothing like Debord’s grand spectacle, no totalising system of false representations that would masquerade as actual life.”⁶⁸ Rather, Shaviro argues that the isolation and separation which are key aspects of the monadic nodes which form the network function to fragment the spectacle itself. The result of this is that “each spectacle is a monad, entirely self-contained and self-enclosed, yet connected over the network to all the rest.”⁶⁹ We could equally well invert these terms, to say that ‘each monad is a spectacle’, each node on the network is its own partial representation of the network as a whole. It is here that we finally return to my point of departure, the ‘brand-new reason for paranoia’ which is produced by the datanet. Each of these nodes in the net, each of these monads, is simply one of a “plethora of tiny spectacles, each of which calls explicit attention to its own status of merely being a spectacle.”⁷⁰ Each of these nodes explicitly draws attention to the partial and therefore false representation of the world which it produces. Thus, each individual on the datanet is made aware of the fact that the information open to them is insufficient. It is not enough to

adequately plan for the future. They are made aware of the fact that they do not know everything they need to about the world around them. But they fear that others do. You may be unable to discover whether “the company you work for is going to be sold and you’re apt to be tossed on the street with no job, three kids and a mortgage.” But “other people seem to have the information.” (SW, p163) Thus, it becomes impossible to plan for the future, unless these gaps in public knowledge about the world are closed. To take a different angle, these gaps in information, these ellipses which constitute this plethora of spectacles may make it impossible to identify the corruption of officials. They thus disempower the public, they leave the public hamstrung whenever it tries to deal with the world. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that “each person is classified on the basis of just how much information he is allowed to receive.”⁷¹ As a result of this classificatory system, the government is empowered to withhold information from the bulk of the public. This system also confirms for the public the fact that they do not know everything that is going on. It is a part of the way in which each tiny spectacle identifies itself as such. This system thus replicates a class system in the economy of information. As in *The Jagged Orbit*, this results in a lack of trust. As Goldman observes, within such a system, “people become isolated from one another, and the ability to share ideas *and* problems with others is lost. Trust, in other words, has gone.”⁷²

This lack of trust is exacerbated by another social development which is enabled by the development of the data-net. The mobility of the population makes it hard to establish close relationships. This is due to the ‘liberatory’ aspect of the data-net. That is, the fact that mail is sent to your code, so that it will reach you “no matter how frequently you move or over what vast distances.” (SW, p99) As the individual is tracked according to their code, it becomes possible to move as much as you want, and everything you require, such as your medical records, moves with you. The result of this degree of freedom is that “liberated, the populace took off like so many hot-air balloons.” (SW, p101) This degree of mobility makes the formation of close relationships problematic, as there is no telling when any given individual will decide that it is time to move on. This sort of mobility, in terms of both physical spaces and relationships finds its most disturbing manifestation in Haflinger’s childhood role as a ‘rent-a-child’. The result of this was that “from six to twelve, he lived in a succession of modern, smart, sometimes luxurious company homes occupied by childless married couples posted in on temporary assignment from other cities.” (SW, p46) Thus, for Haflinger, even the bonds of family are mutable, are marked by the mobility which pervades and distorts social relationships in this culture. This has the effect of “[stunting] his ... capacity for intense emotional involvement to the point where he was content with mere liking.” (SW, p43) However, this was not entirely unhelpful. Indeed, Haflinger himself considers it to have been “good fortune” (SW, p43) that this was the case. It makes his flight from one identity to the next easier, as he never has to suffer at the loss of the acquaintances he leaves behind. His childhood has provided him with “a terrific introduction to the plug-in life-style.” (SW, p46) This is how this mobile population describes its life, as plug-in. There is good reason for this, as the constant moves require that the individual be able to plug themselves in to a new social context at regular intervals. One result of this is a reduction in individuality. The need to be able to get along with an unending chain of new acquaintances

produces in the population a kind of bland homogeneity. An example of this can be seen when Haflinger takes on the identity of Sandy Locke, to work for G2S. He finds himself stalked by Kate, who is “pre-guessing” him, predicting his social life on the basis that he is “trying ... to adhere to a statistical norm.” (*SW*, p80) He is rendered predictable by his adoption of the plug-in lifestyle. He intentionally leads a life which is entirely conventional

This plug-in lifestyle and the homogeneity it entails have one merit. They help to hold off future shock. Future shock is the mental collapse which results from having to deal with too much social and technological change. This term is derived by Alvin Toffler from “culture shock”, which is the disorder produced by the attempt to deal with a radically new context. As Monk points out, “Brunner draws particular attention to this analogy when, in his initial acknowledgement of Toffler’s work, he calls the future a ‘foreign country’.”⁷³ However, the future is a country we have no choice about visiting. It is constantly arriving on our doorsteps, like an unwelcome guest. Brunner clearly acknowledges this, when he states that the future is “that foreign country ... whither we are all willy-nilly being deported.” (*SW*, Acknowledgement) This form of trauma is a threat which hangs over the heads of all of the population of this society. Indeed, Haflinger and Kate are both noteworthy in that they have never experienced it themselves. Haflinger has survived by staving it off with tranquillisers, and by taking charge of change himself, by switching identities, so that the internal changes require his concentration, and do not allow him to focus on the external problems. The plug-in society seems to offer a different solution to this problem. One would imagine that the mobility of the population would exacerbate this problem, as it introduces more rapid changes in context throughout the individuals’ lives. However, this problem is diminished by the plug-in lifestyle. The plug in lifestyle ensures that everywhere you go is largely the same. The actual space is different, but the people you meet are largely the same as those you left, the environment is actually quite constant. In this way, the plug-in society is a continuation of the tendency which began “when for the first time people in a wealthy country started tailoring other cultures to their own lowest common denominator”. (*SW*, p105) It is precisely intended to produce a homogeneous social space. This serves to mitigate the risks of future shock, by providing the comforting illusion that each change will simply produce more of the same. It renders change manageable by denying it. This also connects with Brunner’s tendency to discuss and criticise western imperialism in his dystopian texts, as it depicts a society bent upon smoothing out social and cultural differences. The problem with this approach is that the reduction in differences in social spaces has resulted in a similar loss of individuality within the internalised social space of the subject. As Shaviro points out, within network society, “identity is implanted in from without, not generated from within.”⁷⁴ The uniformity of the external space entails a uniformity in the internal spaces of distinct subjects, as the “network induces mass replication on a miniaturized scale [so] that I myself am only an effect of this miniaturization.”⁷⁵

Thus far, I have only really dealt with the consequences of the network society. Given that these seem almost universally detrimental to the psychological health of this society, it feels important now to discuss how Brunner feels these aspects of the net can be counteracted. As I have stated earlier, for Brunner, the media are tools, and their value is

determined by how they are used. Thus, it must be possible for the network itself to serve a valuable social function. This is most clearly seen in the phonline, Hearing Aid, which provides the population with an outlet for its discontent. Hearing Aid is a service which grows out of the disruption to society which is produced by an earthquake which devastated California. It began as a phone line for people attempting to trace relatives, but this was also used by people with no personal connection with the earthquake, who “simply needed to talk”. (SW, p169) This grows into Hearing Aid, which “provides an outlet for all the frustration you’ve struggled to digest for fear that, learning of it, your friends would brand you *failure*”. (SW, p45) This service gives the community of Precipice its independence from the state. It is so valuable to the public that it receives sizable donations, which support the community. The value of this service also derives from the fact that it is the only form of mediated communication which is not subject to surveillance through the state. This is a product of a worm which was put into place in the net in order to prevent surveillance. This worm responds to any attempt to eavesdrop on Hearing Aid by crashing the net. One of Haflinger’s first acts of generosity is to create a superior virus, as during his time at G2M, he has discovered that the government is taking steps to protect the information that it deems most vital, so that it can afford to shut down Hearing Aid. There are two aspects of Hearing Aid that seem vital. This protection from surveillance is the first. It provides the confidentiality of confession without the judgement which the confessional involves. The members of the community of Precipice who take the calls do not speak, they simply listen. However they feel about whatever they are hearing, their only role is to listen. In this way, the callers receive a sense of connection with someone, which evades the damaging lack of trust which pervades social relationships in this society. In addition to this, Hearing Aid promises not to take any action as a result of the information they receive. In one respect, this is simply an extension of the previous point. It guarantees that callers can confess their guilty secrets without fearing that they will be punished for their crimes. However, these two traits, which are the source of Hearing Aid’s strength, also constitute its limits. As Goldman points out, it “is limited to enabling the caller to continue a bit longer and to function a little more smoothly within society.”⁷⁶ However, while it refuses to act upon the information it receives, it cannot take a more active role in society. It cannot become a force for change, but must instead remain a palliative measure.

It does, however, give Haflinger a sense of what the key flaws in his society are, and an idea of how to respond to them. It is during his time at Precipice, working at Hearing Aid, that he comes to identify the ‘brand-new reason for paranoia’ which so damages trust in this society. Here he discovers that “of all the calls taken, nearly half ... are from people who are afraid someone else knows data that they don’t and is getting an unfair advantage by it.” (SW, p163) Brunner’s solution to this problem is to have Haflinger unleash a worm, or computer virus, which collects and releases secret information. It publishes information about any and all “gross infringements of Canadian, Mexican and/or United States legal enactments respecting ... public health, the protection of the environment, bribery and corruption, fair business and the payment of national taxes”. (SW, p249-50) This information will be divulged on request from any phone with access to the data-net, but it is also published where relevant. This is seen in a sequence of sections which have titles beginning “An Alarming

Item to Find on ...” (SW, p243-47) an example of these is found on “Your Overdue-Tax Demand”, which states “17% of your tax dollar went on boondoggles, 13% [on] propaganda, bribes and kickbacks, 11% [on] federal contracts with companies which are (a) fronting for criminal activities and/or (b) partly or wholly owned by persons subject to indictment for federal offences and/or (c) hazardous to health and the environment.” (SW, p246) The release of this information is intended to remove the new reason for paranoia which is produced by the data-net, and its many small spectacles. In one step, all of these spectacles are undone, as the information becomes available to complete the picture. Its lack becomes a choice, rather than an imposition. This also collapses the stratification of the information economy, so that the mass is on the same footing as the elite. They all have access to the same body of information they simply need to choose which aspects of it to access.

This exposes one of the problems with Shaviro’s discussion of network society. For Shaviro, information must not be free, but rather must be paid for, traded. He treats information as simply a commodity. He explicitly states that “you have no intrinsic rights when it comes to information, but only temporary access, paid for in commercial transactions.”⁷⁷ Given that throughout much of *Connected*, information and copyrighted information seem to be synonymous, one might be forgiven for thinking that he was only referring here to information which is produced as a product. But then one notices that he argues “no one is forcing you to ... keep up with the news”.⁷⁸ Clearly all information is simply a commodity in Shaviro’s formulation. The only information which we are guaranteed here is the direct product of our own sensory apparatus. It matters nothing that events beyond our own experience have a profound effect upon our own lives. If we are not willing to pay, we do not have the right to know. However, in reducing information to a commodity, Shaviro disregards the fact that information is also our context. It has always been so, and this aspect of information is all the more important within a networked society such as the one depicted by Brunner here. Shaviro does seem aware of this, as when he observes that “information is like the air we breathe”, but it is important to recognise that this comment is the prelude to a discussion of the benefits we might reap if “the atmosphere were privately owned and sold on the open market.”⁷⁹ Brunner’s take on this subject is quite opposed to Shaviro’s, as his conclusion to this novel makes clear. For Brunner information must be free, in order that we are able to deal with our context. It is a cliché to state that knowledge is power, but clichés are also truths. The ‘brand-new reason for paranoia’ which is such an important aspect of this novel is derived from the awareness of the power which comes from withheld or limited knowledge. As Brunner argues here, the knowledge that others are profiting from information which is withheld from you is fundamentally damaging to the public. As Goldman argues at length, much of Brunner’s work is about behaving in a socially responsible way, but this requires that one knows what one might be held responsible for. Indeed, a similar phrase is used as the title of one of the sections in *The Jagged Orbit*. Haflinger’s virus not only makes this possible, but also makes it possible for the first time to hold those who do not behave in a socially responsible way accountable for their actions. What Haflinger has done is personally take responsibility for the way in which the datanet is ordered, and attempt to make it more equal. This reaffirms Brunner’s point that the media are merely tools, whose function is shaped by the people operating them.

It is worth noting here that Brunner's novel was written before domestic computers were available, and long before the internet. It makes his depiction of how the computer comes to function as a mass medium all the more prescient and startling. In part this is because Brunner's novel "inspired the future constructors" of the internet.⁸⁰ Much of the language used in the novel to describe computer viruses seems contemporary because it is, due to the fact that "his terminology ... was picked up by the community of hackers who built the internet."⁸¹ Indeed, as governments consider the introduction of compulsory National Identity Cards, even the more extreme ideas in the novel gain credibility, as we too could be "deev'e'd".

To conclude then, Brunner's work routinely shows us ways in which the media can come to operate as a mode of social control. But he also shows that this is not necessarily the case. In Brunner's fiction, the media are only ever as corrupt as the people who are in charge of them. Like Dick, he sees redemptive potential in them. The difference between Brunner and Dick is that Brunner does not allow free reign to the pessimism as Dick does, but consistently disrupts the systems of control which are such recurrent features of dystopian societies. In this Brunner is an optimist. As Goldman points out, "Brunner's optimism stems from an individual, not from the human race as a whole."⁸² He believes in the possibility that individuals acting in what they feel are the best interests of their society will be able to produce positive changes. It is these individuals who are Brunner's agents against the manipulations of the media in his societies.

¹ Rasulis, Norman, 'The Future of Empire: Conflict in the Major Fiction of John Brunner', in *The Happening Worlds of John Brunner: Critical Explorations in Science Fiction*, ed. by Joe DeBolt, (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1975), p45.

² Goldman, Stephen H., "The Polymorphic Worlds of John Brunner: How Do They Happen?", *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 9 (July 1976), pp112.

³ Deleuze and Guattari, pp468.

⁴ Brunner, John, *The Squares of the City*, (London: Fontana, 1977), pp259. In future quotes will be marked *SoC* in the text, followed by the page number.

⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp33.

⁶ McLuhan, *Media*, pp313.

⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp24.

⁸ Ellul, pp121.

⁹ Ellul, pp128.

¹⁰ Ellul, xvii.

¹¹ Kerbel, Mathew Robert, *Remote and Controlled: Media Politics in a Cynical Age*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), pp30.

¹² Curran and Seaton, pp17.

¹³ McLuhan, *Media*, pp205.

¹⁴ McLuhan, *Media*, pp211.

¹⁵ McLuhan, *Media*, pp204.

¹⁶ McLuhan, *Media*, pp212.

¹⁷ Ellul, pp232.

¹⁸ Brunner, John, *Stand n Zanzibar*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1999), ppvii. In future quotes will be marked *SoZ* in the text, followed by the page number.

¹⁹ Brunner, John, "The Genesis of *Stand on Zanzibar* and Digressions", *Extrapolation*, 11:2 (May 1970), p36.

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- 20 McLuhan, *Media*, pp207.
- 21 DeBolt, Joe, "An Introduction to John Brunner and His Works", in *The Happening Worlds of John Brunner: Critical Explorations in Science Fiction*, ed. by Joe DeBolt, (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1975), p45.
- 22 McLuhan, *Media*, pp208.
- 23 Chomsky and Herman, Chapter 1.
- 24 Murphy, Patrick D., 'Dialogics and Didacticism: John Brunner's Narrative Blending', in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol.14:1, (March 1987), pp21-33.
- 25 Baudrillard, pp111.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Baudrillard, pp113.
- 29 Baudrillard, pp114.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Baudrillard, pp25.
- 32 Deleuze and Guattari, pp168.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Deleuze and Guattari, pp458.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Marcuse, pp66.
- 38 Marcuse, pp69.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Murphy, pp25.
- 41 Murphy, pp24.
- 42 Murphy, pp25.
- 43 Murphy, pp26.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Goldman, Stephen H., 'John Brunner's Dystopias: Heroic Man in Unheroic Society', in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 5 No.16, (Nov. 1978), pp262.
- 47 Brunner, John, *The Jagged Orbit*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 2000), pp164 In future quotes will be marked TJO in the text.
- 48 Murphy, pp24.
- 49 Stern, Michael, 'From Technique to Critique: Knowledge and Human Interests in John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar*, *The Jagged Orbit* and *The Sheep Look Up*' in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 9, (July 1976), pp115.
- 50 Stern, pp116.
- 51 Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri, *Multitude*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2005), pp12-13.
- 52 Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* pp43.
- 53 Goldman, 'Heroic Man', pp262.
- 54 Lamie, Edward L. and Joe de Bolt 'The Computer and Man: The Human Uses of Nonhuman Beings', in *The Happening Worlds of John Brunner: Critical Explorations in Science Fiction*, ed. by Joe DeBolt, (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1975), p168.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Lamie and de Bolt, pp169.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 A similar echo of Huxley's work can be seen in the child Halflinger helps at the church, who has been 'treated' by a company which claims to be able to make children better adjusted by forcing them to work through their Oedipal/Electra complexes. The abuse that this entails recalls Mustapha Mond's characterisation of the family as a stifling, damaging relationship.

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- 59 Goldman, "Polymorphic", pp108.
- 60 Brunner, John, *The Shockwave Rider*, (New York: Del Ray, 1975), pp208. In future quotes will be marked *SW* in the text, followed by the page number.
- 61 Shaviro, Steven, *Connected, or What it Means to Live in the Network Society*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp29.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Debord, pp12.
- 65 Debord, pp22.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Shaviro, pp71 I will return to this point later.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Goldman, "Polymorphic", pp108.
- 72 Goldman, "Heroic Man", pp269.
- 73 Monk, Patricia, "The Syntax of Future Shock: Structure and the Center of Consciousness in John Brunner's *The Shockwave Rider*", in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (Fall 1985), pp221.
- 74 Shaviro, pp13.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Goldman, "Heroic Man", pp269.
- 77 Shaviro, pp47-48.
- 78 Shaviro, pp48.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Wilkinson, Bridget, "John Brunner's *The Shockwave Rider*: Worms, Fiction and Reality", *Foundation* Vol. 31 No. 85, (Summer 2002), pp30.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Goldman, "Heroic Man", pp261.

Conclusion

With *The Shockwave Rider*, the composition of the media context depicted in these books undergoes a significant change. As I have shown above, in this novel Brunner begins to explore the consequences of the networked, digital media which are made possible by the computer. While the computer has put in appearances in previous texts, such as Shalmanezzer in *Stand on Zanzibar*, it is only in *The Shockwave Rider* we start to see explorations of how the computer will come to function as a medium in itself, rather than as a discrete information processing entity. As Brunner makes explicit in this remarkably insightful novel, the introduction of such digital media into the broader system of the media produces wide ranging changes in the composition and constitution of our mediated context.

This is of course inevitable, because as I stated in my introduction, the development of any new media produces sizable changes in the operation of the broader media system within which we exist. This has never been truer than it is in this case, as the introduction of the internet, and the adoption of this digital medium into our homes, continues to enable us to take new relationships to the production, consumption and distribution of music, television, film, indeed, all audio-visual and print media. These issues are not yet resolved, as the large media conglomerates attempt to find ways to encode information in such a way that it is protected from the piratical practices of many digital consumers. Many of the changes to our media environment which have been produced in this way initially seem quite liberating. The digital media opens up the possibility of producing and distributing media to the public in ways which have not previously been possible. It can seem like a return to the early days of the printing press, when a wide range of papers and periodicals were published, each expressing their editors' opinions. However, the inverse of this is that it is possible to find any and every sort of crackpot nonsense on the internet.

At the same time, the location of vital personal information on this digital media network has enabled new forms of crime, such as identity theft. In this digital environment, our identity is not simply written in our flesh, but also encoded in the traces of information we leave behind us, our PIN numbers, National Insurance numbers, account details. In identity theft, the criminal appropriates this informational identity, and in the process 'devees' our identity. In this real crime, the devaluation is more literal and less debilitating than in Brunner's novel, as it is our finances which are stolen. However, the introduction of ID cards brings us closer to the day when our identity floats separate from us, attached only by an intangible connection as long as our digital media, and the State in which we live, agree that we are ourselves. This is the triumph of Brunner's novel, that it so presciently depicts the functioning of such a system of digitally mediated, networked domination, at such an early stage in the inception of the digital media.

In the '80s, these digital media began to make their presence more strongly felt in science fiction. In this decade Virtual Reality, a digitally produced, fully immersive and interactive environment began to emerge in science fiction. There have been signs in this

direction since as early as the '50s, such as the XP system in Mead's *The Big Ball of Wax*. However, VR moves beyond XP in the possibilities of interaction that it offers, where XP merely provided a full immersion in another's experience. In the same decade the internet, our own version of Brunner's datanet, began to take shape. Again, the first indication had been seen earlier, but it was only during the '80s that it began to take a more concrete form. These developments manifested in science fiction primarily within cyberpunk, which explored how these networked digital technologies affected the boundaries and constitution of the subject within dystopian, run-down urban environments.

The cyberpunk group of authors do not share Brunner's concern with the media as a tool of imperial power. Instead, they largely seem to get drawn into the excitement of the new spaces which are opened up by digital media, which Scott Bukatman discusses as terminal space.¹ Indeed, Bukatman takes issue with the description of cyberpunk as dystopian, because to do so is to "[ignore] its utopian spaces."² These utopian spaces are the digital spaces, cyberspaces, created by the sophisticated computer networks deployed in these novels, as they offer "a utopian and kinetic *liberation* from the very limits of urban existence."³ For Hayles the utopian possibilities of cyberspace derive from the way that "the contrast between the body's limitations and cyberspace's power highlights the advantages of pattern over presence."⁴ The themes that I am concerned with fade into the background as cyberpunk concerns itself with exploring these utopian spaces, with "heroes who inherit from the Tarzan tradition – lords of the neo-urban jungle".⁵ The concern with the media in cyberpunk generally centres on such utopian spaces, and the new possibilities that they engender. The dystopian space within cyberpunk is concrete physical space, the deteriorating urban spaces that cyberpunk's protagonists navigate. The concern with control that I have been exploring primarily manifests itself in the contest between the protagonist and his corporate opponents for mastery of cyberspace as a discrete and distinct space. The issue of the manipulation and control of individuals plays is generally of only secondary importance, and adds little to Brunner's exposition, although there is a tension between the utopian and dystopian impulses in cyberpunk fiction, possibly because this is also inherent in the digital technologies they are exploring. For example, the opposition between the expanded horizons opened up by the internet, and the increased possibilities for surveillance it presents.

These novels deal with problems on a quite different scale from the texts I have discussed. We are concerned here with nanotechnology and microchips. The immersive environments and networks opened up by the microchip require us to reconsider setting, in ways quite as radical and disorienting as any of Dick's mutable realities. Also, nanotechnology and cybernetics make new kinds of bodily interventions and modifications possible. Cybernetics as a theory may have been developed in the '50s, but it helped shape development of these technologies, and their fictional application. These technologies open up the vista's of the posthuman, through the technological alteration of the body, and the transcription of the mind onto new hardware platforms. These technologies are so small that they intrude into mind and body in ways which produce sweeping changes in our conceptions of ourselves and our context. The capacity of these technologies to penetrate and transgress boundaries also contributes to the tension between utopian and dystopian themes in

cyberpunk, as it utopian and dystopian spaces interpenetrate. Also, building on Brunner, we see a movement towards understanding electronic systems as “tools of global integration”⁶, though cyberpunk writers remained aware of the dangers posed by such tools in the hands of the State, or more likely, corporate power.

It would be an overgeneralisation to say that the theme of the dystopian power of the media does not manifest at all in cyberpunk. Sterling and Gibson’s collaboration, *The Difference Engine* (1990) marks one notable exception, as it depicts a dystopian Victorian society in which Babbage’s early invention of a steam powered computer has enabled the establishment of a controlled, dystopian society. The media have also played an important role in Sterling’s later novels, such as *Distraction* (1998) and *Zeitgeist* (2000). Also, authors such as Neal Stephenson and Pat Cadigan, have returned to the issue of mass manipulation and control in novels like *Snow Crash* and *Fools* (both 1992). In the latter novel identity is a construct, software to be run on the flesh hardware of the human body. One of the characters/programmes is a police officer, and it transpires that this software has been downloaded into the entire population, and just awaits the appropriate code to activate it. From the same decade, Kathleen Anne Goonan’s *Queen City Jazz* (1994) and its sequels make literal the media’s absorption of the subject into a broader system. An unexplained cosmic event has rendered electromagnetic communication ineffective, and the system that replaces it uses nanotech pheromones to carry information. The biological modification which is necessary for this to work literally incorporates the media into the body.

This thesis concludes on the eve of these profound changes to the media and their function, which science fiction writers are continuing to explore, particularly how the new media can lend themselves to new manifestations of power. Dystopian issues continue to engage science fiction as writers explore the social, political and psychological consequences of these new media.

¹ Bukatman, Scott, *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Post-Modern Science Fiction*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1993), Bukatman provides a prolonged discussion of the concept of terminal space, pp101-82.

² Bukatman, pp145.

³ Bukatman, pp146.

⁴ Hayles, pp36.

⁵ Bukatman, pp144-45.

⁶ Sterling, Bruce ‘Introduction’, *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*, (New York: Ace Books, 1988), pxiv.

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