

Architecture and Architectural Symbolism in the Fiction of J.G. Ballard

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in English by

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I, Surya Kiran (Reg. No. 13HEPH05), hereby declare that the thesis titled “Architecture and Architectural Symbolism in the Fiction of J.G. Ballard” submitted under the guidance and supervision of Professor D. Murali Manohar is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted in full or in part to this university or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The proposed study is an exploration of the role of architecture in the *later* novels of the English novelist J.G. Ballard, particularly those in which he predominantly deals with the problems of capitalism, crime, and the breakdown of social order. The novels selected for the study include: *Cocaine Nights* (1996), *Super-Cannes* (2000), *Millennium People* (2003), and *Kingdom Come* (2006). All these novels are set in the urban and suburban regions of Europe. Ballard uses modern architectural developments such as gated communities, middle-class urban enclaves, and shopping malls to situate his narratives in the present with a dystopian vision. I analyse the representations of these architectural structures and their role in the narratives to explain the nature of the crimes and the transgressive behaviour exhibited by the characters. In the course of doing so, I will argue that the chosen novels fall into the “critical dystopian” tradition.

Architecture plays a significant role in defining and redefining the space occupied by an individual or community. This is not only because architecture is an integral part of the quotidian of a person but also because it can act as a pointer towards a wide range of social realities. Unlike other art forms¹, architecture has a direct impact on the lives of human beings specifically due to the functional value it holds in the society. The architecture of a locality can inform us about the natural resources, the climatic changes, the nature of the art forms (the traditional knowledge and the experimental transformations of it), the social norms and values, the distribution of resources and authority, the power structures, and organisation of the community in general.

¹ The reference to architecture as an art form is based on the aesthetic qualities it possesses. Some, not all, architectures are material realisations of artistic imaginations. In certain cases, as in the case of the gothic, architecture lead the way for the art to develop.

When changes occur in these factors, it brings about changes in the built environment too. Building styles and buildings themselves transform, adopt various changes and adapt to new social orders; some of them get modified and are assigned new functions, and some structures become obsolete and are destroyed or forgotten over time. For example, the Mughal architecture which was prominent in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth century can be found only in the form of some monuments in twenty first century India. They act more as tourist destinations and the architectural practice as such has become obsolete. The same may be said about the Renaissance architecture or the Victorian architecture. But whatever is left of these practices act as a pointer towards a tradition that was once strong and prominent. It is undisputable that the existing beliefs and prevailing social order are often reflected through the architecture of the space occupied by a community.

1.1. Defining Architecture

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines architecture as “The art or practice of designing and constructing buildings.” However, this definition seems highly limiting as it leaves out some crucial aspects of architecture. Is architecture just an act of creating a three-dimensional object in space? When we talk about architecture, are we concerned only about the buildings? Is it about attributing an aesthetic value to the buildings? Is it about the categorisation of architecture based on its nature, age, politics, or theoretical perspectives? How does meaning formation happen in the case of architecture? To answer these questions, we will have to make a fundamental distinction between the act of building and architecture.

While buildings comprise an indispensable unit of architecture, architecture is not just about the buildings but the built environment. Built environment may stand for “any

physical alteration of the natural environment, from hearths to cities, through construction by humans.” (Lawrence and Low 454). A built environment is likely to have both open and closed spaces as a part of a larger plan. For example, the compound of a house may have uncovered or vacant spaces with a specific function attributed to it. Thus, it is necessary to break down buildings as basic units because the functional value of the non-built spaces cannot be neglected. Further, when we speak of the Greek, Roman, Byzantine or Mughal architecture, we are not referring to a single type of building. There are different types of buildings under these styles; the palaces, the religious buildings, administrative buildings, houses (there can be variations within this category based on class hierarchy), places meant for public assemblage and entertainment and so on. Further, within these styles, there can be subtle variations in the basic designs based on the terrain, climate, and the availability of natural resources. Moreover, most importantly, the ‘identity’ of each of these buildings is formed by the way we perceive it in its natural setting. The Taj Mahal would look incomplete without the backdrop of River Yamuna or the “Parthenon does not exist without the emphatic outcrop of rock called the Akropolis on which it perches and the visible range of mountains beyond, which rings the arid bowl of Attica.” (Kostof 10). In that scenario, a working definition of architecture would be ‘the conceptual organisation of the fundamental units—the buildings, the built environment, and the essential resources—which can provide a definitive outlook to the entire structure based on the perspectives evolved from its interaction with the people.’

‘The conceptual organisation’ in the definition refers to the thought process of the architects which culminates in the production of the material designs. This segment is a highly sophisticated and evolved field that has developed over centuries. This research is more concerned about the second half of the definition—the process of meaning formation; what is it that provides ‘a definite outlook to the whole structure’

that we call as architecture? Architecture can be a carrier of beliefs, expression of thoughts, and reflections of emotions and preferences of the people who interact with it. Simon Unwin says, “People and their activities are an indispensable component of architecture, not merely as spectators to be entertained, but as contributors and participants.” (16). Every architecture has an inherent social, political and philosophical value attached to it. If we exclude these aspects and restrict our use of the word ‘architecture’ only to the process of designing a building and attaching an aesthetic value to the finished structure, then the animal world is equally developed in this art form. Talbot Hamlin observes that “Not only is the building instinct highly developed and widespread in the animal world, but also there are many evidences of a sense or an emotion which approaches the aesthetic.” (4). The relationship of human beings with his constructions is more reciprocative than it is in the case of animals. Lefebvre argues that architecture “reproduces itself within those who use the space in question, within their lived experience.” (*Production* 137). As Winston Churchill had famously stated in one of his speeches at the House of Commons on October 28, 1943, “We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.” (12)

The reflection of this reciprocative relation between man and his built space can be traced back to as early as his search for shelters beyond caves in the forest. Architecture begins as an idea; while the spider’s web or bird’s nest has remained the same over the years or maybe, even centuries, human shelters kept on evolving. Human-made buildings are thus, the products of the human being’s creative capacity merging with these constructive instincts. The creative capacity is what “distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees” where “the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax.” (Marx 284). In that sense, we may find that in the primitive drawings of the cavemen, “there is evident a delight in line and form, a pleasure in

creating with their hands, that is essentially similar to the artist's delight today.” (Hamlin 4). With man moving out of caves and starting to live in groups began the necessity to build; and as time progressed, he had to build better. First, he needed a shelter to protect himself from rain and the sun; second, he had to defend himself from wild animals (and probably fellow humans too); third, to hoard food and supplies for future use. With the emergence of paganism and religious beliefs, he was in need of a place for community gathering and worship. Talbot Hamlin infers, “It is the history of these shelters men have built for themselves and for their gods, these protections against the weather and against hostile men or animals, which is the true history of architecture.”(5)

Let us examine these two factors mentioned by Hamlin, a shelter for themselves which I would relate to dwelling, and shelter for gods (by extension religion) in detail. I shall not go deep into the analysis of the concepts but rather outline how these two factors contribute to our understanding of architecture as a social practice.

1.1.1. Dwelling

The necessity for a shelter is the first and foremost concern that marked the beginning of the building practices among human beings. Even in the 21st century, the shelter is the priority when it comes to the construction of every new building (the purpose of these ‘shelters’ might differ though), and a proper shelter remains an unresolved crisis for a large section of the human population. The purpose of the shelter is one aspect based on which we can take up the idea of dwelling. Not all buildings are meant to dwell; for example, industrial buildings, office buildings, and cafeterias are not intended for dwelling. Phenomenologists like Gaston Bachelard and Martin Heidegger gave obvious importance for the concept of dwelling in their studies on architecture. Heidegger wrote the essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” at a point when the World

War II and its consequences had created severe shortage housing facilities. For Heidegger, the role of man in this world is dependent extensively upon the question of the dwelling. He says, “the basic character of dwelling is to spare, to preserve.” (97).

What does it mean to dwell? Nicholas Dungey observes, “At its most basic, dwelling expresses the emotional care that animates and binds together the family, home, and extended relationships we find ourselves in.” (241). From Dungey, we can borrow the notions of ‘home’ and ‘family,’ and add the idea of ‘house’ to it since we need a place to dwell. This can be a problematic contention since “we recognize that not all dwellings are houses, for instance when certain types of dwellings are characterized as slums, huts, cabins, shacks or tents.” (Coolen and Meesters 2). The current discussion will restrict the notion of dwelling within a ‘house’ since our prime concern here is architecture and “housing, habitation—the human 'habitat', so to speak—are the concern of architecture.” (Lefebvre *Production* 12). Slums or shacks do not follow any specific pattern or design but are random constructions.

The primitive man began constructing his proper houses after the ‘hunter-gatherer’ phase². With the beginning of the practice of agriculture, the need for permanent settlements became a necessity. These initial architectural structures, thus, provided the first sense of community to the primitive man. With possible exceptions, these buildings are products of teamwork. The erection of a house might be carried out by a family or with the involvement of other people in the community. Either way, it serves the purpose of fitting into a particular community. As much as the goal of these buildings is to fit into a specific framework of the society, so is the method involved in

² Further details on the development of architecture during various phases in the history, refer Gascoigne, Bamber. "History of Architecture." *History World*.

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=1511&HistoryID=ab27>rack=pt> hc. Accessed 16 Sep 2016.

the construction process. With the advancement of age and the improvement of tools and building techniques, each community started producing architecture unique to them. Hamlin provides numerous examples in his study:

...in many parts of the neolithic and bronze-age Mediterranean world, round huts were built in connected groups, each forming a complex dwelling, as in early Greece and Crete; or a number would be regularly arranged in a rectangular pattern, such as we see in the ruins of the neolithic towns of Citania and Vianna do Castelo in Portugal. (7)

In the beginning stages, these differences were dependent on external conditions such as climate changes, natural disasters, topography and also, the availability of raw materials. In the course of time, the unique patterns of architecture became the identity of a community or culture. Factors such as commerce, religion, and war started having an impact on defining the function of the buildings as well as its style. The durability of the walls, the size of the compound, or the richness of ornamentation started fulfilling what Umberto Eco termed as the ‘communicative’ aspect of architecture³. Within an architectural tradition, the dwelling places differed based on class hierarchy, and the social and political status of the owner. For instance, the house of a merchant differed from that of a soldier or that of a priest. These dwelling forms led to the formation of identities within a community and also helped the community to differentiate itself from another. Architecture, writes Klaufus, “becomes a means of communication that broadcasts that identity and establishes the boundary between ‘them’ and ‘us’.” (343)

³ Architecture, at the primary level is meant to be functional and not communicative. At the same time, it communicates the function that needs to be fulfilled and hence, acts as a form of mass communication. For further details, refer Eco, Umberto. "Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture." *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, edited by Neil Leach, Routledge, 2005, pp. 173-195

The dwelling started portraying itself as a representation of the living status of the owner and this, often, led to competition within the community. Dwelling became a significant factor for acquiring prestige within a community and people started experimenting with their houses and lifestyle. These experiments were well within the limits of the standard setup to avoid negative assessment. For example, in the Gothic architectural tradition, “Equal lots are laid out along the straight streets, and frequently building requirements compelled the man who leased one of these lots to build a house of a given size, often stretching across the entire width of the lot.” (Hamlin 284). Within this limit, they could experiment with the products they use for construction for the acquisition of power and prestige. In the glass and wood combination employed in the Gothic tradition, for example, the quality of wood used for construction could act as a symbol of superiority and wealth. In this sense, “the building of one's own house becomes a specific and strategic form of consumption.” (Klaufus 344)

Over centuries, dwelling evolved into a fundamental unit that plays a distinct role in determining the social, cultural, and political aspects of society. Constructing and inhabiting a house became a cultural phenomenon; it is built on a system of settings. These functions vary from the basic necessity of safety to privacy and to maintaining the image of the cultural milieu to which it belongs. Rapoport stipulates, “If provision of shelter is the passive function of the house, then its positive purpose is the creation of an environment best suited to the way of life of people—in other words, a social unit of space.” (46). Thus, “architecture have an immediate relationship with dwelling as social act” (Lefebvre *Writing* 190), and dwelling becomes one of the fundamental functions of the social space.

1.1.2. Architecture and Religion

If dwelling can be identified as the primary architectural requirement of human beings, then religious architecture is one of the critical components that brings together a community or society as such. Architectural historian Thomas Barrie writes, “A sense of community based on shared values is typically connected with a specific place, and thus religion and mythology are often deeply rooted in the definition of meaningful places.” (52). The structural organisation of these places and the meanings they convey serves as a pointer towards the belongingness of people within a community and reflect upon their belief system. Barrie argues that architecture “has traditionally aided in establishing a sense of meaningful place and articulating people's beliefs.” (52)

James Swan distinguishes the different types of sacred places; first and foremost are the “human-crafted building, which by its presence, and regardless of its form or size, marks a place as special for religious reasons.” (35). He borrows the phrase ‘a microcosm of the macrocosm’ from Joseph Campbell⁴ to explain the second category: these are the structures like the Stonehenge or the Bighorn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming that has an astronomical or astrological value assigned to it. A larger universe is condensed into a symbolic form in these structures. The third category includes those spaces that are found naturally on Earth with an inherent sacredness. He associates this to groves, meadows, stones, etc., that are worshipped by “primal-minded people.” (35). He points out that most of the religious centres in the present-day Europe are built on such sites and cites the case of Lourdes as a specific example.

This section would be dealing with the “human-crafted buildings” to point out the impact they have had on the human society. Most of the contemporary religions

⁴ Campbell, Joseph. *The Mythic Image*. Princeton University Press, 1974.

emphasise on faith, rituals, doctrines, community, etc., and more often than not, the role of the architectural structures take a secondary or tertiary position in their discourses. One may argue that most of these structures are mere containers of rituals and are viewed as locations of community gathering. There exist very few structures that are an intrinsic part of the rituals. This in a way justifies the underplaying of architectural structures in religious discourses. However, from a sociological perspective, these structures are remarkable achievements of the human race considering the amount of time, energy, and money that were invested in the construction of them.

There is a specific power politics that operates behind this investment. When a place is declared sacred, it gets detached from the surrounding territories and attains a higher quality over the rest. It is “through the actions of masters or conquerors, a part of this space is assigned a new role, and henceforward appears as transcendent, as sacred (i.e. inhabited by divine forces), as magical and cosmic.” (Lefebvre *Production* 234). For example, in India, the management of temples were carried out only by Brahmins for centuries. The power structures inherent in these buildings forbade people from the lower castes from entering these premises. Although “its mystery and its sacred (or cursed) character are attributed to the forces of nature” says Lefebvre “it is the exercise of political power therein which has in fact wrenched the area from its natural context.” (Lefebvre *Production* 234). The higher the mystery or sacredness that is associated with the religious structure, a proportional rise is visible in the impact it has on people. Douglas Hoffman observes that “certain physical elements of architecture act as symbolic markers transforming ordinary place into sacred sites.” (xiii). Eugene Walter notes, “Technicians of the sacred—the builders of megaliths, temples, churches, cathedrals, and other sacred place—have creatively used the ambiguities of space to move the mind.” (72). This is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the massive investments

made by various human races towards attaining architectural finesse and supremacy for their sacred spaces.

These locations in no time became the loci of power within and outside the religious discourses. Thomas Barrie points out that “creation of a sacred place has principally provided the existential means for people to establish a center and thus define their place in the world.” (54). An object or a person once placed inside this centre gets transformed and attains new power dimensions: “the vase will become holy, the garment ceremonial, the chair the seat of authority.” (Lefebvre *Production* 225). Once the centre is established, the architectural structure extends its power into the political and economic realms. On the positive side, such structures bring unity and harmony among the members of a community. These structures provide every individual in a society some sort of membership, a reflection of his/her image that fits into a particular social order. The other side of the coin reveals a power structure that is vested with the authority to control the social and political life of individuals which, if left unmonitored, may lead to chaos and anarchy.

Juxtaposing these religious structures against Henri Lefebvre’s concept of ‘monumentality’ provides a better understanding of the impact they have had on society. Monuments, according to Lefebvre, “is the only conceivable or imaginable site of collective (social) life” where “the characteristics of a society are most recognizable and commonplace.” At the same time, he adds, monuments “embody a sense of transcendence, a sense of being *elsewhere*.” (Lefebvre *Urban* 21). He also provides us with a colder perspective by adding that the space organised around a monument can display oppressive nature. The monument is built to celebrate and glorify the powerful, and hence a discourse of oppression is inherent in it. The common understanding of monuments as the structure of historical and political importance lists many religious

sites as customary examples. However, from Lefebvre's observations, we can infer that all the religious structures create a similar impact on society in terms of power relations.

The management of the religious architecture has varied with people and time. History has witnessed the constructive and destructive uses of these structures. Many of these sites act as centres of civil management and local judiciary thereby helping the consolidation of the people. In addition to that, they also serve as the storehouses of invaluable wealth ranging from gold and diamonds to religious and cultural artefacts. The richness of the wealth hoarded symbolise the development of the community to which it belonged. At a deeper level, the construction and preservation of these structures played very crucial roles in nation building, religious movements, economic changes, etc. The 'sacred' status of the religious structures (by extension all monuments) overshadows the history of aggression, negativity, crimes and death caused by/for these structures. It may be safely said that the role of religions cannot be undermined in the transition of humans from hunter-gatherers to settled farmers and further to be a part of various civilisations. In that process, the religious structures replaced the negativities in social practice with "a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror." (Lefebvre *Production* 222). They helped (with its own shortcomings—favouritism, patriarchal norms, etc., to name a few) in the construction of stable communities and by extension, powerful civilisations.

The destruction of the religious structures also served similar purposes. A classic example of such an act is the massive demolishing of churches in Moscow during Stalin's regime. Though the government claimed that it was an act to build metropolitan railroads, it is argued that "it was part of an effort to destroy the Russian Orthodox religion and break its hold on the Russian people.". In an attempt to solidify the Communist regime and conceal many of the political problems "Icons central to Orthodox traditional

practices were shunned, covered, or destroyed.” (Schildgen 6). Another example is the destruction of Babri Masjid mosque in 1990 by the Hindu fundamentalists. They claimed that Babur built this mosque in 1527 over a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Rama. This event not only created tension between two major religions in the country but also changed the country’s political setup and its repercussions are vibrant even today. Lefebvre says that “Turmoil is inevitable once a monument loses its prestige.” However, in the given examples and many other similar cases, the structures themselves were destroyed. What follows such a scenario is a power struggle; on the one hand an attempt to retain the lost “by means of admitted oppression and repression”(Production 222) and on the other hand a resistance to build a new order or vice versa.

1.1.3. Shifting Paradigms

The widespread understanding of architecture as an act of designing and constructing buildings evolved with the advancement of civilisations. Aesthetic and functional values in societies took significant transformations with the establishments of new institutions and evolution of new governing patterns. As much as dwellings and religious buildings remained as the base of social life, the emergence of new ways of living and administrative mechanisms introduced new dimensions to architectural practices. Tracing the whole history of such a change is beyond the scope and purpose of this research. So, I will provide a brief sketch of it under the broad umbrella term ‘city’.

Etymologically, the origin of the word ‘city’ traced back to the mid-thirteenth century where it was originally used to denote ‘any settlement’ but was popularly used to refer to a ‘cathedral town’. Evolving from the Latin word *Civies/Civitas*, which meant citizen/citizenship. One could easily assume that the word ‘city’ is associated equally with both space and people. Kostof, drawing strictly on the etymology of the word, relates civilisation as the art of living in cities; something that differentiates it from the

village or the pastoral life. Developing this view, he deduces that “the molding of the city as a social and material concept is credited to the same cradle of civilization that invented writing, specifically to the southern region of Mesopotamia, Sumer, sometime in the early fourth millennium B.C.” (43). However, the city as a distinctive mode of settlement with all the modern implications we attribute to it today came into existence only in the nineteenth century (Williams *Keywords* 55-56). Henri Lefebvre also makes a note of how industrialisation has influenced our perception of the city and how the “Oriental City”, the “Antique City” and the “Medieval City” differ from the cities of the post-industrialization era (*Writing* 65-66). In this sense, the proliferation of capitalism during and after the industrial age has contributed heavily to shaping the perception of the modern city.

From the Medieval ages itself, the city has become an accumulator of wealth through commerce and banking. A significant change took place in the power structure of the society when feudal landlords were replaced by urban capitalists who thrived on trade, commerce, and usury. The rich were unable to catch up with the progress of the society merely with land possession. So they tried to establish their superiority in the community by spending extravagantly on building palaces, public houses, foundations etc., and by organising festivals and public events. (Lefebvre *Writing* 67). To read this conversely, tracing the motives behind constructing new buildings or organising festivals can lead us to the capitalist proliferation of the age. This is one of the possible ways to study the historical aspects of a city. However, history is only one aspect of a city; there are numerous other aspects that define and redefine the nature of a city.

The scientific advancements and Marxist theories of the nineteenth century brought significant changes in the outlook of the concept of the city as well. If power structures in ancient cities were built around the religious institutions and the ruler of the

state, the industrial age saw these power structures losing stronghold on the city. Instead, various urban centres were formed, each of it promoting a particular kind of industry. This resulted in the rural population migrating to these urban centres in search of better living conditions though many of these developments were uneven. The space that was once the core of the power structure (religious/institutional headquarters) transforms itself in the new scenario into “spaces appropriated for entertainments, parades, promenades, festivities.” (Lefebvre *Writing* 73). Thus, the city of the time witnessed the proliferation of urban production centres. At the same time, the city itself started getting reproduced as a space of consumption.

While there can be multiple discourses about a city, Roland Barthes’ observation that city itself is a discourse is much helpful in this context. He writes, “The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it.” (Barthes 160). At a basic level, this can be interpreted as the city having a cluster of signs and symbols which may be studied and analysed to get a better understanding of the society and the city itself. Phil Hubbard in his study on urban theory in *City* (2006) notes how the city gets represented in language. He refers to James S Duncan’s *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandy Kingdom* (1990) to point out how urban geographers of the 1980s started considering the city as a text (Hubbard 60). This supposition has enabled researchers to analyse various discourses, signs, and symbols which affect the outlook of a society. In doing so, deciphering these symbols contributes significantly in improving our perceptions of the city. As Siegfried Kracauer puts it, “Spatial images are the dreams of society. Wherever the hieroglyphics of any spatial image are deciphered, there the basis of social reality presents itself.” (57)

The question of how to decipher these spatial images brings back architecture into our discussion. Many critics have stressed the importance of understanding architecture as a carrier of urban culture and capable of articulating social realities existing in a civil society. Fredric Jameson begins his essay “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” by saying “it was indeed from architectural debates that my own conception of postmodernism ... initially began to emerge.” (“Cultural Logic” 2). The importance of architecture in the understanding of a city becomes apparent from the description of the image of the city by Doreen Massey et al. in *City Worlds*:

My list of urban features began with physical features such as houses, housing estates, streets, shops, hotels, hospitals, museums, traffic, libraries, cathedrals, soup-kitchens, restaurants, and so on —and so on, so I stopped writing after a while. On the other hand, the number of things that can only be found in cities appears to be much smaller: I thought of skyscrapers, underground railways, street lighting (maybe), and not much else. (5)

The city, from the perspective of architecture, goes beyond the material limits and assumes the roles of both spaces of imagination as well as that of representation. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson raise two crucial questions about the city being a space of imagination. They ask, “how the city affects the imaginations and how the city is imagined.” (7). Imagining the city primarily happens with urban planners, designers, and architects. While creative writers like Italo Calvino have had a positive impact on architectural theories with their writings, I would prefer to consider the imaginations of writers about a city as only second to that of urban planners. This is because cities had existed in some form or the other before they received narrated existence.

The urban planners come up with precise ideas of how a city should be designed, how it should project itself. They envisage functions and styles of living, and through architectural ventures, these plans are converted into built spaces. These ideas about a city have undergone tremendous changes over the centuries. We had the Renaissance architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Gothic architecture that took prominence during the Romantic age, followed by Victorian architecture. However, the post-industrial cities witnessed a rupture in architectural traditions. Cultural aesthetics paved the way for utilitarian theories. The consumerist culture driven by capitalist forces and a sudden boom in population demanded the maximum utilisation of available space.

1.2. The Rupture

The French architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc begins his section on the nineteenth-century architecture by pointing out that the architects of the age “are neither inspired by original ideas nor guided by definite and well-understood principles”. A man, whose thoughts and writings were well ahead of his age, was shrewd enough to point out that the “monuments seem to be bodies without souls, the fragments of some departed civilization, a language incomprehensible even to those who employ it.” (Viollet-le-Duc 472). He was one of the earliest critics to have pointed out the growing impact of capitalism on architectural practices. His criticism targeted not only the architects but also the audience. Duc asks, “Is it surprising that the public remains cold and indifferent in the presence of works thus void of ideas, and too often of reason, and that its appreciation is limited to considerations of cost?” (473)

Although the majority of Viollet-le-Duc’s insightful writings came between 1850 and 1875 and capitalism was flourishing since the Industrial Revolution of the early 1800s, I prefer to situate my study around the 1900s. This is primarily because a noteworthy change in architectural practices took place with the “Art Nouveau”

movement that had its origins in Western Europe in 1892. Jean Lahor argues that the movement was born out of the dissent towards existing decorative art forms and “everywhere there was a push towards a new art that was neither a servile copy of the past nor an imitation of foreign taste.” (5). Drawing significant inspiration from the Industrial Revolution and scientific advancements “Methods of construction underwent revolutionary changes which made possible startling innovations in architecture and design” (Lenning 6) during the period. Lenning notes down the impact of architects like Henry Van de Velde⁵ on his contemporaries as well as his pupil who played a significant role in the development of “the twentieth century's International Style because there was in his work the necessary transition from the confusion of nineteenth century revivalism to the modern architectural esthetic.” (31)

Though the movement had a considerable impact on the architecture and design across Europe, it did not last long. The economic and cultural changes of the time demanded a rupture from all the traditions that existed till then and “it disintegrated with the decline of a certain set of bourgeois and nationalist fantasies, and with the inexorable rise of machine production and mass society.” (Colquhoun 32). One of the key figures in this transition from Art Nouveau to mass production is Adolf Loos who, in his essay, “Ornament and Crime” argues that ornament (by extension, style) in architecture results “in a waste of human labour, money, and material.” (21). While terming ornamentation as a crime may be highly contested, his essay was highly influential in the architectural practices of mass production that followed soon after.

The increasing impact of industrialisation and capitalism led to mass migration of people towards urban centres. The rapid growth of industries and booming population

⁵ Henry Van de Velde (1863-1957) was a Belgian architect and interior designer who, along with Paul Hankar and Victor Horta, began the Art Nouveau movement in Belgium.

demanded a pragmatic approach which resulted in the mass housing projects. Walter Gropius was one of the first architects who came up with the guidelines for such mass production. The standardisation of size and usage of same building components were the apparent suggestions; the more radical and significant proposition was the idea to employ multiple uses of completed plans. The lack of uniqueness or individuality in these structures were hardly a concern since the targeted occupants of these houses were the proletariat. The governing principle behind these houses, according to Gropius was “to make these houses comfortable, not in terms of overdone gilded pomp but rather in clear and open spatial arrangements and in the selection and application of proven materials and reliable techniques.” (240)

Gropius’s propositions marked the beginning of a movement which later on came to be known as the “Henry Ford syndrome” in architecture (Herbert 240). Though Gropius proposed the initial model as early as in 1910, it was the post-World War I period that saw the massive implementation of it. Gropius himself was the biggest proponent of it at the Bauhaus School⁶ at Weimar. In a speech about the policy of the Bauhaus he stated, “The home and its furnishings are mass consumer goods, and their design is more a matter of reason than a matter of passion.” (qtd. in Herbert 242). This commodification of architecture was driven by the industrialist forces and capitalist motives on the one hand and the increasing urban population on the other.

This strategy, however, invited lots of criticism from various ends; Ernst Bloch was probably one of the first to point out the shallowness of this practice. He considers

⁶ Staatliches Bauhaus was a school of applied arts, design and architecture that existed in Weimar, Germany from 1919 to 1933. For further details, refer Gropius, Walter. *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*. The M.I.T. Press, 1965.

the architecture of the functionalists such as Gropius and Le Corbusier⁷ to be devoid of content; there is an evident lack of connection between the buildings and the human beings residing inside them—“the real human beings in these houses and cities become normalized termites, or within a “dwelling machine” they become foreign cells, still too organic.” (188). Theodor Adorno is yet another critic who has raised concern over the loss of architecture’s autonomy. In his famous essay “Functionalism Today”, which is more of a reply to Loos’s stand on style and ornamentation, he argues that functionalism cannot be blind adherence to demands of the economy and industry; one cannot abandon the aesthetic values altogether. Such an attitude can lead to monotony. In such a case, he concludes, “the absolute rejection of style becomes style.” (9), however paltry it may look.

Italian architecture historian Manfredo Tafuri had vehemently attacked the ‘Taylorism’ (a term which he uses to point out the mass industrial production of architecture; quite similar to the ‘Henry Ford Syndrome’ employed by Herbert) of Gropius, Hilberseimer⁸ and other followers of Bauhaus School as he believed that the buildings constructed under that ideology were mere manifestations of capitalist oppression. Reflecting on how the role of an architect has got limited that of an organiser of the city, Tafuri claims that the building is “no longer a question of giving form to single elements of the city, nor even to simple prototypes.” (107). He believed, under the influence of capitalism, the entire city had “assumed the structure of an industrial

⁷ Le Corbusier (1887-1965) was a Swiss-born French citizen who has designed buildings across the globe in a career that lasted over five decades. He is considered as one of the pioneers of modern architecture and his contributions to urban planning is unmatched.

⁸ Ludwig Hilberseimer (1885-1967) was a German architect and urban planner known for his associations with the Bauhaus School as well as the Armour Institute of Technology (later renamed as Illinois Institute of Technology).

machine” (114), and in that process, architecture lost its ability to become an instrument of social transformation.

If capital is one of the factors pointed out by Loos for his disregard for ornamentation, its prominence only increased with every passing decade. Mass production of buildings gained priority over the motto of developing architectural styles unique to a culture, region or time. Increasing industrial production and proliferation of the real estate business meant “‘form follows function’ [became] ‘form follows finance’” (Merwood-Salisbury 25). As a result of this shift in attitudes, critics note, architecture became a commodity with a market value, a product of capitalism. Christine Boyer observes:

The contemporary arts of city building are derived from the perspective of white, middle-class architectural and planning professionals who worry in a depoliticized fashion about a city's competitive location in the global restructuring of capital, and thus myopically focus on improving a city's marketability by enhancing its *imageability, livability, and cultural capital*. (4) (emphasis added)

There are two aspects to Boyer's observation: first, it stresses on the commodification of architecture and the evolution of it as a consumer good. Second, the implication of an 'urban society' to which I will come back later.

There occurred a paradigm shift when production was shifted from the city to the suburbs and to the countryside to accommodate space for business. In Jameson's words “a well-nigh structural mutation of the economy away from heavy industry and in the direction of an unaccountably massive service sector” (“The Brick” 170), which resulted in a shift of capital investment from production to stock market. The rising value of city spaces increased the investment in urban land to extract rent. The land value had

proportional growth depending on its accessibility, connectivity and proximity to administrative centres. As a consequence of this, Simon Barker points out, a significant number of workers had to shift to the suburbs or out of town settlements where the establishment of large-scale manufacturing industries was rather cheaper and easier. (Ch. 6 Section 4). We may look at the history of the Rockefeller Center provided by Jameson as an example of this phenomenon. Tracing the history of the building Jameson writes:

We need to ground that understanding in two facts: first, Rockefeller Center is initially a failure, that is to say, occupancy rates in the 1930s range only from '30 percent to 60 percent' owing to its eccentric positioning in the midtown; many of the tenants being peers whom the Rockefellers have made special arrangements to attract (or to coerce, as the case may be). ("The Brick" 173)

The reason for this failure as given by the consultants who were commissioned to address the issue was the lack of access to mass transit. In a significant turn of event, changes were made in the arrangement of the city so that the investment poured into the centre does not go in vain. The changes that it brings into the working class (one of the obvious exception to Barker's optimism about the displacement of the working class from the city centre) can be seen in Robert Fitch's embarrassment when he asks, "How could such a family ... be totally obsessed with such mean endeavors as driving hot dog sellers away from 42nd Street?" (qtd. in Jameson "The Brick" 174)

Jameson's mention about the special arrangements offered to the tenants is the point where we have to go back to Boyer. Jameson does not specify what those arrangements were, but evidently, a strategy to attract consumers was implemented. The basic idea behind the consumer culture is to create the need for products to satisfy less tangible desires (these products may or may not be fulfilling the basic needs). These

needs are often generated artificially by a set of social norms and values shaped by the producers which are mediated by advertising and marketing. Jameson's references are pointing to, if not exactly a model of consumption, at least a crude variety of it. A modern-day residential complex offers a sophisticated version of such marketing strategies by incorporating swimming pools, gymnasiums and playrooms into the building when the primary function of the structure is only dwelling. Some of these buildings might even offer a kindergarten or a theatre within the premises adding an extra dimension of cultural consumption. These strategies are essential to enhance the factors like 'imageability', and 'livability' mentioned by Boyer as the cycle of consumerism operates by creating new requirements and new consumers for its products and services.

Implied in Boyer's and Jameson's observations are an 'urban society', a term which Lefebvre used to refer to the "'postindustrial society'—society that is born of industrialization and succeeds it.". Lefebvre, when he wrote *The Urban Revolution*, considered the urban society to be a 'virtual object' and the process of complete urbanisation to be a hypothesis which "will become real in the future." (*Urban 2*, 1). How close is the modern society towards complete urbanisation is a topic for another research, but the tremendous progress made towards it since Lefebvre is unquestionable. The urban fabric which he defines as "all manifestations of the dominance of the city over the country" gave rise to "growths of dubious value: suburbs, residential conglomerations and industrial complexes, satellite cities that differed little from urbanized towns." (*Urban 4*)

1.3. Architecture in the Context of the Current Study

The characteristic features and values attributed to architecture from the aesthetic, cultural, topographical, political, and personal points of view have played a significant role in the literary narratives from around the world. It can be spotted as early as in the

Greek and Indian epics- the *Odyssey* and the *Mahabharata*. When Odysseus returns to Ithaca after 20 years, his wife, Penelope, was unable to recognise him and thinks he is an impostor. Later, it is the nuptial bed which Odysseus had built with his own hands with a live olive tree as its bedpost that helps Penelope identify her husband. In the case of *Mahabharata*, there is a scene where Queen Draupadi laughs at Prince Duryodhana when he fell into a stream while exploring the newly built palace of Indraprastha. He mistook an architectural mirage for a stream earlier and in the second instance, mistaking it the other way around, he fell into the water, causing Draupadi to laugh at him. This is a crucial episode whose effects include the public humiliation of Draupadi in the Kaurava court which in turn leads to the epic war.

Clearly, architectural symbolism existed in literature across the ages and genres in varying degrees. In *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Early Modern France* (1998), David Cowling explores the correlation between political ideology and rhetoric and its impact on both architecture and literature. Focusing specifically on ‘Rhetoriqueurs’⁹, he dissects various forms of architectural metaphors and allegories in existence before the ‘Rhetoriqueurs’, those developed by them and what evolved afterwards. Cowling’s work provides in-depth information about the writings of ‘Rhetoriqueurs’ which played an important role in shaping the political and literary culture of France during the Renaissance period.

Anne Myers in her book *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* (2012) shows how buildings of the post-Reformation England have their own stories to narrate. She begins her study focusing on antiquarian John Leland who believed

⁹ A group of poets who flourished in Northern France during 1460 and 1530 whose poetry dealt predominantly with historical and moral themes with excessive use of allegory, symbolism, dreams, myths etc.

“architectural and written forms of history were necessarily intertwined: buildings, like documents, communicated history.” (1). Rumiko Handa comes up with a similar exposition about the role of architecture in eighteenth and nineteenth century British literature in *Conjuring the Real: The Role of Architecture in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*: “Textual and visual depictions of historical buildings helped create the sense of a particular time period” (14). Architecture specific to a culture and topography at a specific point in time provides authenticity and credibility to a text of the same age, especially in genres like historical fiction. The same might be said about the Gothic genre as well. Architectural features such as the gargoyles, hidden passages, dark hallways, mystery doors, numerous traps, and others helped the genre to achieve the desired effect on the audience.

Architecture thus adds a certain degree of cartographic possibilities in a text. Description of landscapes might not be as adequate as that of architecture when detailing a location. An account of a lush green tropical forest may not even help the reader to identify the country in which the story is set, but a note on the stylistic features about a typical country house might prove far more useful in the same regard. For example, Robert T. Tally points out how Captain Ahab utilises his vast experience at sea to pinpoint various locations on a map where people have reportedly spotted the white whale. One is forced to admire Captain Ahab’s efficiency and agree with Tally’s statement that “Melville employs a literary technique that is itself fundamentally a form of mapping” (Ch. 2). In the case of the protagonist of *Life of Pi*—Pi Patel—who was lost at sea for 227 days but could not explain where and how he survived in the sea. Architecture proved to be a useful mapping tool for Jules Verne who could detail the places visited by Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) and cityscapes

in *The Begum's Fortune* (1879) wherein he provided excellent descriptions of the Gothic city built by German gun manufacturers.

A writer who has put the sketch of built space to good use is James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922). Frank Budgen, citing Joyce himself, argues that the Joyce's intention in writing the novel was "to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book." (69). Budgen claims that Joyce wrote the Wandering Rocks chapter in *Ulysses* "with a map of Dublin before him on which were traced in red ink the paths of the Earl of Dudley and Father Conne" (124-125). Ironically, it is the same novel that exemplifies the rupture in architectural traditions within modernity. In David Spurr's words: "*Ulysses* is a work that gets its characters out of the house and into the street, where they are confronted not with dwelling in its domestic sense but with their existence in urban space, the very scene of modernity." (63)

In a work that is exceptionally interdisciplinary which covers philosophy, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, urban life, art history, and modernist studies, David Spurr attempts to construct a bridge between architecture and literature from a modernist perspective. He limits his outlook of modernism to socio-political, economic and cultural aspects of the urban industrial society of the nineteenth and twentieth century but raises some compelling questions about the role of architecture in the literatures produced during the period. However, when it comes to the final chapter ("*Annals of Junkspace: Architectural Disaffection in Contemporary Literature*"), as much as it is thought-provoking, it "is more disparate, too, than the relatively coherent and extended narrative about the long nineteenth century." (Eeckhout 117). So, when he calls Ballard "an heir to the literary traditions of apocalyptic ruin in poets like Blake and Eliot", one might

wonder, is that all we get from a writer like Ballard? A writer who replaces “Jerusalem and Margate Sands” (Spurr 252) with a shopping centre?

Spurr’s observation is true to a good extent; if a typical Victorian building was erected in Venice or Rome of the 1950s, it would have appeared anachronistic. If a skyscraper from present-day New York is placed in a city in India or France or any other country of the architect’s choice, it would hardly make a difference. Hence, the literary representations of architectures in modern fiction is often limited. That is, a novel based on the urban life of any modern city will essentially portray buildings that belong to the ‘international style’ of architecture which are more or less the same across the globe. However, going through Spurr’s analysis of Ballard’s novels using Rem Koolhaas’s concept of ‘junkspace’ and Marc Auge’s theory of ‘non-places’, we are made to think why he has limited his study on contemporary literature to just two aspects? The current research is an attempt to look beyond what Spurr has portrayed as the role of architecture in contemporary literature with specific focus on J.G. Ballard. The study will focus only on the final four novels of J.G. Ballard. I prefer to look at these novels as something that deal with a post-industrial society—unlike Spurr’s categorisation of ‘urban industrial society’ of the nineteenth and twentieth century—where the stress falls more on service sector than the production of goods. I will employ the technique of close reading and detailed textual analysis of the passages to unravel the role of architecture in the selected texts.

The choice of J.G. Ballard and these four novels, in particular, was a conscious one. There is arguably no other author who, in a career that has spanned so long, has stuck to the urban scenario with so much passion. As explained in detail in the next chapter, his narratives are filled with the description of the urban life that the landscape of countryside is almost absent in it. However, he has not restricted his novels inside the

cities but chose the expanding suburbs, and urban centres in the middle of deserts or marooned islands as his locations. And above all, he is a writer whose understanding of architecture goes hand in hand with the working definition I have provided at the beginning of the chapter. In Nic Clear's words:

At a time when architectural discourse has become wholly subsumed by the moneymaking pre-occupations of the architectural profession, the writings of JG Ballard serve as reminder that architecture is about people, the things that they do and the places where they do them. Sometimes architecture will involve terrible people doing terrible things in terrible places. (5)

The last sentence in Clear's observation which repeats the word 'terrible' is another aspect of Ballard which is of importance in this research. The life in the urban settings of the selected novels are built around anti-social activities and shared psychopathologies. Ballard is once again using the tried and tested futuristic dystopian visions technique to question the current urban life in these novels. Dominika Oramus reads these elements as a "record of the gradual internal degeneration of Western civilization in the second half of the twentieth century." (12). While I agree with Oramus about the degeneration of civilization (not necessarily Western; the urban settings used by Ballard is found across the globe), my readings of the chosen texts will focus on the open ended nature of the novels as well. Though Ballard offers no alternative to the impending break down of the society, he is not totally pessimistic either. In an interview given to Simon Sellars in 2006, Ballard says:

I think my work is superficially dystopian, in some respects, but I'm trying to, as you say, affirm a more positive worldview...Most my writing was about the 20th century, and anyone writing about the 20th century writes in a dystopian mode

without making any effort at all — it just comes with the box of paintbrushes.

(Ch. 40)

The description of the architecture in the novels selected is fundamentally contemporary (even futuristic to some extent) in nature which enables us to relate to Spurr's observations. The novels selected for the study deals with architectural phenomena that have gained popularity in the latter half of the twentieth century and is growing at a rapid pace across the globe in the present day urban world. These include urban enclaves, gated communities and shopping malls. The second chapter of the thesis titled "The Ballardian Setting" will provide a brief biography of the author and his unique writing style that became popular as an eponymous adjective (Ballardian) in the Collins English Dictionary. By building upon the features of his writing, I will explain the urban settings employed by Ballard in general and the context of the novels in particular.

Susan Marie Divine's research on Spanish science fiction has focused on how the promises of a better world can manipulate the spatial dimensions of a capitalist city and how these spaces in due time can "control and stagnate social processes whereby the concerns of capitalism always win over those of social justice." (10). Divine's focus is on how the replacement of one ideology by another is not an answer to the problems faced by humans. Further, she argues that all the ideologies, no matter how well-intentioned, can be distorted and eventually create dystopias. Ballard, whose affinity towards dystopian themes are well known, does not show much interest towards the conflict of ideologies in his novels. Rather, he focuses on highlighting organised crimes and transgressive behaviour as the dominant operational forces in his futuristic writings. My third chapter will probe into the dystopian nature of Ballard's work. The chapter will elucidate how Ballard portrays the breakdown of the societies in the selected novels and

will provide explanations based on the descriptions of the architecture. Based on textual evidences, I will postulate why these novels are examples of ‘critical dystopia’ rather than the conventional dystopia.

The dystopian impulse in these novels are subtle and differ from the earlier novels and short stories of Ballard. Hence, the apocalyptic visions of the tussle between nature and culture as outlined by Mahavir Raykumar Sankla in his comparative study of John Brunner and J.G. Ballard (the novels chosen for his study were *The Wind from Nowhere*, *The Drowned World*, and *The Burning World*) cannot be traced in Ballard’s later novels. Neither do we find a totalitarian rule and its consequent failure which was a recurring theme in his short fictions. P. S. Subrahmanya in his research which focused on the short fiction of Ballard points out how the apocalypse and dystopia in those works expounded the impact of technology on human lives. While the theme of technology is recurring across his fictions, the themes of capitalism and consumerism dominate his final four novels. I will be focusing on different aspects of capitalism/consumerism which promises a new utopia which eventually fails resulting in the formation of dystopian societies.

The fourth chapter, “The Architecture of Crime”, will focus on the choice of locations chosen by the characters to commit the crimes and the rationale behind it. Ballard has always been critical of the impact of technological innovations on human beings as found in his early novels and short stories. In his doctoral dissertation submitted to Dalhousie University titled “Corporeality and Ethics in the Fiction of J.G. Ballard,” Andrew Richardson has elaborated on the “technologically facilitated a-consequential thinking of Ballard’s characters.”(vii). The quartet he chose for his study included *The Atrocity Exhibition*, *Crash*, *Concrete Island*, and *High Rise* which were dystopian projections of human life that were increasingly getting affected by modern technology. Here, I focus on various forms of organised crimes that form the crux of his final four

novels. I will outline how the crimes carried out by the characters can be better understood based on their choice of location.

The final chapter will summarise the arguments and conclude the findings.

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Chapter 2

The Urban Setting in Ballard

2.1. Brief Biography of the Author

James Graham Ballard, popularly known as J.G. Ballard, was born in Shanghai, China on November 15th, 1930. Ballard's father was of British origin who moved to Shanghai in 1929 as a chemist of a Manchester-based textile manufacturers firm called the Calico Printers' Association. Later on, he became the chairman and managing director of its subsidiary firm in Shanghai known as the China Printing and Finishing Company. Ballard was brought up in an International Settlement in Shanghai which, in his own words, "was the Paris of the Pacific, one of the gaudiest cities in the world, a stronghold of unlimited venture capitalism." (*User's Guide* Ch. 9). He witnessed the Japanese soldiers taking over the outskirts of Shanghai during the Second Sino-Japanese War and later, Japan capturing the whole of Shanghai during World War II. Both these wars and the life as a war refugee left a considerable impact on his personal and professional life.

Ballard returned to England with his mother after the end of the World War II in 1945. Though his mother went back to China later, he stayed back in England with his grandparents. He joined the King's College at Cambridge in 1949 to become a psychiatrist. Ballard started writing short stories around the same period, but he could not get most of them published. In the pursuit of developing his writing career, he abandoned his medical studies and joined the Queen Mary College to study English Literature. Ballard joined the Royal Airforce in 1954 and had his training at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. It was during this period he developed his interest in science fiction and started attempting short stories in the genre. Upon the completion of his training, he had returned to England in 1955 and married Helen Mary Mathews. In the

following year, he got two of his short stories published— “Escapement” in *New Worlds* and “Prima Belladonna” in *Science Fantasy*—and started getting recognised as a writer.

The association of Ballard with the *New Worlds* magazine, especially under the editorship of Michael Moorcock, proved to be a blessing not only for Ballard but to the genre of Science Fiction as such. The genre of science fiction was facing a severe crisis during the 1960s with repetitive style and predictable theme and storylines. Ballard, along with many others, reacted against the existing patterns that were more or less limited to recycling a limited number of tropes and/or ideas. What followed was a high level of experimentation with the genre, where these authors prioritised literary and stylistic qualities of the text, unlike their predecessors who preferred filling the narrative with scientific facts and predictions. Ballard argued that “What we need is not science fact but more science fiction” and demanded the inclusion of “more psycho-literary ideas, more meta-biological and meta-chemical concepts, private time-systems, synthetic psychologies and space-times, more of the sombre half-worlds one glimpses in the paintings of schizophrenics, all in all a complete speculative poetry and fantasy of science.” (Ballard *User's Guide* Ch. 7). Thus, began the era of New Wave Science Fiction¹ in Literature.

The majority of Ballard’s writings dealt with dystopian modernity and post-apocalyptic visions. The first phase of his writings portrayed surrealist dystopias as found in novels like *The Wind from Nowhere* (1961), *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Burning World* (1964), and *The Crystal World* (1966) all of which deal with catastrophe created due to natural disasters and the apocalyptic concerns built around it (these novels are

¹Latham, Rob. "The New Wave." *A Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by David Seed, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, pp. 202-216.

often referred to as the natural disaster novels). The second phase of his writings, often associated with the novels that came out in the 1970s, deals with the increasing impact of technology on human life and the psychological aftermath of it. Arguably the most celebrated work of Ballard, *Crash* (1973) which deals with the car-crash sexual fetishism; *Concrete Island* (1974), a modern-day adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe*, which deals with the life of a person who gets stranded in a fenced-off region near a motorway intersection; *Highrise* (1975) which talks about the deterioration of a society into violence from a highly civilised life etc., are the significant novels that features in the second phase of his writing. In the subsequent years, he published a lot more novels including *Empire of the Sun* (1984), a novel that drew much inspiration from his childhood in Shanghai. However, a significant change in narrative style, something as significant as which qualifies to be termed as another phase of his writing came in 1996 with the publication of *Cocaine Nights*. This novel and the next three that followed, namely *Super Cannes* (2000), *Millennium People* (2003) and *Kingdom Come* (2006), employs a slightly more realistic scenario delving into the issues of extreme consumerism and capitalism (Beckman 271).

In a writing career that has spanned over five decades, Ballard published nineteen novels, an extensive collection of short stories and two works of non-fiction. Although he was criticised for the extreme violence and explicit use of sexuality in his novels, he made his way into the British literary canon in his own unconventional and revolutionary ways. His literary distinctiveness was so prolific that the Collins English Dictionary introduced a new term—Ballardian—to refer to his writings. Ballard died in April 2009 due to prostate cancer.

2.2. The Term ‘Ballardian’

Granting an eponymous adjective to a writer is not new, but it is not very common either. We can muse over a Dickensian city or can have a Freudian nightmare. For the legacy he has created in his admirable writing career, it is quite unsurprising that J.G. Ballard’s name finds itself on the list of such adjectives. Collins English Dictionary provides two meanings to the word ‘Ballardian’: “(1) of James Graham Ballard (J. G. Ballard; born 1930), the British novelist, or his works. (2) Resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in Ballard’s novels & stories, esp. dystopian modernity, bleak manmade landscapes & the psychological effects of technological, social or environmental developments.” The first part is stating the obvious, and hence, in this section, the focus will be on the second meaning.

The dystopian modernity and bleak manmade landscapes in the definition of ‘Ballardian’ has evolved during his shift from science fiction to social realism. Ballard’s narratives are about the perils of modernism. He draws raw materials for his themes from the contemporary conditions and then projects the visions of a dystopian future. Rather than political totalitarianism, the ever-advancing modern lifestyle of the humans took the centre stage in Ballard’s novels. Hence, the totalitarian systems in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games Trilogy* cannot be found in Ballard. Ballard’s dystopias are inspired by the dark sides of science and technology, and the urban life forms that lead to confusion, chaos and eventual breakdown of the society. In short, dystopia in Ballard is an embodiment of the psychopathologies of modern life.

Ballard’s narratives deal with landscapes that are altered and distorted by human intervention. He provides us with details of a world that is continuously in the pursuit of progress; the world that is seeking comfort and convenience. He then pulls in the seriousness of the crime, terror and violence, of both the present and the future to make

his audience aware of a bleak future that is in the making. Throughout his writing career, Ballard focused on highlighting the problems created by humans, which disturb the existing norms of the society. The gist of Ballard's intentions can be found in his own statement about *Crash* where he wanted to "rub the human face in its own vomit, and force it to look in the mirror" (qtd. in Sharko). However, the reflection of the contemporary society in Ballard is not as straightforward as it looks but a distorted one. He defamiliarises the reader in his own ways, and the "familiar aspects of contemporary culture are rendered [in a] strange and unnerving" (Jeannette Baxter 2) fashion.

The short stories like "The Concentration City" (1957) and "Billenium" (1962) are written in the science fiction genre that discussed the issues of the unavailability of space. The former presents us with a scenario of uncontrolled urbanisation due to which the world is filled with apartment blocks and no free space. A travel across the globe in quest of free space ends in vain as the protagonist realises that the entire earth is occupied by buildings, which are occupied by humans to their maximum capacity. The latter also deals with a similar scenario where people have migrated to urban centres to make more room for agricultural production. Again, we find buildings filled to their maximum and people are forced to occupy hallways, pedestrian sidewalks, staircases etc. The surreal landscapes and crumbling societies were a common theme in many of the short stories that came out during this period. "Manhole 69" (1957), "The Subliminal Man" (1963), "The Terminal Beach" (1964) are some of the noteworthy examples of Ballardian short stories that came out during the initial stages of his career. All these stories had utilised built environment (airfields, swimming pools, unusual artefacts etc.) quite efficiently in the development of the dystopian narrative.

His first four novels belonged to the genre of New wave science fiction. These novels dealt with a post-apocalyptic scenario rich with dystopian visions. Mahavir

Raykumar Sankla, in his doctoral dissertation, takes up these novels and demonstrates “how the irresponsible behaviour of human beings has generated the natural calamities like drought, flood and solar storm.” (231). The havoc is wreaked by natural components such as air or water gone berserk. However, the root cause that instigates such a response from nature is caused by the human activities. For example, the scientific explanation given for the increasing strength of wind in *The Wind from Nowhere* includes cosmic radiations, electro-magnetic waves, gravitational drag etc., which hints that the disaster is an aftermath of the uncontrolled technological advances achieved by humans. Similarly, solar flares are the reason for the melting of the ice caps in *The Drowned World*. *The Drought* presents a scenario of complete disappearance of the rain, which is caused by extreme pollution. Although the ultimate destruction is caused by nature, the role of humans cannot be ignored.

Dominic Pringle is one of the earliest critics of Ballard who, in his monograph, *Earth is the Alien Planet: J. G. Ballard's Four-dimensional Nightmare* (1979), acknowledged and appreciated Ballard’s experiments with the genre of science fiction. He also distinguished the increasing elements of social realism in Ballard’s works, which were more of a bitter criticism of crime and violence underlying in the contemporary life. In his observations on *The Drowned World*, Pringle notices how Ballard has successfully inverted the ‘classic’ English disaster novel by infusing surreal views of the hero into the landscape. Pringle had anticipated the success of Ballard beyond the genre of science fiction and his consequent association with the avant-garde when he said “Ballard is one of the very few sf writers who has successfully fused influences from the sciences and the arts on a sentence-to-sentence level, in such a way that one of his subordinate clauses may carry all the thrill of a whole story by a lesser science-fictional talent.” (Pringle Ch. 35)

It is in the second phase of his writing that we find a change away from the genre of science fiction. Bruce Franklin notes that in the second phase of his writing, especially with *Crash*, *Concrete Island* and *High Rise* “the pretense of science fiction is gradually replaced by an awareness that the bizarre external environment is essentially a projection of a psychological state or a way of perceiving reality.” (Franklin). For example, in his analysis of *Crash* Pringle writes, “Is it science fiction? Some people think not, but the author believes it to be sf, and I would agree with him.” The book is about the obsessive relationship of humans with technology— the impact of technology on the human race and what humans have done to themselves through obsessive use of technology. It shows us the dark side of the human race, the underlying criminal behaviours and foul desires of human mind created by capitalism. In short, *Crash* is a “dystopian nightmare—not projected on to the future, or another planet, but realized *here*, right now, no further away than your nearest motorway or airport (and perhaps even closer to home than that).” (Pringle Ch. 69). By the time Ballard enters the final stage of his writing career, we find him leaving out the science fiction elements from his narratives and developing “an interest in the control of social (and particularly privatized) space which is of considerable contemporary political urgency.” (Baker 15)

In one of the interviews that came out in 1984 in association with the publication of *Empire of the Sun*, Ballard stated: “The future in my fiction has never really been more than five minutes away.” (qtd. in Pringle Ch. 76). This statement had gathered increasing relevance by the time he published *Kingdom Come* in 2006. The dystopia in his fiction is a picturization of the possible outcome of the present. When he started his writing career, the threat of nuclear war was looming in the world with the Cold war between U.S.A and U.S.S.R being a serious concern of the 1960s and 70s. He says:

Now the threats [that] are more internal and the pathology of everyday life is what interests me. It's an entertainment and consumer society and you can see that it's a new dark age. There's a kind of inner darkness and this consumer and entertainment landscape, which I have been touching on for 30 years really, well elements of this pathology are beginning to assert themselves in everyday life. ("Dystopia Now")

In the pursuit of “a single quest to find what the hell is really going on” (“Dystopia Now”), he holds a mirror towards the contemporary lifestyle of the people and society. At the same time, critics like Bruce Franklin points out that Ballard’s fictions are “ultimately a literature of despair, negation and death” and he “remains incapable of understanding the alternative to these death forces, the global movement toward human liberation which constitutes the main distinguishing characteristic of our epoch.” (Franklin). This argument sounds logical in the sense that Ballard does not offer a strict criticism of the way of living; even when issues like capitalism and consumerism are taken up as primary themes, he opts not to provide a left-oriented critique of the same nor has he got any suggestions to escape the predicament of the bleak scenarios created by the modern way of living. Even in *Millennium People* (2003) which may be accounted for as a collective resistance against consumer culture, the instigator of the middle-class revolution is expecting it to fail. This is probably because his intentions are only to ‘find what the hell is really going on’ and not offer a solution for the problems at hand. Alternatively, Benjamin Noys argues that it is “the ‘repressive tolerance’ of British cultural life” that accepted Ballard as a “licensed eccentric who can be guaranteed to offer up the provocative opinion, and his fictions generate a certain amount of ‘safe’ controversy.” (404)

2.3. The Urban Setting in Ballard

Toby Litt in his forward to *J. G. Ballard: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* notes that “No other novelist has paid such close attention to the quiddity of where we now live and work - in all its recalcitrant mundanity.” (vii). Ballardian narratives often provide an insufficient description of the forest or field. Rather, he invests better on the urban scenario with technology, communication, and transport system at the focus. The earlier futuristic writings of Ballard seem to be a portrayal of Stanley Cohen’s concern: “the city of the present—the iconography of violence, crime, insecurity, pollution, traffic congestion, overcrowding—is the society of the future.” (205). The mechanical life driven by the clocks in “Chronopolis” (1960) which leads to the consequent break down of the society, or his projection of the automobile industry in “The Subliminal Man” (1963) as an example of the impact of growing consumerism are notable examples in this regard. More often than not, we find landscapes of technology, zones of suburbia and non-place urban fields assuming the central roles in Ballardian fiction.

The urban landscape and topography in Ballardian narratives underwent various changes over the years. The surrealist imaginary spaces in the 1960’s saw Ballard experimenting with the genre of science fiction and the post-apocalyptic universe. Most of his short stories of the period such as “The Concentration City” or “Billennium” dealt with unnamed future cities. Another set of short stories, which came out as a collection under the title *Vermilion Sands* in 1971, was located in an imaginary resort of the same name. Although it is a vacation destination in the middle of a desert, it is filled with electronic music, mutant vehicles, large sculptures and other similar features that are essentially urban. Novels like *The Wind from Nowhere* and *The Drowned World* are set in the city of Post-apocalyptic London. The 1970s witnessed a shift of location from the ‘city’ to the urban and suburban regions. The novels that came out between 1970 and

1980 “attempt linguistic and geographical dislocation by moving to London's periphery.”
(Groes 86)

Ballard focused more on novels and started dealing with short stories at a much lesser rate around the 1980s. However, his association with the urban and suburban settings for his novels remained intact for the rest of his career. David Ian Paddy marks the location of Ballard's novels on the map of the Great Britain and points out how most of those novels are primarily “suburban or at best liminally urban or ex-urban.” Paddy analyses this constant association with the suburbs using the city versus country dichotomy of Raymond Williams. In his view, Ballard was thoroughly disappointed with the landscapes of England and romanticised versions of it after his familiarity with the terrains of Asia. The in-between status of the suburbs enabled Ballard to portray the “Englishness...through a forthright rejection of the idea of England as a pastoral idyll.”
(Ch 8)

In an interview given to Ian Sinclair, Ballard says that he considers the city to be semi-extinct. In his perspective, the real life of people can be better perceived in the suburbs as “In the suburbs you find uncentred lives. The normal civic structures are not there.” (*Crash* 84). In a sense, the locale of suburbs had helped Ballard in creating the dystopian landscapes to such impeccability. Being a part of what Lefebvre calls the ‘urban fabric’, the high-rise buildings, motorways, supermarkets etc., is connected to technology and consumerism as much as the city. More importantly, it allows necessary freedom and privacy to the dwellers to fancy their imaginations and obsessions. While the example of television sets transforming the lives of suburban people in the 1960s seems apt enough, I cannot help but notice how the crime sequences in *Crash* or *Cocaine Nights*, which form the backbone of their respective plots would have been impossible inside the city of London.

Ballard has efficiently used abandoned runways, high-rise apartments, bunkers, aisles, shopping malls, airport lounge, carparks, swimming pools and possibly every other thing that one can come across in an urban setting to show us how human intervention into natural landscape has had adverse effects on humanity itself. His novels may be considered as an interpretation and deciphering of the dark side of urban life. One can observe the presence of a persistent act of subversion, an attempt to portray utopian efforts to build a perfect urban life and the consequent production of a dystopia. I will come back to this argument in a later chapter. For now, I will focus on the settings of the novels that are chosen for this study.

2.3.1. Gated Communities in *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes*

Gated communities offer a number of themes in the modern context to a writer like Ballard. The idea of order versus chaos, alienation, social exclusion and security concerns provide ample material to create a typical Ballardian narrative. Dominika Oramus outlines how Ballard had used the example of existing luxury enclaves to recreate future leisure societies in his later novels: “Viewing them as samples of Europe’s future he describes their settings and architecture: the man-made cityscape of replicas, models and stylization; the lifestyle of the inhabitants, the social problems which are going to arise.” (135)

There are no clear markers in history to denote the formation of the first gated community. The idea of ‘walling in or walling out’ is not new to human civilisation. However, the majority of the literature on ‘gated communities’ suggest that the term entered the academic circle and urban theory in the 1980s. Blakeley and Snyder gave the most popular definition of the term in 1997: “Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatized.” (2). Setha Low elaborates the definition by providing a brief description of the features; she writes, “A

gated community is a residential development surrounded by walls, fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured entrance. In some cases, protection is provided by inaccessible land such as a nature reserve and, in a few cases, by a guarded bridge.” (11)

There are a number of reasons which draw people towards gated communities. The sense of community, lifestyle management, the convenience of avoiding outsiders, and the proposition of better safety and security. These locations offer more stability to its residents, and the resale value of their properties are likely to remain the same or increase. Also, such communities offer better control of their environment to its inhabitants. Rowland Atkinson et al. explains, “Gated communities create vehicles for micro-government in which civic goods, such as security and environmental services, may be provided privately.” (402). For example, shared spaces like a golf course or a swimming pool are the common property of the community. Any changes that need to be brought about on such spaces occurs with a common consent of the members. Moreover, a modern-day consumer prefers (is made to?) the services offered by the private sector to the ones provided by the public sector.

Gated communities differ from other urban housing systems in many ways. To begin with, the entire lived space— houses, streets, administrative buildings, and other amenities—are circumscribed inside the walls and gates which are “visible barriers that have social and psychological as well as physical effects.” (Low 12). Rita Raposo sketches three major characteristics of gated communities: “(1) private or privatized amenities for collective use ... (2) perimeter impermeability and access control ... and (3) collective private ownership of open space or privatized access to it.” (44). While these characteristics remain constant, there can be different varieties of gated communities based on the purpose on which it is built. Blakeley and Snyder outline three

different types of gated communities: (1) Lifestyle communities whose preference is to provide space for leisure activities to its residents. (2) Prestige communities, which operate primarily on economic and social status. (3) Security zone communities where the residents are provided or imposed with the highest level of restrictions.

Blakeley and Snyder divides lifestyle communities into three: 1) the retirement community whose lives are structured around club houses, various recreational amenities, and social activities; 2) the golf and leisure community which is more or less similar to the first category in many ways but gave importance to the requirements of the working class; and 3) the suburban new towns which are “large master-planned developments that aim to provide residents with a complete living experience, from gated subdivisions to schools, shopping centers, commercial offices, and parks and recreation.” (46-47). The ‘Mission Hills Country Club, Rancho Mirage, California’ was taken up as a case study in *Fortress America*. The description of the architecture of the club provides us with a clear-cut image of the luxurious life of the residents in these communities.

Mission Hills Country Club is a sprawling development next to a lush golf course; the vista from nearly any of the narrow internal roads is of greens and palm trees... The main entrance road turns past several fairways and through areas of prosperous but not showy homes. It leads to the Mission Hills Country Club... The lobby is decorated in the tasteful, luxurious, but unremarkable style of upper-middle-class hotel chains... We met with some residents in the Dinah Shore Room... it had the feeling of an executive board room. (Blakely and Snyder 50-51)

From the categorisation provided by Blakeley and Snyder on lifestyle communities, we can list *Cocaine Nights* under the first category meant for retired

professionals and *Super-Cannes* under the third category which has the active professional class as target occupants. The quasi-futuristic version of gated communities in *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes* (They are often referred to as companion texts which deal with similar themes.) deals with self-regulatory communities that experiment with lifestyle and quotidian in unusual ways. A wide range of political, cultural, and ethical issues including growing capitalism, racism, rapidly growing prostitution and the porn industry, politically instigated crime and violence are all employed by Ballard in both the novels. We find similar plot lines which set off as an investigation by the protagonists into the murder mysteries that took place in the gated communities who eventually finds out the cultural life in these complexes are dependent on organised crimes and violence.

Cocaine Nights is set in Estrella de Mar, “a residential retreat for the professional classes of northern Europe” (Ballard *Cocaine* 35) located at Costa del Sol, Spain. Charles Prentice, a travel writer by profession, arrives at Costa del Sol trying to unravel the mystery behind an arson attack that killed five people. His brother Frank, who was the secretary of Club Nautico at Estreall de Mar was accused guilty for the murders. Prentice assumes the role of an amateur detective and starts his own investigations into the matter as the reports he got from the police and Frank’s indifferent attitude towards his queries proved unhelpful. In the process, he realises two sides of Estrella de Mar; on the one hand a community with a flourishing cultural life; there were sports clubs and art groups focusing on traditions inspired by Harold Pinter and T.S. Eliot. On the other hand, a community prone to the dangers of drugs, illegal sex, pornography, and violence.

During his initial meeting with the treasurer of Club Nautico, David Hennesey, Prentice is informed that “Estrella de Mar is more like Chelsea or Greenwich Village in the 1960s. There are theatre and film clubs, a choral society, cordon bleu classes.”

(Ballard *Cocaine* 43). Prentice himself is impressed by what he saw at the resort during his initial days. After getting acquainted with the residents of Estrella de Mar, his idea of the place is quite positive: “Here there were no gangs of bored teenagers, no deracinated suburbs where neighbours scarcely knew each other and their only civic loyalties were to the nearest hypermarket and DIY store.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 66). However, Ballard leaves a hint about the place in the initial description of the place by the travel writer in Prentice. On his arrival at the resort, he observes, “The cubist apartments and terraced houses resembled Arcosanti's, their architecture dedicated to the abolition of time, as befitted the ageing population of the retirement havens and an even wider world waiting to be old.” He makes a mental note for his next article: “the memory-erasing white architecture; the enforced leisure that fossilized the nervous system.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 34). In one sense, this description anticipates the breakdown of social order, which Prentice will soon witness. In another sense, it hints at the crisis of architecture itself- the gated communities are isolating themselves from the rest of the world not only physically but also culturally.

When Prentice attempts to trace the history of the resort, he is informed that Estrella de Mar was constructed in the 1970s with the professional class of Europe as its targeted visitors. Presently, the place is not open to tourism as most of the members of the community are permanent settlers. He gets an entirely different image of the resort than what he had in mind when his brother got the job as the secretary of Club Nautico. During his interaction with Dr Sanger, Prentice learns that the social and cultural life in Estrella de Mar was almost dead at one point. It was the set of criminal activities started by Bobby Crawford, the tennis coach at Club Nautico, which changed the lifestyle of people. Later, Prentice is appointed as the secretary of Costasol Complex. His activities, from this point, acts as a foil suggesting that Frank might have had a similar life at Estrella

de Mar. In due course, the series of incidents that led to the arson attack at the Hollinger Mansion is revealed.

The residents of Costasol Complex are, again, expatriates who have come to spend the rest of their retired life. They had secluded themselves from the rest of the world with no amount of social life or community interactions. What Charles witnesses here is a ‘leisure society’² as explained by the character of Dr Sanger. Sanger talks about a scenario where “People will still work - or, rather, some people will work, but only for a decade of their lives. They will retire in their late thirties, with fifty years of idleness in front of them.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 180). These people have shut themselves in their drawing rooms, watching cable programs and coming out only if they have no choice to do otherwise. In a way, Estrella de Mar and Costasol Complex is a reflection of the global scenario; Hennesey tells Charles that places like Estrella de Mar are “Europe’s future. Everywhere will be like this soon.” and Crawford confirming that “Britain, the States, western Europe - people are sealing themselves off into crime-free enclaves.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 23, 293)

Super-Cannes, often considered as a companion piece to *Cocaine Nights* presents us with a business park: The Eden-Olympia. In his foreword to the novel, Ballard describes Super- Cannes as a “luxury enclave on the heights above the Croisette, but the term might well refer to that whole terrain of science parks and autoroutes on the high ground above the Var plain.” Eden-Olympia is one of the high-tech business parks described as an “intelligent city” by the protagonist Paul Sinclair, which “concentrated on the office as the key psychological zone.” The fictional enclave of Eden-Olympia is

² The social and cultural theorists of 1960’s and 1970’s used the term ‘leisure society’ to refer to communities who treated life as a festival of free choice and self-determination. This was often considered as by-product of industrialisation. Refer Haworth, Lawrence. *Decadence and Objectivity*. University of Toronto press, 1977.

modelled on “the landscaped business park of Sophia-Antipolis, a few miles to the north of Antibes.” (Ballard *Super* Foreword)

Eden-Olympia, as explained earlier, falls into the category of the suburban new town. Most of the luxuries and elemental features of a gated community such as sports centres, shopping malls, private security forces etc., are present in Eden-Olympia. As it is typical of the suburban new towns, the residential arrangements here vary based on the income level. A strong sense of class division which is evident from the very beginning of the novel shows the clarity with which Ballard has developed his setting for the novel. While explaining about the details of accommodation arranged for Jane and Paul Sinclair, the psychiatrist Wilder Penrose gives them a brief picture of the residential arrangements in the park. He says, ““A fifth of the workforce live on-site...Middle and junior management in apartments and townhouses, senior people in the residential estate where you're going. The parkland buffers the impact of all the steel and concrete.”” (Ballard *Super* 17). From the description of Penrose, it can be inferred that the leisure society in *Cocaine Nights* is replaced by a community of workaholics.

A vast complex that has offices of multinational brands like Unilever, Mitsui, Siemens and others along with homes of the elitist entrepreneurs of Europe brings in the element of the economy into the picture. The very description of the buildings by Paul in the first chapter goes like this:

[W]ork and the realities of corporate life anchored Eden-Olympia to the ground. The buildings wore their ventilation shafts and cable conduits on their external walls, an open reminder of Eden-Olympia's dedication to company profits and the approval of its shareholders. The satellite dishes on the roofs resembled the

wimples of an order of computer-literate nuns, committed to the sanctity of the workstation and the pieties of the spreadsheet. (Ballard *Super* 8)

Even the house allotted to Paul and Jane spoke of how money ruled the life in Eden-Olympia: “I peered through the wrought-iron gates at silent tennis courts and swimming pools waiting for their owners to return. Over the immaculate gardens hung the air of well-bred catatonia that only money can buy.” (Ballard *Super* 20). In Paddy’s words, “In *Super-Cannes*, Ballard charts how the modern nation-state has been trumped by the postmodern corporation as the dominant mode of social order.” (Ch. 7)

The narrative of *Super-Cannes* follows a pattern similar to *Cocaine Nights*. The plot develops around a mass murder that has led to Paul’s arrival at Eden-Olympia, his investigative tours around the community to get information about the murders, an influential figure who runs the organised crimes and the protagonist’s admiration for his principles. Here Penrose is running a therapy program of “controlled and supervised madness” which he justifies by claiming that “A voluntary and sensible psychopathy is the only way we can impose a shared moral order.” (Ballard *Super* 264). However, unlike *Cocaine Nights*, here the crimes are not meant to develop a sense of community. Here the workaholic executives of Eden-Olympia organise raids (ratissages) against Blacks, Arabs and other people from the lower strata of society. While the crime in *Estrella de Mar* happened within the community, the raids in Eden-Olympia happens outside the community thereby retaining the image of Eden-Olympia as a safe and secure place until the mass murders happened. In both the novels, the protagonists travel in the path of a previous character who has wreaked havoc in the society only to find themselves in a similar situation paving the way for another massacre.

Sarah Blandy notices that while the description of the setup of gated communities in Ballard is “over-efficiently ordered,” (Blandy), the life that happens inside it seems to be that of the disorder. Estrella de Mar and Eden-Olympia is presented as the future of Europe in their own different ways but inherently resonating the offer of a better and safe life offered by the advertisements of gated communities proliferating across the world. Ballard in his own style induces disorder and chaos into a well-built space using his characters to show us how the interaction of the humans within the space can result in bleak man-made landscapes.

2.3.2. Urban Enclave of Chelsea Marina

Although Chelsea Marina in *Millennium People* is also considered as a gated community, I chose to have a separate section for it in this study. Unlike Estrella de Mar and Eden-Olympia, Chelsea Marina is not strictly closed to outsiders, nor it has a separate administrative mechanism of its own. The crimes and murders in the first two communities are met with limited external intervention. In the case of *Millennium People*, the crimes are conducted to invite political and public attention. Chelsea Marina is occupied by the middle class whereas the Estrella de Mar and Eden-Olympia dealt with the rich and wealthy.

The amateur investigator protagonist that we found in the other two novels is present here as well. David Markham, an industrial psychologist by profession, sets out to find the mystery behind a bomb blast at Heathrow airport, which killed his ex-wife Laura. The double perspective developed by Charles Prentice and Paul Sinclair during the time they spend with the instigators of violence is found in Markham’s interaction with Dr Richard Gould as well. In what follows, Markham becomes a witness and passive participant of the plans of Dr Gould who appears to be the half-prophetic figure, which

carries out the similar role played by Bobby Crawford and Wilder Penrose in the other novels.

David Markham gets involved in a bourgeoisie uprising in Chelsea Marina which started as a small revolution “so modest and well behaved that almost no one had noticed.” The revolution is born out of the dissatisfaction of the middle-class “who were society’s keel and anchor”, and yet being forced to live under the threat of increasing prices, burden of mortgages and many other issues related to the standard of living. Kay Churchill’s argument that the class system is meant “to keep the middle class down, make sure they’re docile and subservient” (Ballard *Millennium* 5, 85) stresses the concerns of the middle class that led to the revolution. At the same time, one cannot overlook the role of their lived space in understanding the cause of the revolution. Chelsea Marina was meant to be a middle-class enclave. It is described as:

Built on the site of a former gasworks, Chelsea Marina was designed for a salaried professional class keen to preserve its tribal totems – private education, a dinner-party culture, and a never-to-be-admitted distaste for the ‘lower’ orders, which included City dealers, financial consultants, record industry producers and the lumpen-intelligentsia of newspaper columnists and ad-men. (Ballard *Millennium* 51)

However, the intervention of the real estate groups changed the whole scenario. Vera, in her conversation with Markham, explains how life is made difficult in the enclave.

“This place is a dump. Maintenance is almost nil but the charges keep going up. This flat cost me more than my father earned in his lifetime.”

“one of the lifts has been out of order for months. For two hours a day the taps don’t run. You have to plan when you need a shit.”

“They want to run the place down, buy us out and raze it to the ground. Then they’ll bring in Foster and Richard Rogers to design huge blocks of luxury flats.”

(Ballard *Millennium* 78, 79)

In short, what was supposed to be a place that upheld the middle-class status turned out to be “a high-priced slum.” (Ballard *Millennium* 52)

What started as a peaceful protest of the middle-class makes a shapeshift with the entry of Dr Richard Gould. Gould takes the revolution to a much higher level where he concerns the whole motive to be questioning the mechanised life led by people. The concerns of an over affinity to leisure that we found in *Cocaine Nights* is one-half of the reasons he cites to Markham. He says: “An endless theme park, with everything turned into entertainment. Science, politics, education — they’re so many fairground rides. Sadly, people are happy to buy their tickets and climb aboard.” The other half is Wilder Penrose’s experiments to increase capitalist productivity in *Super-Cannes* with the difference being Gould totally opposing the idea. He wanted to stop people from being turned into “a professional class who will run the show for consumer capitalism.” (Ballard *Millennium* 62, 104)

Both Kay Churchill and Richard Gould use violence to achieve their targets. In Churchill’s case, her fight is primarily against the middle-class oppression, and hence the targets she chose are specific. It began by smoke bombing department stores and destroying travel agencies, parking machines and every other building that had strong associations with shaping/prescribing the middle-class life; they were “exploiters of middle-class credulity. Their corrupting fantasies had deluded the entire educated caste, providing a dangerous pabulum that had poisoned a spoon-fed intelligentsia.” (Ballard *Millennium* 120). In the case of Gould, his fight was against the meaningless life of the

20th century, and the middle-class revolt is only a part of it. He chooses to fight meaninglessness with meaninglessness; he opts for random targets with the intention of creating unease in the lives of people. He believes that the pointless attacks generate a higher and long-lasting impact on people:

Blow up the Stock Exchange and you're rejecting global capitalism. Bomb the Ministry of Defence and you're protesting against war. You don't even need to hand out the leaflets. But a truly pointless act of violence, shooting at random into a crowd, grips our attention for months. The absence of rational motive carries a significance of its own. (Ballard *Millennium* 194)

The motivation for Richard Gould is supposed to have arisen from his days of working at Bedfont Hospital with disabled children. It is interesting to note that the Bedfont Hospital, a Victorian Asylum, was closed down shortly after the dismissal of Gould for the abuse of children who were admitted there. Gould himself supported some practices, which may otherwise be categorised as offensive. The description of the Victorian Architecture is particularly compelling in the chapter where Gould explains to Markham about the site where the hospital site is taken over by a property company to build starter homes for the middle-class. Dr Gould seems to be at better ease with "the architecture of prisons, cotton mills and steel foundries, monuments to the endurance of brick and the Victorian certainties" but he is unable to accept the "soft-regime prison" created by modernity. He believes it to be a "flight from the real.". While his methods as a doctor and the instigator of the crimes have questionable ends, his comment on the new buildings that replaced the Victorian ones does coincide with the argument of David Spurr that the modern architecture lacks mediation or historical importance: "There's no past and no future. If they can, they opt for zones without meaning - airports, shopping malls, motorways, car parks." (Ballard *Millennium* 133)

2.3.3. The Shopping Complex in the Suburbs

Metro-Centre, a shopping mall located at the M25 motorway of Brooklands is the focal point of Ballard's final novel, *Kingdom Come*. Much similar to the other novels discussed here, this novel too is told from the perspective of an amateur detective. The protagonist here is Richard Pearson whose father was allegedly killed by a person with a mental health condition, Duncan Christie, in a gunfire he released at Metro-Centre. From the wealthy upper class of *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes* and the middle-class of *Millennium People*, Ballard shifts his focus towards the impact of fascist consumerism on the lives of the working class in *Kingdom Come*. In Pearson's view, these suburbs hardly bothered about the tradition and history of London. They preferred to live in the present created for them by the retail outlets; "This was a place where it was impossible to borrow a book, attend a concert, say a prayer, consult a parish record or give to charity. In short, the town was an end state of consumerism." (Ballard *Kingdom* 14)

The second half of the 20th century witnessed the conversion of small shopping centres into shopping malls which slowly became a crucial element of the urban life. Paco Underhill notes that by the early 1970s the time spent by an average American adult in a shopping mall was next only to the time spent at home and work. By 2005, the number of shopping malls in the US has gone up to 1175, and the rest of the world is following the path. Regarding architecture, the critical point to note is what I mentioned in the introduction of this research — an apparent lack of uniqueness. The designs indeed differ from one another, but the purpose of the building and the meaning formation concerning the people who interact with it remains the same — it speaks only in the language of consumption. Underhill, in his pursuit of studying the malls, makes a similar statement: "Which specific mall we'll be visiting doesn't really matter, since the things

we'll see and the lessons we'll learn apply to all." Let us have a look at the description of the nameless mall which he is visiting:

Our mall reeks of money—inside we'll see acres of marble, in tasteful shades of tan, brown, and white. The flooring is tile. There's a glassed-in elevator. There are 144 stores. Befitting its middle-to upper-middle-class market, there's a Versace and a Ralph Lauren, a Cartier and a Tiffany, a Nordstrom and a Saks. There's also a Gap, an Abercrombie & Fitch, a Victoria's Secret, but no Spencer Gifts. The biggest single category is women's apparel, which is also the mainstay of every other mall in the world. There's a record store, a toy store, a video game store and nine stores selling sneakers. There must be close to twenty places to buy cosmetics, if you include the department stores and the boutiques that sell it as a sideline. (Ch. 2)

He goes on talking about the cinema, the restaurant chains, food courts, beauty spa and so on. However, these are all the same features one can find at any other mall in any part of the world. They are painfully similar. A typical example of this repetitive, unoriginal architecture in the global scenario is given by Mona Abaza who points out the building of five new shopping malls in Saudi Arabia, all of which "in an architectural style that emulates that of Singaporean and Malaysian malls." (100)

The consumerism we witness inside a shopping mall also lacks the 'uniqueness' — the products we buy are copies of one another. Here the stress is put on reproducibility and not on originality. A Calvin Klein shirt or Levi's jeans you buy from one of the showrooms can have tens or hundreds of replicas. The process of consumption continues even with the lack of originality. The idea behind this consumption is to prove oneself as a consumer, to show that one has access to these locations and thereby establish a social

status. In this sense, it is the feeling of possession and not the utility value that guides the purchase. Hence, the value of a product is not just the price offered but the esteem it adds to the social status of its owner. These shopping malls bring together a large number of people who are unknown to each other and yet are pressurised unconsciously by others to maintain their status and increase consumption.

Despite this lack of uniqueness, the shopping malls proliferated at a rapid pace. In the beginning, the growing suburbs and a population that was increasingly depending on automobiles needed space for shopping. It was a matter of convenience for people to utilise such malls, which had substantial parking lots unlike what they had inside the cities. Kay Churchill's comment in *Millennium People* that "the next revolution is going to be about parking" (Ballard *Millennium* 66) and Pearson's observation in *Kingdom Come* that "parking was well on the way to becoming the British population's greatest spiritual need" (Ballard *Kingdom* 14) shows how one form of consumption (automobiles) has led to the growth of another (shopping malls). Douglas J. Goodman and Mirelle Cohen infer that these shopping malls very soon converted themselves from zones of convenience to symbols that redefined and redesigned the suburbs with the emergence of new Highways, houses and service industries built around them. Shopping Malls acted as a metaphor for the whole concept of consumption which "increasingly became one of the main driving forces for social change." (23)

A number of critics have pointed out how the shopping malls have become a space to spend leisure time; to borrow an expression from Tracy C. Davis, these spaces are "stationary theme parks." (10). Metro-Centre in *Kingdom Come* is one such space accounted for a tourist destination. As for the life of the people in the suburbs is dominated by their craze for football and the time they spend at the shopping mall. Consumerism dominated their quotidian. The people go around shopping the whole day,

and once the gates of the mall are shut, they turn towards sports. The association with sports is where Ballard brings in his typical ‘organised crime’ and ‘elective insanity’ into the picture. They go around attacking Asian shopkeepers and burning cars. The central argument of the novel is formed around this lifestyle of the people: “consumerism creates an appetite that can only be satisfied by fascism.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 190)

We can find the themes of *Cocaine Nights* overlapping into *Kingdom Come*. If leisure was the cause of inactivity and docile nature of people in Estrella de Mar, consumerism creates a similar effect for people in the suburbs. If too much of leisure had destroyed the sense of community in Estrella de Mar, consumerism did that job in Brooklands. We find Geoffrey Fairfax complaining: “Here in Brooklands we had a real community, not just a population of cash tills. Now it’s gone, vanished overnight when that money-factory opened.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 42). Tony Maxted, the psychiatrist figure in the novel, tells Pearson: “Consumerism rules, but people are bored. They’re out on the edge, waiting for something big and strange to come along.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 118)

Don Slater articulates how consumerism can be a freedom that is compulsory in nature in his book *Consumer Culture & Modernity* (1999). He observes that a new form of secularisation has emerged where there is no principle constraint on who can consume what. However, “while consumer culture appears universal because it is depicted as a land of freedom in which everyone can be a consumer, it is also felt to be universal because everyone must be a consumer” (27). This creates a situation where an individual “obeys the same code as others, receives the same messages, responds to the same entreaties.” (Auge 103). So as much as consumerism offers a new sense of freedom, it creates another sense of slavery. Ballard posits both perspectives on consumerism through the characters of Geoffrey Fairfax who calls it a “plague” and William Sangster who states “only consumerism can hold a modern society together” (Ballard *Kingdom*

102). While I have no particular interest to stand up for or against consumerism, I cannot overlook the fact that the identity of an individual is almost erased completely in the realm of consumerism. Metro-centre, the epitome of consumerism in this context, provides us not only the image of an architecture that is devoid of uniqueness but also an architecture that is capable of erasing the individuality of a person who interacts with it.

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Chapter 3

The Dystopian Impulse

As mentioned in chapter two, the novels of Ballard have an inherent dystopian tone to them. The nature disaster novels of the 1960s presented a post-apocalyptic scenario where a natural calamity destroys every system established by human civilisation. In *Concrete Island* (1974), the protagonist Robert Maitland who gets marooned in a traffic island turns into a savage lunatic by the end of the novel. In *High-Rise* (1975), the entire residents of a 'vertical city' plummet from a group of civilised people to a group of barbarians. But as we approach the final four novels, the dystopian impulse becomes subtler. Instead of a totally degenerated society, he presents us with the images of contemporary society and shows us the silent dystopian traits present in them.

3.1. Understanding Dystopia

The word Utopia, according to the Oxford Dictionary of English, means "An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect." First used in the sixteenth century by Thomas More in his eponymous work with the same title, *Utopia*, the root of the word goes back to Latin *ou* and *topos* which means 'not' and 'place' respectively. While this produces the impression that a utopia is a place that does not exist in the real world (in accordance with the definition given by the dictionary), the dictionary also suggests that, in the late eighteenth century observations were made on the root of the word which suggested that it might have been formed from Latin *eu* meaning 'good' and hence utopia also refers to a 'good place'. Taking this sense of the word into account, the dictionary also suggests that 'dystopia,' which means 'bad place,' as the opposite of utopia. However, this perception of dystopia seems rather vague and confusing. Therefore, I will provide a brief description of the concept in the next few pages before placing the selected novels of Ballard in the dystopian context.

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines dystopia as “An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.” Lyman Tower Sargent in his studies distinguishes utopia, eutopia and dystopia. According to him, utopia is a “non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space.” Eutopia or positive utopia is defined as “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived.” Dystopia or negative utopia is defined as, “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived.” (9). From this viewpoint, the reader or critic is supposed to juxtapose his own society against the one specified in the narrative. However, no real-life society is perfect, nor any of them qualifies to be a utopia which makes it impossible to consider dystopia as a proper antonym to utopia. In order to get a better understanding of the term, I will begin by tracing the origin of the concept of utopia and then delineate the historical origin and evolution of dystopia.

The term ‘utopia’ came into existence in 1516 through More’s work, though the trace of it in literature and philosophy had existed even before that. The ideal society projected by the utopian writings and thoughts point to some kind of social dreams that existed in every society. Claeys and Sargent observe “simplicity, security, immortality or an easy death, unity among the people; unity between the people and God or the gods, abundance without labor, and no enmity between human beings and the other animals.” (2), as the common features of such societies. Such visions had existed ever since the humans had started living in groups; one or the other form of such visions had acted as a stimulus for the growth of human race. Attempts to improve the current living conditions

had led man to dream of a better future which, when viewed from the other angle, hints at a dissatisfaction with the existing order of things. As Gordin et al. point out “Projecting a better world into the future renders present- day problems more clearly.” (1)

One may refer to the description of Garden of Eden in the book of *Bible*, Genesis as one of the early instances of utopian visions cutting into a literary genre. Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* also gives us some account of a utopian society. The most significant work to be considered in this category would be Plato’s *Republic* where he lays down the rules for a well-balanced society. While there might be criticism of the set of rules he has prescribed, his intention of creating a perfect society is evident beyond doubt. A vital inference regarding the Greek version of Utopia is made by Lewis Mumford, who argues that even after constant struggles to build a commonwealth, the maximum the Greeks were able to produce was a city (271). He further goes on exploring the possible existence of a real city which might have served as a prototype to the Greeks, Plato in particular.

Mumford’s essay “Utopia, the City and the Machine” focuses specifically on establishing that the primordial city was probably the most enduring version of utopia, with the palace and the temple as its locus. Utopia is a broad term that is used to refer to a society or an ideology as such and the concept of time is as important as that of space. However, Mumford’s studies reflect that “in spite of their repeated efforts at confederation, the Greeks were never able to conceive of a human commonwealth except in the concrete form of a city” (271), and later civilizations also had ended up building more and more cities. Gordin, Tilley and Prakash reiterate this point by arguing that the word utopia invokes the image of space that is “typically a city, but not necessarily so- that has been organized and mapped out geographically.” (4). This might be because cities are capable of reflecting upon the complex nature of human society in a better way. In other words, the city encompasses multiple groups of people, with their dreams and

aspirations, willing to experiment with their life. To go a step ahead, one might borrow the idea of Stanley Cohen and say that the city of the present is the society of future. (205)

While the writings of Plato or any other political thinker for that matter (for instance, Chanakya from India) has had city as a prominent image in their views about a better society, literary works were not limited to it (In the case of Thomas More's *Utopia*, the setting is an island). Utopias had existed both in literature and political/philosophical thought of humans since time immemorial in the form of social dreams. However, the proper development of the term as a literary genre took place only in the sixteenth century. While tracing the history of utopian literature, one may find many works that had tried to portray a complete society without limiting it to the microcosmic view offered by a city. Francis Bacon's incomplete work, *New Atlantis*, is an oft-quoted example of the genre. Many critics are of the opinion that Bacon was trying to question the political authority of religion. Stephen A. McKnight argues that "Bacon's program of utopian reform presented in the *New Atlantis* is grounded in genuinely and deeply felt religious convictions" (11). The new perspective that Suzanne Smith tries to bring in her essay "The *New Atlantis*: Francis Bacon's Theological-Political Utopia?", falls in between these theories when she argues "the *New Atlantis* represents a utopia that is effectively divided against itself regarding its laws, its politics and its religion." (98)

Discovery of new lands and people through voyages opened up a new avenue for writers to experiment with the genre of Utopia. *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*, popularly known as *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift was one such work which had attracted much critical appreciation. In the revised edition of the

work that came out in 1735, the protagonist, Lemuel Gulliver, makes a direct reference to More's *Utopia*.

If the Censure of the Yahoos could anyway affect me, I should have great Reason to complain, that some of them are so bold as to think my Book of Travels a meer Fiction out of mine own Brain, and have gone so far as to drop Hints, that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of Utopia.
(289)

Further, Brian Vickers infers that "*Utopia*, in its political and ethical attack on contemporary society through the juxtaposition of an imaginary equivalent, emerges as a source and model for *Gulliver's Travels*." (qtd in. Houston 426). Swift's work served as a model for many works that came in the same line which attempted to reproduce the stories heard from voyagers about primitive people, their culture, pagan worship, etc.

The nineteenth century witnessed two significant events that are crucial in utopian studies. First was the birth of the industrial age and consequent technological innovations which resulted in the reflection of utopian societies in science fiction novels. Second was the evolution of the idea of dystopia. Raymond Williams categorises the kind of fictional writings that are usually considered as utopian into four: (a) The Paradise; (b) The externally altered world; (c) The willed transformation and (d) The technological transformation. He then goes on to say that the third and fourth categories are the ones which, in the strict sense, should be considered as utopia. He argues that these types of writing provide more space for human actions in the narrative and at the same time they are accommodative of the idea that a utopia can fail. ("Utopia" 203, 205)

A prominent and probably one of the most remarkable variety of utopian writings will be the ones that had come up in the late eighteenth century advocating human

equality. The idea of liberty, social justice and greater human virtue propagated by the American and French Revolutions inspired these kinds of writings. Such writings reached its zenith with the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The utopian nature of communism/socialism, the dystopian effect created by totalitarian socialist governments, etc., are topics that are in academics ever since. Utopia as a social concept has served as a very useful tool to scrutinize the nature of various socio-political theories. Karl Manheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), was a significant work which took a very critical stand against the utopian ideologies. He "eschewed characterizations of utopia as an articulation of a planned ideal society and instead redefined it as a socially located critical stance." (Gordin et al. 5). German Marxist critic Ernst Bloch's *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918) was a work that utilised both biblical and Marxist perspectives to analyse the Western art, religion and philosophy to enhance the understanding of the influence of utopian undercurrents in the growth of western culture.

Scientific advancements on the one hand and the birth of Marxist theories on the other are the two developments that has brought the idea of dystopia into the discussions on utopia. Lewis Mumford remarks that the modern forms of utopia found in science fictions "relate all ideal possibilities to technological innovations, they are so close to the working premises of modern civilization that they hardly have time to be absorbed as fiction before they become incorporated as fact." (291). However, these innovations were not always productive in a positive sense. Bio/nuclear weapons, failed experiments, cyber wars, etc., were by-products of scientific progress, and the results it produced did not match with the utopian thought on which these discoveries or inventions were made. Marxist theories, on the other hand, acted as a critique of the bourgeoisie culture that was

born with the industrial age and the advent of capitalism. Both these factors point to the possibility of a utopian thought producing undesirable results.

At this juncture, we may look at dystopia as a 'failed utopia'. Gordin, et al., describe dystopia as "a utopia that has gone wrong, or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society." They further argue that a "true opposite of utopia would be a society that is either completely unplanned or is planned to be deliberately terrifying and awful." (1). The notion that if certain requirements are fulfilled, human needs can meet to perfection is the driving force behind the attempts to build utopias. In the quest to tie up the loose ends of the existing system, there are more chances of the new policies going wrong or the current setup creating new loose ends. For instance, capitalism was a faulty system for Marx and Engels because of which they came up with the idea of communism and socialism. However, over decades, even these practices were criticised for turning into a totalitarian form.

The perspective of dystopia as failed utopia goes hand in hand with Philip Stevick's argument that dystopia should have some "degree of social reorganization" with the existing society in the narrative. Further, the text should have some "sense of continuity" in the sense that the dystopian society is formed not because of a rupture from the existing scenario but, because of an existing condition that goes past the saturation point resulting in chaos and disorder. This strategy enables the author to hold a lens towards the society and provide futuristic visions making dystopia not just a "name for a form and a subject matter but also a strategy, a narratorial stance." (234)

This brings us to the possibility of looking dystopia as a tool to criticise the society. Dystopia as a mode of criticism is an "act of interpretation, of explaining why a place is or is not a dystopia" (Thiess 20), and by extension, it may be attributed to the act

of questioning utopian ideals and ideologies as well. Unlike utopia that looks at a better future through proposed changes, dystopia may be used to analyse crises and catastrophe in the existing society that can lead to a possible breakdown in the future. For example, Theiss considers Aristophanes' *Clouds* (428 BCE) as a dystopian criticism of "Socrates's overemphasis on philosophy and rationalism." (22). Using the same logic, we can categorise Marx's theories as a dystopian criticism of the capitalist/industrialist promises of a better society (a capitalist, in a similar manner, may criticise Marxism/socialism as well). Dystopia, in this sense, is not an antonym of utopia; rather it is something that co-exists with utopia, which portrays the possibility of a proposed or implemented idea being unwelcome or unsatisfactory to certain segments of the society.

An important development in dystopian studies in this regard came up in the 1980s known as 'critical dystopia'. Lyman Tower Sargent defines it as:

a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia. (qtd in. Baccolini and Moylan 7)

M. Keith Booker's *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* (1994) studies some of the well-known dystopian novels in detail from a socio-cultural perspective to illuminate various social and political issues through a dystopian lens. The final section in Tom Moylan's *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (2000), titled "Dystopian Maneuvers" analyses Kim Stanley Robinson's "Orange Country Trilogy", Octavia Butler's *The Parable of the Sower* (1993) and Marge Piercy's *He, She and It* (1991, published in Britain as *Body of Glass* in 1992)

in the critical dystopian tradition. A collection of essays edited by M. Keith Booker's under the title *Critical Insights: Dystopia* (2013) also features the analysis of a number of texts using critical dystopia.

While the classical dystopia ends with the triumph of the totalitarian rule over individual freedom, critical dystopias are more open-ended. A traditional view of classical dystopian texts often holds a view that dystopia is an imminent evil that is likely to fall upon humanity in future. On the other hand, Boccolini and Moylan say that "critical dystopias allow both readers and protagonists to hope by resisting closure: the ambiguous, open endings of these novels maintain the utopian impulse *within* the work."

(7)

3.2.Dystopia in the Selected Novels

Ballard's final quartet of novels falls into the category of critical dystopian fiction. Ballard provides us with glimpses of sophisticated and luxurious architectures which is often considered as a mark of human progress. There are no derelict buildings, urban wastelands or decaying cities. Instead, he talks about a breakdown of the social order; the society is undergoing degeneration due to lack of empathy and social values. Ballard presents the convenience and sophistication of modern lifestyle and technology in detail but shapes his narratives to point out its pitfalls by focusing on the new fragmentations formed in the society, deranged sexual practices and an increasing affinity towards crime, violence and psychopathy. Yet, the fall into chaos is not complete in any of the novels. Rather, they have ambiguous open endings which is at the least suggestive of a maintenance of the status quo if not a possible recovery.

J.C. Davis makes an interesting observation in his book *Utopia and the Ideal Society* that the utopia reflects "the collective problem: the reconciliation of limited

satisfactions and unlimited desires within a social context” (36). In all the four novels we see a group of people who are made to believe that a better life awaits them (or a dissatisfaction is created about their existing lives). They fall for the promises of an improved life only to produce what Gregory Claeys refers to as “the group goes wild scenario” (18). The common factor operational in all the novels is the manipulation of the psyche of a set of people by an individual to instigate violence. A sense of dissatisfaction is created among people about their current life to create fear or anxiety which brings them together. This compulsory solidarity¹ enables individuals to conduct social experiments on various social groups leading to chaos in the texts. The term ‘group’ is a much neutral one. Any set of people who gather together can be designated as a group. But in the current scenario, ‘crowd’ would be a better-suited term because once the experiment is carried out on them, their behaviour exhibits “violence or lawlessness, irrationality, extreme emotionality, or uncontrolled movement, a proneness to delusion, and a pronounced susceptibility to manipulation by charismatic leaders.” (Claeys 18)

Gustave Le Bon’s *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1896) explains the role of a leader in detail. He postulates that the first reaction of a crowd once assembled is to follow a leader. A leader can generate faith in an idea, an objective or in himself to which the crowd responds. Once gathered, the rationale each of the individuals possesses in isolation disappears and a collective mind is formed. The crowd can be primitive in their thoughts and wild in their behaviour, but their actions are controlled solely by the decisions of the leader. As much as a crowd might have gathered to raise a voice of protest, they have an equal sense of submissiveness towards the person who guides them.

¹ A term used by Leszek Kolakowski in his lecture on "The Death of Utopia Reconsidered" at The Tanner Lectures on Human Values organised by The Australian National University

They are so much obsessed with the idea of obedience and it “is the need not of liberty but of servitude that is always predominant in the soul of crowds.” (Bon 123). This blind following of crowd can be seen in *Kingdom Come* when Richard Pearson unintentionally becomes a group leader during one of the riots of the St. George’s club:

When I turned to avoid a traffic sign the entire column swung after me. I stopped to pick a strip of burnt rubber from my shoe, and they marked time without thinking, then resumed their strolling pace when I set off again... The unique internal geometry of the crowd had come into play, picking first one leader and then another. Apparently passive, they regrouped and changed direction according to no obvious logic, a slime mould impelled by gradients of boredom and aimlessness. (Ballard *Kingdom* 139)

Le Bon’s observation that the leaders are often “recruited from the ranks of those morbidly nervous, excitable, half-deranged persons who are bordering on madness” (120) seems to fit Ballard’s characters almost perfectly. From Crawford to Maxted, all the charismatic leader figures believe that their path is the best suited for the society. In each of their cases, they successfully convinced the people around them to follow and co-operate with their plans (some of the characters including the protagonists have late realisations about the grim consequences of the plans but not before involving themselves into the nasty business). Their convictions are so strong that however absurd their ideas may sound, they are able to persuade even the most educated and revered people in the society beyond all the questions of rationality.

In *Cocaine Nights*, Bobby Crawford’s crime spree creates tension and insecurity among the residents of Estrella de Mar which bring them out from their otherwise uneventful life. The residents of this luxury enclave are retired immigrants who had

earned heavily at a very young age and retired in late thirties in search of a peaceful life. Crawford influences their lives by creating a sense of fear and persuades them to come out of the dormant lives:

People are like children, they need constant stimulation. Without that the whole thing runs down. Only crime, or something close to crime, seems to stir them. They realise that they need each other, that together they're more than the sum of their parts. There has to be that constant personal threat. (Ballard *Cocaine* 260)

Crawford believes that the current lifestyle of people is flawed and the future looks grim. He is convinced that a leisure-dominated future represented by “the apparent absence of any social structure; the timelessness of a world beyond boredom, with no past, no future and a diminishing present” is unfair to humanity. In order to counter this, he decides to “break the rules [and] sidestep the social taboos.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 35, 245)

The minor crimes alerted the sleepy life of the resort and people started having a community life. In Crawford's words: “A real community has created itself here. It rose spontaneously out of people's lives.” However, after a point the transgressive behaviour crosses the limits leading to bigger crimes and the society in Estrella de Mar starts deteriorating. Gradually and unknowingly, the residents of Estrella de Mar and Costasol Complex become participants in the criminal activities in the enclave. The most disturbing part of this downfall of the society lies in the fact that they are unaware of what they are doing. As Paula Hamilton tells Charles Prentice: “that's the most perfect crime of all - when the victims are either willing, or aren't aware that they are victims” (Ballard *Cocaine* 260, 188). In short, Crawford created a cult of willed madness in the residential resorts of Estrella de Mar and Costa Del Sol.

In *Super-Cannes*, Eden-Olympia is presented to the readers as an intelligent city which is equated to “Corbusier's radiant city”² (Ballard *Super* 5). The life here is dictated by the structure itself which diminishes the relevance of democracy and morality in the life of the people inside the business park. The “decisions about right and wrong were engineered into the social fabric along with the fire drills and parking regulations.” The dominance of science and technology in the park can be seen in Pascal Zander’s arrogant words: “There are no pine cones to trip you, no bird shit on your car. At Eden-Olympia even nature knows her place.” (Ballard *Super* 88, 83)

Wilder Penrose, the psychiatrist at Eden-Olympia, considers the business park to be “an ideas laboratory for the new millennium.” (Ballard *Super* 16). The higher ranked officials of the multinational companies experience severe burnouts which affect their productivity. Working for over sixteen hours a day and the pressure of dealing money in millions and billions on a regular basis has inflicted psychological struggles to these people. Penrose abandons conventional methods of treatment and conducts a social experiment on them. He convinces them that the conventional recreational activities are insufficient to balance the work pressure. As an alternative, he organises crimes like kiddie porn, gang rapes, ratissages etc., as a better way of channelizing their pressure in order to retain their efficiency and productivity. Wilder Penrose’s theory of controlled violence producing better health receives astonishing response and support from the powerful entrepreneurs of Eden Olympia.

As seen in the case of Crawford, we can see conviction and belief in Penrose’s action. In a society where, puritan work ethics prevail over leisure, he believes that

² Refer Mitchell, Laurie. “Redefining Le Corbusier's Radiant City.” *My Radiant City*, 31 July 2017, www.myradiantcity.com/blog/2017/7/26/redefining-le-corbusiers-radiant-city. Accessed 12 Jan 2018

“Small doses of insanity are the only solution. Their own psychopathy is all that can rescue these people.” Moreover, he too is driven by the faith that his action can create a better society. He explains to Paul Sinclair: “Here at Eden-Olympia we’re setting out the blueprint for an infinitely more enlightened community. A controlled psychopathy is a way of resocializing people and tribalizing them into mutually supportive groups.” (Ballard *Super* 251, 264). Sinclair, much like his predecessor David Greenwood, falls for the charisma of the psychiatrist. They realise that these crimes are not mere recreational activities but are crimes with dire consequences only when it hits dangerous levels.

The self-assumed ‘new proletariat’ of Chelsea Marina in *Millennium People* are probably the most vocal of the groups who show discontent towards the existing way of life. Unlike the previous two novels where people were forced to think of new forms of leisure in a world dominated by advanced technology and better living conditions, the people in Chelsea Marina are asked to protest against the age-old middle-class life. The rise in land revenue, taxes and cost of living affects every individual in the society, especially, the real working class more than anyone else. However, Kay Churchill’s radical ideology and activities convince the middle-class executives of the Chelsea Marina that they are the most affected group. They are made to believe that the oppressive socio-political system had exploited them throughout the history and a revolution is necessary to destroy all the laws that are designed to target the middle class.

Elaborating on Wilder Penrose’s theory that “Meaningless violence may be the true poetry of the new millennium” (Ballard *Super* 262), Richard Gould convinces the people of Chelsea Marina to take up the path of violence. Under Gould’s guidance, they pick random targets and stage senseless attacks as a way of protest. The public attention received by the revolutionaries of Chelsea Marina confirms Gould’s assessment about the potential of untargeted terrorism. However, we must not forget that Gould had his

own reasons to carry out the attacks and the revolution was only a smoke screen he created to meet his ends. In fact, he was totally aware of the fact that the revolution would fail. Once the rise in taxes, parking fee and maintenance charges are withdrawn, the middle-class return to their normal life. Kay Churchill and her appeal to destroy the oppressive middle-class morality is forgotten. As David Markham reflects towards the end of the novel, "Nature had bred the middle class to be docile, virtuous and civic-minded. Self-denial was coded into its genes... now they are only remembered for their destruction of the Peter Pan statue in Kensington Gardens." (Ballard *Millennium* 292). Yet, in the presence of a charismatic leader, they become a primitive, rebellious mass with great potentials for damage.

Kingdom Come is probably the text that brings out all the atavistic nature of crowd. The suburbs of the M25 motorway town feature people who have reconfigured their lives to suit the consumer standards prescribed by the Metro-Centre. The advertisements and promotions of Metro-Centre and the products they showcase defines the idea of the better life in the suburbs. Extend of its influence on the people's lives is evident in a resident's voice when he tells Richard Pearson that "It's an incubator. People go in there and they wake up, they see their lives are empty. So they look for a new dream..." (Ballard *Kingdom* 72). The dream is realised in the form of a sports community united by the baseball caps and St. George's T-shirts. The crowd in *Kingdom Come* is first united by the sports team and later on, by the sentiments they hold towards the Metro-Centre.

Unlike the other three novels, we don't find a single person acting as a leader of these crowds. As mentioned in the example given at the beginning of this section, the crowd are instinctual and follow different people at different stages in the novel. The crowd assembled every weekend after the football matches under the flag of St. George's

flag and carried out street violence as a part of their celebration. Gradually, it paved way to the football hooliganism that later led to attacks on immigrant population. Unknowingly, they were carrying out political rallies that promoted “A new kind of fascism, a cult of violence rising from this wilderness of retail parks and cable TV stations.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 288). The group had its first leader in David Cruise.

Richard Pearson creates a consumer-cult with David Cruise as its celebrity demigod who holds the sports community together. He was “a new kind of leader-a smiley, ingratiating, afternoon TV kind of fuhrer.” After David Cruise is shot during one of his programs, Tom Carradine takes over the leadership and the followers of the St. George’s club becomes an army sworn to protect the shopping mall. The elevation of David Cruise as a martyr and the shopping mall as a religious icon converts the suburb into a battle-field where the ethnic minority are chased by native residents. The lifestyle of the emigrant population who depends on smaller shops and takeaways rather than using the luxury of the Metro-Centre, is considered much like an act of blasphemy. A new form of fascism is born, driven by consumerism and advertisements.

All the four novels deal with the degeneration of societies that are obsessed with crime, violence, and psychopathy. However, none of them ends with a complete decadence. In *Cocaine Nights*, Bobby Crawford is shot at the end. Ballard provides a list of suspects including Paula Hamilton, Dr Sanger and Gunnar Andersson but does not disclose the identity of the murderer. These were the people who had developed disagreements with the activities of Crawford. The removal of the leader figure combined with individual voices of dissent is what prevents *Estrella de Mar* from complete degeneration. In *Super-Cannes*, Frank Halder and his associates show the signs of resistance. The protagonist, Paul Sinclair, himself takes up the responsibility “to finish

the task that David Greenwood had begun” (Ballard *Super* 392), which is to murder Wilder Penrose and destroy his therapeutic program.

When it comes to *Millennium People* and *Kingdom Come*, Ballard opts for less ambiguous endings. Richard Gould and Vera Blackburn in *Millennium People* and Tony Maxted and Tom Carradine in *Kingdom Come* are killed off at the end of the novels. But unlike the earlier novels which happen within the premises of gated communities, the latter two offer the space for government interventions. The life is brought back to normal in Chelsea Marina by waiving off the additional tax imposed upon the residents. After the Metro-Centre was burned down, the football club and its followers ceased to exist. With the return of peace and absence of racist attacks, the immigrant population also returned to their normal life at Brooklands. The term ‘normal’ can be very subjective and is prone to invite debates. I have used the term in the current context only to point out that the life in these two places have returned to a common or expected pattern that exists in other parts of the country.

Peter Fitting in his study of science fiction films cites the example of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and explains why the text must be considered as an example of critical dystopia. He says that the texts in the critical dystopian tradition provide “the description of [a] dystopian society [which] contains an implicit warning that this may be where we are heading, as well as an account of those elements in our present that have produced this future” (156). The term that can help us in explaining the scenario in Ballard is ‘utopian pessimism’. The term was introduced by Søren Baggesen to denote dystopian elements in a text that are caused by specific historical forces. In the case of such texts, Baggesen argues, the formation of dystopias is “as yet undecided” which “leaves history open to discussion and-to a limited extent-to decision” (41). The architectures in each of the selected novels draws attention to issues which are

relevant in the present—the security concerns in gated communities, standards of life in urban enclaves and quotidian dependent on shopping malls (A detailed analysis of these issues will be done in the next chapter). Ballard, then uses characters who experiment with the collective consciousness of the crowd to show how a bleak future is in the making. He does not offer any tactical solution or political strategy to tackle the problem. In fact, killing of the leaders or the governmental intervention are only temporary strategies that have delayed the degeneration of the society. The basic circumstances that have led to the issues mentioned in each novel remain as it is.

In short, the selected novels present the readers with a scenario that is worse than the society in which they live. At the same time, they do not end with conclusive closures to mark them as classical dystopias. Ballard chooses to end the novels at a juncture where the current slump in the social and moral behaviour of the people involved are met with a temporary arrest. A hope—slim though it be—is left in the text to portray that a recovery might be possible. Though it might not be as strong to create a possible eutopian enclave mentioned by Lyman Sargent Tower, it is potent enough to categorise these texts as critical dystopias.

3.3. Architectures of Consumption

What are the circumstances that has led to the degeneration of the societies in these novels? What is the controlling factor that forces an otherwise well-off set of people to stoop to the level of barbarians exhibiting primitive behaviour? As explained in the first section of this chapter, the wrong implementation of an idea can result in the formation of dystopias (utopia gone wrong). In the current study, consumerism can be considered as one such idea that has yielded negative results. Ballard has carefully integrated a discourse of consumerism into his novels. In *Cocaine Nights*, he shows the basic premise of capital accumulation; *Super-Cannes* deals with the questions of

productivity; *Millennium People* raises concerns of lifestyle management; and the final novel, *Kingdom Come*, addresses the consumer culture directly. Analysing Thomas More's *Utopia*, Gregory Claeys has noted that "a utopia of opulence and consumption might be understood as generating a dystopia of scarcity and environmental degradation." (6). Ballard in his final quartet of novels shows how consumption can damage a prospering society.

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines consumption as "the purchase of goods and services by the public". However, the act of consumption involves much more than purchase. The nature of the good or services purchased encompasses meanings that define the identity of the person who has bought it. The brand of a shoe—Nike or Adidas, Reebok or Puma—is not only a statement of the class or economic status; it can represent the strategy you believe in or the sports team you support. Consumption is, therefore, also about the meaning. Goods or services are purchased not only for their material characteristics or contents but also for what they represent—the meanings and associations an individual is able to decipher from them. In that sense, a more fitting definition of the term is given by Douglas J. Goodman and Mirelle Cohen: "Consumption can be defined as the set of practices through which commodities [both material goods and services] become a part of a particular individual." (2)

In the novels selected for the current study, Ballard focuses on the ever-pervasive lifestyle of the modern consumer which is built on the idea of unfulfilled desires combined with the artificially created notion of insatiability. Ballard presents his readers with a curious scenario of a near dystopian future where crime and transgressive behaviour becomes commodified. In a modern society burglar alarms, private security forces, and the importance given to various crime related programs in mass media have all asserted the commodification of crime. However, Ballard uses his description of the

architecture to show his readers how a modern economy is utilising crime to increase consumption. In each of the novels selected for the study, the members of the community are displaying a set of aggressive behaviour (consciously or unconsciously) to the extent that it may be used as a convenient generalisation to mark them as different from the rest of the world. Crime and transgressive behaviour become a shared value which results in various forms of organised crimes (I will address the issues related to the organised crimes in the novels in the next chapter.). There are characters who do not fall into this category but they may be ignored since exceptions are common in every community.

Cocaine Nights, as explained in the previous chapter, has a Spanish resort named Estrella de Mar as its main location. It is a gated community chosen by retired expatriates who expect a peaceful and undisturbed life. If crime, burglary and other forms of crime are increasing, it is going to affect the reputation of the resort in general. In such a scenario, any event of transgressive behaviour must be dealt promptly and efficiently using the inside security forces or with the help of police units from outside. Surprisingly, the police outside are not reported about any instances of crime. Inspector Cabrera observes that “Crime is not a characteristic of Estrella de Mar. That's why we are happy to leave the policing to your volunteer force.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 158). Further, when Prentice informs Betty Shant, the owner of the complex about the crimes he has witnessed, she discards them as random incidents.

We find a logical explanation for this careless attitude of Betty Shant and David Hennessey only after Charles Prentice is appointed as the secretary of the Costasol complex. Ballard does not specify the nature of the residential setup in Estrella de Mar or Costasol Complex. During his conversation with Prentice, when Dr. Sanger says that he owns an apartment at Costasol Complex, we may safely infer that these houses are sold to the residents permanently. In that case, the profit from these houses can be taken

only at the time of sale. So, the income for consumption becomes the recurrent and profitable one. Betty Shant had her share of profit from the services of the “hoteliers and restaurateurs, a taxi company proprietor, two satellite-dish agents, a cancer specialist from the Princess Margaret Clinic, property developers, bar-owners and investment counsellors.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 62)

Although Costasol Complex is a similar gated community with retired expatriates as its targeted occupants, the life there is dormant and inactive. This scenario is not feasible for the set of people who offered various forms of services. The description of the clubhouse at Costasol Complex goes like this:

A handsome clubhouse presided over the marina and its boatyard, but its terrace was deserted, awnings flared over the empty tables. The nearby sports club was equally unpopular, its tennis courts dusty in the sun, the swimming pool drained and forgotten.

[A] Thai restaurant, whose empty tables receded through a shadow world of flock wallpaper and gilded elephants. Next to it was an untenanted retail unit, a concrete vault like an abandoned segment of space-time. (Ballard *Cocaine* 214, 215)

Clearly, these centres of leisure-based consumption were not generating the revenue as it is supposed to do. But the intervention of Bobby Crawford and the introduction of criminal activities brought the members out of their slumber and there is a visible change in the social setup of the entire community.

Green shoots of a forgotten metropolitan culture were poking through the property developer's plaster and lath... They would end the session bouncing in their leotards to a rock number, then lie panting by the swimming

pool...Refurbished restaurants and boutiques had opened in the shopping mall, briskly profitable as they prospered under Elizabeth Shand's steely gaze.

Half a dozen new restaurants thrived around the plaza, all but one financed by Betty Shand and managed by the Keswick sisters. Two nightclubs had opened near the marina, the Milroy for the older set and Bliss's for the younger. (Ballard *Cocaine* 252, 289)

Once the tone was set, people started using the facilities at the club in Costasol Complex as they did at Estrella de Mar. The boutiques and restaurants started fulfilling their political function as buildings and revenue started generating in due time. In short, the general idea we get of these changes happening in these spaces is that “consumption [is] a propellant that keeps the economy rolling” (Goodman and Cohen 29)

Eden-Olympia, the business park in *Super-Cannes* too faced a trouble similar to that of the consumer services in Costasol Complex. Advertised as the “intelligent city,” Eden-Olympia “was the latest of the development zones that had begun with Sophia-Antipolis and would soon turn Provence into Europe's silicon valley.” (Ballard *Super* 5). A few months after the park was established, the higher officials of various multinational corporates started getting affected by depression and anxiety attacks. The space that was supposed to improve and increase their productivity did the exact opposite. The postmodern technology, advanced office and laboratory facilities and luxury apartments are offered to these workers in this business park purely based on their skills and productivity. When they fail to execute these skills to maximise the productivity of their respective firms, they are failing the function of the park as a whole.

Wilder Penrose, the psychiatrist, formulates that this breakdown is a result of excess work and lack of leisure. He explains the deranged dreams and fantasies of these workers which involved anger, violence and transgressive behaviour:

Despair was screaming through the bars of the corporate cage, the hunger of men and women exiled from their deeper selves. They wanted more violence in their lives, more violence and cruelty, more drama and rage . . . But how to satisfy them? Any perverse elements in their lives would have to be administered externally, like a vitamin shot or an antibiotic . . . Let's say a carefully metered measure of psychopathy. (Ballard *Super* 255)

As a solution, he organises a therapy program which includes carefully administered doses of violence. He believes that just like other societies of the past which had maintained a balance between work and leisure, the corporate world also should subscribe to a mechanism that could do the same. He describes the business park as a “laboratory for the new millennium” and measured psychopathy is solution he has come up with for the corporate lethargy. Hence, when Penrose says, “Here at Eden-Olympia we're setting out the blueprint for an indefinitely more enlightened community.” (Ballard *Super* 16, 264), the business park becomes a symbol of not only the corporate production house but also a social laboratory.

The impact of these crimes on the reputation of the business park is a topic that needs explanation. David Greenwood's murder spree affected the business in the park in a negative way. As Frances Baring informs Sinclair: “David Greenwood nearly destroyed Eden-Olympia. Huge amounts of corporate funding were pulled out.” However, this was a solitary incident and Eden-Olympia was back to its normal self soon enough. Greenwood's act was of the unproductive variety; one that was born out of moral

obligations which has no role to play in the corporate world. On the other hand, Penrose's organised crimes become the very force that drive the productivity in the park to new levels giving him the audacity to say that "The Adolf Hitlers and Pol Pots of the future won't walk out of the desert. They'll emerge from shopping malls and corporate business parks." (Ballard *Super* 115, 256)

The success of the therapy program resulted in the expansion of the program itself. At the initial stages, it was often the workers who sought relief that got hurt in the therapy program; they came back with a few wounds or may be a small fracture. After a point, the therapy program started targeting the people outside the business park as objects for leisure. The immigrant population at Rue Valentin were often the sufferers. Two instances help us to infer that a super-structure and base relationship is formed between the business park and the outside world. First, when Wilder Penrose who is the proponent of crime and violence, shows his discontent over the random graffiti marks found inside the park. He says, "all the graffiti at Eden-Olympia - a fifty-million-dollar office building and a few francs' worth of paint turn it into something from the Third World." (Ballard *Super* 364). The paint is identified as a stain that damages the superiority of the park; something that defiles the corporate lifestyle that is demanded of Eden-Olympia. Second incident is when Halder tells Sinclair that the residents of the park are happy with the therapy program as long as the crime stay outside the premises. It is this ruthless representation of the capitalist forces at its brute best that makes Paddy comment that "Ballard's late fiction is intent on showing the malevolent political forces at work in the antiseptic, seemingly non-ideological spaces of contemporary business and consumption." (Ch. 7)

Millennium People is the novel in which Ballard deals with the lifestyle of the people. As explained in the previous chapter, the middle-class residents of Chelsea

Marina claim themselves to be the new proletariat and starts a revolution. While their complaints towards the increase in parking charges or the irregular maintenance of their buildings may be valid, it does not qualify them to be the proletariat. The primary concern of the real proletariat in a conventional Marxist point of view is a place to live and not the maintenance of it. But the proliferation of the consumer culture does not categorise an individual on the basis of material possession but on the basis of his/her consumption. As Douglas J. Goodman and Mirelle Cohen puts it: “in modern society, one learns simply to consume, and tasteful or appropriate consumption is only one of the myriad choices.” (4). The real driving force behind the revolution of Chelsea Marina is an outrage at being left out of a consumer culture that is accessible to the rest of the people.

The most striking feature of a modern consumer society is the options it provides to the consumers. They have the privilege to choose from a long list of commodities (both material goods and customer services) that could cater to their needs. As Colin Campbell puts it:

the modern consumer is characterised by an insatiability which arises out of a basic inexhaustibility of wants themselves, which forever arise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of their predecessors. Hence no sooner is one satisfied than another is waiting in line clamouring to be satisfied; when this one is attended to, a third appears, then subsequently a fourth, and so on, apparently without end. (37)

The people of Chelsea Marina have the insatiable need for goods and services but they could not find services to fulfil their demands. The whole enclave was designed to suit the needs of the middle-class but has now turned to a slum. Kay Churchill explains the scenario to Markham: “No City bonuses here, no share options or company credit cards.”

(Ballard *Millennium* 52). The residents have no services to choose from; instead, they have to be content with whatever resources are available.

Ballard also shows us the other side of consumerism through Richard Gould. His activities (invoking the people of Chelsea Marina for the revolution, planting bombs at Heathrow and other places etc.) are born out of his contempt towards the twentieth century lifestyle. To be precise, the seeds of his protest began with the conversion of various Victorian asylums into starter homes for the middle-class. He expresses extreme dislike towards his father's private firm that has bought the land where the Bedfont hospital stood and began the construction of new starter homes there. It is the same commodification of architecture that is creating troubles in Chelsea Marina as well. In his conversation with Vera Blackburn, Markham learns that the increase in tax and lack of services offered is a part of a bigger picture. She informs him that private firms are after the place and "They want to run the place down, buy us out and raze it to the ground. Then they'll bring in Foster and Richard Rogers to design huge blocks of luxury flats." (Ballard *Millennium* 79)

The phenomenon that we are witnessing here is something that may be termed as 'Consumer Darwinism'. While the residents of Chelsea Marina (the middle-class people who form an integral part of the consumer culture) want to keep pace with the evolving lifestyle demands of the society, they are unable to do so because the very phenomenon they seek—consumerism—demand higher levels of adaptation. With "People have sky-high school fees, and the banks breathing down their necks," the middle-class of the urban enclave have to find alternatives. Either, find ways to meet the new demands or manage a "two-hour commute to Reading or Guildford" (Ballard *Millennium* 79) on a daily basis. The revolution has succeeded in convincing the administrative bodies to withdraw the policies and regulations that stirred up the population. However, the private

firms that had took over the asylums and other spaces along the suburbs leading to Heathrow would come back again to claim Chelsea Marina.

Kay Churchill's call to get rid of the morality codes that has been controlling the lives of the middle-class for centuries may be looked upon as a step towards adapting a new lifestyle. Explaining the nuances of the lifestyle in consumer culture, Mike Featherstone writes: "'Today there is no fashion: there are only fashions.' 'No rules, only choices.' 'Everyone can be anyone.'" The life of the middle-class community is based on unwritten social contracts; some sort of uniformity binds them all. Adaptation of a consumer lifestyle demands the breaking of rules and accepting new choices however radical they might be. In the postmodern consumer culture, it is impossible to maintain a hierarchised "system which correlates to fixed social divisions" which could possibly suggest "the irrelevance of social divisions and ultimately the end of the social as a significant reference point." (Featherstone 81)

Kingdom Come is set in the suburb of the Heathrow, the space along which Richard Gould's father was buying and building the new set of starter homes. Gould comments on how people in these regions are mesmerised by the new developments. He says, "If they can, they opt for zones without meaning – airports, shopping malls, motorways, car parks. They're in flight from the real." (Ballard *Millennium* 133). Ballard develops these architectures as zones of consumption in *Kingdom Come* when he describes Brooklands as a fictional suburb along the M25 motorway that resembles "Ashford, Staines, Hillingdon – impossible destinations that featured only on the mental maps of desperate marketing men." It may be noted that the people of Brooklands thought of the place not as a "suburb of London [but as] a suburb of Heathrow and the M25." (Ballard *Kingdom* 9, 119). Here, Ballard is establishing that the suburbs are the fertile grounds for consumerism to prosper. It resonates his own view that "London is basically

a nineteenth-century city... [studying London is not] really appropriate to [understand] what is really going on in life today.” (Sinclair *Crash* 84). Rather, the social trends are better understood in the suburbs.

In the introductory chapter, I had explained how the religious space plays an important role in holding the society together. Ballard, throughout his narrative, shows how the religious structures have lost its value and is taken over by consumerism. At his very first visit to the suburbs, Richard Pearson observes: “There were no cinemas, churches or civic centres, and the endless billboards advertising a glossy consumerism sustained the only cultural life.” As the novel progresses, we find the character of Geoffrey Fairfax describing consumerism as a plague that has affected Brooklands and how it has altered the lives of the people. “People prefer to stroll around the mall. No one attends church. Why bother? They find spiritual fulfilment at the New Age centre, first left after the burger bar.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 13, 42). Later on, we find the promoters of the Metro-Centre using terms like temple, religious experience, shrine etc., to describe the shopping mall and the experiences associated with it.

Consumerism is often considered as an opposite to religious beliefs for various reasons. These include the emphasis on the pleasure principle, celebration of the ‘live in the moment’ attitude, promotion of narcissism, accentuation of hedonism, and the development of style principles. Mike Featherstone writes:

It is often alleged that consumerism led to spiritual impoverishment and hedonistic selfishness with its ‘live now, pay later’ philosophy which ran directly counter to the ascetic regimes, industry, foresight and thrift which religion in general, and the puritan heritage in particular, taught. (112)

In *Kingdom Come*, Ballard proposes a scenario where consumerism itself becomes a religion and the Metro-Centre becomes the cathedral of it.

William Sangster explains to Pearson how modernism has brought alienation and neurosis among people. In his perspective, the idea of democracy or church or monarchy has all lost its currency. What holds the current population together or rather, the idea of a collective community is provided to the people by consumerism. The idea of sharing and celebrating is formed around consumption. He says “When we go shopping we take part in a collective ritual of affirmation.” This idea of consumerism as a religion is further established by him when he goes on to claim “The Metro-Centre is a cathedral, a place of worship. Consumerism may seem pagan, but in fact it's the last refuge of the religious instinct.” While Sangster takes up a philosophers tone in making these observations, for people like Tom Carradine, David Cruise and the followers of St. George “the Metro-Centre was never a commercial enterprise, but a temple of the true faith.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 101, 282, 194)

The imagery is further strengthened when a bomb blasts at the parking lot of the Metro-Centre. The act is accounted as a threat on the temple, and David Cruise urged people to defend the structure. From an anchor of the local cable TV network, he started being portrayed as a Messiah whom they had expected to walk out “of some shopping mall or retail park” (*Kingdom* 124) just like the way Messiah's of older religions walked out of deserts. When Duncan Christie shoots him, he is given a martyr image and the fanaticism hits new levels. Tom Carradine and others take control of the Metro-Centre, and they hold people inside as hostages. For them, it was an attack on their faith, and they had decided to defend it. The teddy bears became their idols of worship. Towards the end of the novel, we find “Half a dozen supporters in St George's shirts knelt on the floor, faces raised to the stuffed beasts.” Moreover, similar to any other deity of any other

religion, their “button eyes saw nothing and everything. In their toylike way they displayed a touching serenity.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 194)

The portrayal of the shopping mall as a cathedral adds a new dimension to the organised crime in the novel. The football hooliganism of the St. George’s supporters was orchestrated and redirected by the administrators of the Metro-Centre in order to evacuate the immigrant population along the M25 motorway. Their intention was to grab more land from these people “to make room for new retail parks, marinas and executive estates.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 94). However, with the religious image these attacks became more of a battle between the believers and non-believers. Consumerism, which Sangster described as ‘soft fascism’ attains a totalitarian nature which leads to the siege of the shopping mall itself by its followers.

In the other three novels, the protagonist plays second fiddle to the conspirators of the crime to unravel the mysteries of the deaths to which they are related to in one way or the other. In each of those novels, consumerism was a subtle undertone while the social experiments of Crawford, Penrose and Gould took prominence in the narrative. However, in *Kingdom Come* we find that consumerism is the major theme, and crime and transgressive behaviour is treated as an associated evil. Further, the protagonist Richard Pearson himself is one of the chief proponents of consumerism in the text. Pearson, along with David Cruise advertises various products and the Metro-Centre itself. These advertisements created desires in the minds of the unsuspecting public through careful manipulations which they accepted as their own (the hypodermic theory of advertising³). In the suburbs where consumerism found a sacred status for itself, David Cruise became “a shrink-proof shaman of the multi-storey car parks.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 293)

³ Key, Wilson Bryan. *Subliminal Seduction: Ad Media's Manipulation of a Not So Innocent America*. New American Library, 1981.

In an interview given to Tim Chapman, Ian Sinclair suggests that “*Kingdom Come* could have been stripped down to be a series of savage essays or presentations about the motorway corridor with dramatised events happening in the middle.” (“When in Doubt, Quote Ballard’: An Interview with Iain Sinclair”). The dark sides of consumerism which is incorporated subtly into the narrative in the other three novels is addressed more directly in *Kingdom Come*. We find the character of Tony Maxted saying “The danger is that consumerism will need something close to fascism in order to keep growing.” Then he adds, “The consumer society is a kind of soft police state.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 123). One cannot help wondering how Bobby Crawford’s crime spree, Wilder Penrose’s controlled psychopathy and the private firm’s tactics to deny services to the residents of Chelsea Marina helped in creating soft versions of fascist states.

Ballard is hinting that the growth and survival of consumerism and capitalist motto’s will rely on calculated and organised use of violence, perversity, and psychopathy for their survival in future. The pseudo-utopian flag of better life is held in front of people to lure them towards crime and violence to promote consumerism.

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Chapter 4

The Architecture of Crime

Ballard's affinity towards the themes of crime and violence are evident throughout his career. His biographer, John Baxter, notes that Ballard has a liking for the crime novels of Raymond Chandler and Lawrence Sanders during his early days in England. Ballard shared the first prize for the annual crime story competition conducted by a student magazine named *Varsity* in the year 1951. Baxter speculates that many of Ballard's early science fiction stories such as "The Quiet Assassin", 'Mr E is Mr E', 'Now: Zero', 'The Man on the 99th Floor' and even 'Track 12' might have been originally conceived as crime stories meant to be published in the "British Reprint Editions of *The Saint Detective Magazine*, *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*" or "for *Argosy* and its sister publication, *Suspense*, which was devoted entirely to crime. (76)

The celebration of crime and approval of violence in Ballard's fiction seems to have had its inspiration in the surrealist thoughts. Ballard argues that the relevance for the technique of surrealism is increasing in the contemporary world as the fictional elements are "multiplying to the point where it is almost impossible to distinguish between the 'real' and the 'false' – the terms no longer have any meaning." (Ballard *User's Guide* Ch. 3). It is rather unsurprising that the behaviour of many of Ballard's characters coincides with Andre Breton's idea of surrealist act which "consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd." (Qtd in. John Baxter 34). If Duncan Christie's firing at the Metro Centre shopping mall in *Kingdom Come* is the literal depiction of Breton's words, the criminal activities carried out by the characters in other novels are not much different in essence.

While surrealism is not as prominent as found in the ‘car-crash sexual fetishism’ in *Crash* or the class-conflicts in *High Rise*, Ballard’s use of crime, violence and psychopathology to portray future societies is as or more effective in his final four novels. Ballard’s claim that “The future in my fiction has never really been more than five minutes away.” (qtd. in Pringle Ch. 76), seems to fit into his final quartet better than it does with any of his other novels. He uses a clever mix of psychopathology and violence into the acts of organised crimes in the novels. While organised crime is not a new concept, it is the inversion of the roles—authorities funding and promoting such crimes—that gives the futuristic outlook to Ballard’s novels.

Organised crimes had existed across the globe for a long time in different forms. For the same reason, providing a precise definition for the term will be a laborious task. Alan Wright in his study points out the problems with various existing definition of the term:

Some definitions are highly emotive, expressing the attitudes of their authors in language that makes clear their deep feelings about the subject. Some definitions have legal or political aims, seeking to bring about improvements in the ways in which states and law enforcement agencies might tackle the problems that it presents. On one hand, policy makers and investigators seek firm ground upon which to base their operations and to contain the risks that it poses. On the other, criminologists seek definitions that will provide a deeper conceptual basis for their analysis. Definitions vary according to their source. (3)

However, there are certain characteristic features that are common to the concept of organised crime: 1) there are two or more people or organisations involved in the act; 2) usually carried out over a period of time; 3) use of power, threat and violence as a tool

of intimidation; 4) vested interests in economic and/or political gains. Deeper analysis on the natures of these crimes can reveal other shared features. However, as these four are the most common and of relevance to this study, I will be focusing on them in this chapter.

Most of the literature available on the history of organised crimes begins with pirates, goes through slavery and human trafficking, drug and weapons dealing, and reaches the age of cyber-crimes. A considerable amount of study carried out on organised crimes tend to associate such acts specifically to the underworld and criminal groups. However, in Ballard, we find a significant turn of the scenario; in the novels selected for the study, it is the normal, law-abiding, respected figures in the society who plan and operate these crimes. Criminal activities are normalised and commodified in these texts where the people involved in the acts are unable to distinguish between right and wrong. Through his well-crafted narrative, Ballard creates “The ultimate crime-based society...where everyone is criminal and no one is aware of the fact.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 304)

4.1. The Enemy within the Walls: Security inside Gated Communities

Oscar Newman’s *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design* (1972) is considered as one of the most influential texts that came out during the 1970s on architecture and urban design. The book deals with two major concerns that are specific to the then American society but is applicable to almost any city in the current world: mass housing and increasing crime rates. An architect by profession, Newman suggests that the design of the urban residential areas has direct impact on the crime rates and the physical design of the collective habitat of urban residents can determine their vulnerability towards crimes. He defines defensible space as “a model for residential

environments which inhibits crime by creating the physical expression of a social fabric that defends itself.” (3)

Newman develops his idea of defensible space using two important concepts: collective community action and territoriality. The idea of a space that is controlled “by a community of people sharing a common terrain” where they have “clear, unquestionable control over what can occur there” clearly demands the residents to share the responsibility of defence. The idea of territoriality and collaborated efforts to protect it from intruders can create “a living residential environment which can be employed by inhabitants for the enhancement of their lives, while providing security for their families, neighbors, and friends.” (Newman 2, 3)

One problem in using Newman’s concept to study *Cocaine Nights and Super-Cannes* is that he disapproves the concept of gated communities. Cutting themselves off from the rest of the population, these fortified spaces (or high-rise buildings for that reason) are “clearly a retreat into indifference.” (Newman 3). These spaces were a luxury affordable to the upper middle-class and the elite section of the society and Newman’s major concern at the point of writing his book was the housing of the poor. Considering the fact that, in the next two decades the gated communities had proliferated across the major cities in the world, I am taking the liberty of using his ideas for analysing gated communities in this section. Moreover, the idea of community as explained by Lawrence Haworth seems to fit into the life inside gated communities as well:

In any genuine community there are shared values: the members are united through the fact that they fix on some object as pre-eminently valuable. And there is a joint effort, involving all members of the community, by which they give

overt expression to their mutual regard for that object. (Qtd in. Pedlar and Haworth 519)

Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy's categorisation of three different communities which I had mentioned in the second chapter makes it clear that community life is a part of gated communities as well. One of the essential features of gated communities is an internal administration system which acts in addition to, and at times above, the conventional administration rules of the state. Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy provide a brief idea about the management of these communities:

Living in a gated community means signing up to a legal framework which allows the extraction of monies to help pay for maintenance of common-buildings, common services, such as rubbish collection, and other revenue costs such as paying staff to clean or secure the neighbourhood. (177)

The point to be noted here is that these communities are running a parallel government. The sharing of civic responsibilities and common space ensures the existence of a living community. However, there exists an "increasing fear of crime that is unrelated to actual crime trends or locations, and in the growing number of methods used to control the physical environment for physical and economic security." (Blakely and Snyder 1). With security being the concern, surveillance mechanism (technology has replaced natural surveillance beyond doubt) is given due importance in these places. The major difference to be pointed out in this regard would be the employment of private security forces in the gated communities whereas in Newman's vision the residents themselves had to take up the policing job.

The theme of community building is recurring in both *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes*, and crimes happening in the society plays a crucial role in developing the sense

of community among the characters. But unlike what Newman envisaged in his idea of defensible space where the sense of community would deter crime, it is crime that creates sense of community among the residents of Estrella de Mar and Eden-Olympia. In both these novels the “criminal anti-social behavior is the new orthodoxy and is in fact demanded of expatriate Europeans lodged away in their exclusive gated communities.” (Paddy Ch. 7)

One common factor that affects the normalisation of crime in both the novels is the concept of leisure. If it is the excess of leisure that had caused trouble in Estrella de Mar, it is the absence of proper (satisfactory?) leisure that lead to various violent criminal activities in Eden-Olympia. Before examining the texts in detail, let me provide a brief introduction to the term ‘leisure’ and its role in gated communities.

Leisure was a part of every civilisation. Each civilisation had allotted specific spaces and activities to carry out that function. As John Galbraith observes “Nearly all societies at nearly all times have had a leisure class - a class of persons who were exempt from toil.” (Ch. 23, Sec. IV). One of the earliest work on the concept of leisure came out in 1899 with the publication of *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* by Thorstein Veblen. He infers that leisure is only a means of conspicuous consumption¹ for a set of people who use it as a tool to gain reputation and social status. Though there were random works that touched upon the idea of leisure after Veblen, the concept of leisure evolved as an academic discipline only in the 1970s. (Blackshaw "Introduction" vi)

While the key disciplines in leisure studies include sociology, economics, psychology, cultural studies, and geography, my focus in this research will be the role of

¹ Refer to Ch. 4 for details. Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford University Press, UK, 1899.

architecture in it. Space is an important part of leisure studies for the simple reason that certain forms of leisure can take place only in specific locations. The experience of pleasure at home, in a pub, at a football stadium, in a theatre, etc., are all different from one another and each of them makes a different impact on the economic, social and cultural competence of the society. For example, urban centres are thoroughly reshaped with the introduction of shopping malls and theme parks adding new dimensions of consumerism to the life of the people while acting as spaces of leisure. Although such spaces of leisure exist in different forms in every society, the concept of 'leisure society' remains a highly contested one. Tony Blackshaw observes that as an idea the 'leisure society' lacks conceptual precision and fluctuates between two viewpoints. The first category includes "those who merely observe that work is losing its former centrality." They believe that the post-industrial society has reduced the workload on humans thereby offering them more leisure time. The second category includes the "most ardent adherents who suggest that it is only with the emergence of leisure society proper... that humankind will be able to realize its fullest and free expression of creativity and sociability." (Blackshaw "Leisure Society" 131)

The sceptical views of Jeremy Seabrook in *The Leisure Society* (1988) place the transition of leisure class into leisure society (he envisages it happening in an indefinite future) in between the categories mentioned by Blackshaw. He argues that leisure, from what was once sought during the interstices of work has become the main focus of life. In his perspective, leisure in a capitalist society has become a commodity "that must be purchased and that can be permitted only through continuous growth and expansion." The point Seabrook is trying to make is that leisure has become a consumer good and thereby the privilege of only a certain segment of the society. In an urban setting where the sources of leisure are shopping malls and sports stadiums, consumerism

automatically becomes not a choice but a necessity. Leisure thus becomes a privilege of “the rich, and is far removed from the kind of autonomous activity in which people genuinely liberated from labour could, given the possibilities of technology, freely engage.” (23, 22). This scenario provides consumerism the power to define the social hierarchies. This marks not only the birth of an elite class but also the creation of a new set of working class who are employed in restaurants, beauty sector, and theme parks where hard skills are not considered necessary. These jobs are often ill-paid and exploitative. Although the leisure society is a futuristic concept in Seabrook’s arguments, we can see the slider moving from inferring leisure society as a concept, where work has lost its centrality, to the idea of leisure being an end in itself.

Defining and developing a conceptual framework for ‘leisure society’ is not an objective of this research. This section will rather focus on ‘lifestyle communities’, the archetypal gated community which is the first to appear and develop in many parts of the world. The primary motive of the designers and architects behind the construction of the lifestyle communities “was to capitalize on a growing leisure-consuming society” (Blakely and Snyder 46). The proliferation of lifestyle communities is often associated with the growth of the US as an economic superpower in the latter half of the 20th century. The huge rise in the per capita income of the citizens resulted in an increased life expectancy, better health, improved standard of living and higher consumption. This, in turn, converted the upper middle class into a leisure class who are “able to engage in leisure activities beyond the scope of any people in the world.” This provided the builders with a chance to mass produce houses that will cater to the needs of the newly appeared leisure demands of the upper middle class. The new housing plans incorporated “garages, work rooms, and game and television rooms into ordinary dwellings” and the public spaces were embellished with “artificial lakes, planted forests, and man-made streams.”

Substantial changes were made in the architectural design of the communities depending on the target occupants. For example, the buildings and the public spaces meant for retired professionals differ to a great extent from those that had sports enthusiasts as the target occupants. The latter demanded the presence or the creation of spaces meant for golfing, fishing, etc. Effectively, “Lifestyle, not mere shelter, became a major feature of development.” (Blakely and Snyder 48,49)

Based on the broad categorisation of lifestyle communities made in the second chapter—the retirement communities and the new suburban towns— let us examine *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes* to infer how crime and violence operated in these two communities.

4.1.1. Uncontrolled Leisure in *Cocaine Nights*

When Charles Prentice enters Estrella de Mar, he is welcomed by a thriving community which David Hennessey describes as “almost too lively.” Hennessey juxtaposed the life in Estrella de Mar to that of the other retirement complexes along the coast. He takes pride in the active community life of Estrella de Mar while the life of the people in the ‘White-walled Andalucian pueblos’ are described as “Brain-death disguised as a hundred miles of white cement.” Prentice saw many events that could convince him about Hennessey’s claims; thriving arts group that performed Harold Pinter, open-air theatre that showed classic movies, “schools for the French and British children, a thriving Anglican church and a local council of elected members which met at the Club Nautico.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 43, 66)

Prentice’s enquiry into the Hollinger murders gets him involved with the tennis coach of Club Nautico, Bobby Crawford and other important people of Estrella de Mar. He is appointed as the secretary of the newly built Costasol Complex. There, he finds a

set of people who are indifferent towards community life unlike what he saw in Estrella de Mar. They have locked themselves up in their homes with no interaction with the rest of the world. The extent of their indifference is so high that Bobby Crawford tells Prentice that the map maintained inside the complex is not meant for the visitors but for the residents themselves. He says “It's there to help the residents find their way home. Sometimes they make the mistake of leaving the place for an hour or two.” (Ballard *Cocaine* 211). This, we learn as the novel progress, was the condition of Club Nautico when Frank Prentice joined there as its secretary.

One of the major points which Newman stresses on when it comes to community building is that of territoriality. Territoriality may refer to the ownership of an area but in this context, dealing with public space, stewardship of the area would be a more apt usage. Neal Kumar Katyal notes that territoriality “provides an incentive for residents to take care of and to monitor an area and subtly deters offenders by warning them that they are about to enter a private space.” (1058-1059). The ‘public space’ shared by the members of a gated community but inaccessible to an outsider may be categorised as ‘private space’ as mentioned by Katyal. The idea of sharing such a responsibility is simultaneously offering a sense of community and natural surveillance. The public spaces at Costasol Complex were not visited by any of the residents of the complex. When people are least bothered about these places, the need to protect and maintain these spaces become obsolete.

During his first visit to Costasol Complex with Bobby Crawford, Prentice gets introduced to the dangerous levels of indifference that has entered the lives of its residents due to the excess of leisure in their lives. Though leisure cannot be considered as anything harmful (and in certain ways it is a necessity), the idea of leisure in Estrella de Mar is rather toxic. The idea of leisure and recreational activities associated with it begins and

ends with the subscription to various cable TV networks. Prentice's hope for "sound of a raised human voice, a too-loud stereo system, the recoil of a diving board" proved unproductive and he became aware of the "intense inward migration" happening in these enclaves. (Ballard *Cocaine* 216)

Bobby Crawford takes up the job of waking people from the dormancy and re-establishing their social connections. He uses the very idea—fear of crime—that has made people settle down in Residencia Costasol to revive their community ties. The Residencia Costasol is one of the many fortified enclaves that are developing across the globe. Moreover, all these enclaves are "designed around an obsession with crime." He starts a series of criminal activities, and every single person/family becomes a potential target. This creates a sense of equality among the residents who are otherwise expatriates from different countries and are least bothered about one another's existence. Crawford says, "Only crime, or something close to crime, seems to stir them. They realize that they need each other, that together they're more than the sum of their parts." (Ballard *Cocaine* 212, 260). It created a sense of wartime camaraderie and resulted in the formation of a real community. What followed is a flourish of community activities such as people signing up for tennis lessons and ballet classes, tea dances, festivals, and so on. In the hindsight, it gives a much-needed momentum to the architectures based on leisure activities.

The leisure theories often warn against the improper management of time which can cause frustration, boredom, etc., leading to vandalism, transgressive behaviours, ill health, and so on. Richard G. Kraus in his book *Recreation & Leisure in Modern Society* (1998) cites the case of Puerto Rico in 1967 to explain that uncontrolled leisure may lead to people finding fun in transgressive behaviours. He quotes a nun who had witnessed the crime scenes and says: "They were doing it out of sport, you know, not maliciously.

They were laughing like: ‘Isn’t this great fun, getting something for free.’” (227). A converse of the same is presented to us through Bobby Crawford who believes that people’s lives in Costasol Complex is stagnant (as it was in Estrella de Mar before his arrival), and crimes are the only way to bring the residential area back to life.

The architecture of the Costasol Complex helped Crawford in carrying out his plans. He is the tennis coach of Club Nautico owned by Elizabeth Shand (who happens to be the owner of the Costasol Complex as well) and hence had free access through the main gate of the residential complex. The appointment of Charles Prentice as the secretary of Costasol Complex increased the freedom of Crawford in the premises. The fortified walls ensured that no other disciplinary forces entered the premises, and the security measures were completely dependent upon the individual surveillance cameras maintained by each member at his/her own flats. The burglaries and thefts done by Crawford often went unreported to the external world, as it happened in Estrella de Mar as well. Crawford expected to bring the residents together through these activities, and he succeeded tremendously well. Soon, the transgressive nature of Crawford started reflecting on the residents, and theft, burglary, pornography, drugs, etc. became an integral part of their quotidian. Chris Jenks in his book *Leisure and Subculture* (2006) explains how crime operates in a leisure community; “They like it, they take pleasure in it, they pass their time through it, they may acquire mastery in it, they may exercise choice through it, find fulfilment through it, it may be exciting and distracting – it might constitute a leisure pursuit not the exercise of labour power.” (290)

From the rest of the progress followed, as Chris Jenks puts it, “we might profitably view crime as a sustaining mode of leisure.” (289). When Charles observes that “Residencia Costasol had come to life”, the focus is yet again falling on the “somnolent township with its empty shopping mall and deserted sports club had

transformed itself into another Estrella de Mar". The residents then go on to elect a council of their own for the residential association, starts a patrol mechanism and effectively creates a full-fledged parallel government. In effect, the buildings which bore the names of the club, shopping mall, restaurant, etc., started serving their political purposes. This conversion what we witness through Charles Prentice at Costasol Complex is more or less similar to what has happened at Estrella de Mar under Frank Prentice. The result of both these transformations is summarised in Sanger's words: "This is a social economy based on drug-dealing, theft, pornography and escort services - from top to bottom a condominium of crime." (Ballard *Cocaine* 251, 288, 304)

The fire at the Hollinger Mansion was the culmination of all the minor criminal and transgressive behaviours that was nurtured at Estrella de Mar. The character of Paula Hamilton, who served as a doctor at Estrella de Mar, explains: "A great crime was needed, something terrible and spectacular that would bind everyone together" so that the community life created by Bobby Crawford will keep running. However, the residents fail to realise that the community is built by victimising them; with crime becoming "one of the performance arts" (Ballard *Cocaine* 317, 146), and people are converted into characters playing roles assigned to them. The Hollingers become the martyrs of a bigger crime organised by Betty Shand, David Hennessey and others. Only towards the end of the novel, Prentice can perceive that the murder of the Hollingers was not carried out by an individual but the whole community was responsible for it.

These crimes are carried out within the community; the practitioners are the residents themselves, and everything occurs within their premises. Newman's contention that "A criminal will rarely commit a crime in a building in which he knows he will be easily recognized" (18) raises the questions about the nature of crimes anticipated by him. In the case of the fire at the Hollinger Mansion, it was a well-planned crime that

involved people of different profession playing their designated roles in the whole episode. Inspector Cabrera's explanation of the fire is particularly helpful in understanding this point:

The intake manifold draws air from a pipe on the kitchen roof. The air is filtered and humidified, then either cooled during the summer or heated during the winter, and finally pumped to the rooms around the house. The arsonist switches off the system — for the few minutes he needs no one will notice. He removes the cowl of the humidifier, drains off the water and refills the reservoir with his gasoline and ether mixture. All is now set for a huge and cruel explosion. (Ballard *Cocaine* 105)

Frank Prentice played his part in the fire, and he pleads guilty. However, it must not be forgotten that he was framed. Betty Shand and David Hennessey (the chief beneficiaries of the club) expected him to plead guilty yet he had to be caught with convincing evidence. To organise such a crime, to plan and to execute it with such precision, they needed complete awareness of the Hollinger mansion. Their insider status proved vital in this regard. That also calls into question about Newman's idea of securing the space against outsiders. What if the threat is lurking from inside?

4.1.2. Mismanaged Leisure in *Super-Cannes*

Super-Cannes provides us with a similar but probably a more sophisticated scenario from what we saw in *Cocaine Nights*. The retired expatriates in a holiday resort are replaced by the actively working elites inside a business park. Paul Sinclair's immediate impression of Eden-Olympia is his acknowledgement of the place's "dedication to company profits and the approval of its shareholders," which he deduces from the organisation of the stellar office buildings. Jane's reaction is even more shrewd when she comments about the alienation she felt on reaching the premises: "We've been

here ten minutes and haven't seen a soul" (Ballard *Super* 8, 16). Wilder Penrose's explains to them that people are occupied in front of their computer screens and laboratories for most hours of the day. This gives us the first hint at the kind of life that exists in Eden-Olympia. Extreme leisure in Estrella de Mar gives way to extreme productivity in Eden-Olympia.

As it is in the case of Estrella de Mar, the sites of social interaction are less frequented in Eden-Olympia as well. During his conversations with Dr. Penrose, Sinclair is told that shopping, traffic jams and airport queues are to be considered as folkloric activities meant to build communities. Sinclair's observation of the place informs the readers that none of the recreational activities is given much importance. For example, he finds the tennis courts and swimming pools to be abandoned by the residents and the artificial lakes that are built at various parts of the park to be eerily silent. Later, Halder tells him that all these landscapes are "more for show. Like most of the things in Eden-Olympia." In short, "Intimacy and neighbourliness were not features of everyday life at Eden-Olympia. An invisible infrastructure took the place of traditional civic virtues." (Ballard *Super* 59, 38)

Unlike Estrella de Mar where the population was in a state of prolonged trance induced by leisure, the people in Eden-Olympia were proactive. The idea of inbuilt civility and polity demanded less interference from the people. Everyone seemed happy to follow the predefined rules and norms of social conduct that was enforced with the help of surveillance cameras and private security force rather than representative democracy. The mechanised life of these workaholics went to the extent of defining freedom as "the right to paid work" and the concept of leisure being considered as "the mark of the shiftless and untalented." "[C]ommitted to work rather than to pleasure," Eden-Olympia is pretty much opposite to Estrella de Mar. Here, people preferred "the

balance sheet and the drawing board [over] the brothels and gaming tables of the Old Riviera.” (Ballard *Super* 46, 82)

Wilder Penrose’s belief that “Work at Eden-Olympia is the eighth deadly sin” sets the crime sequences rolling in the business park. Unlike Bobby Crawford whose acts of violence were rather random deeds to create camaraderie among the residents of Estrella de Mar, Penrose’s acts are well planned. Penrose organised ratissages outside the business park as a part of his therapeutic programme for the business tycoons. In his version of the story, Penrose justifies his programme to Sinclair saying that normal recreational activities were not helpful for the people in Eden-Olympia. People struggled to keep their spirits running as there were severe burnouts. Then he came up with his idea of metered violence with which he is “setting out the blueprint for an infinitely more enlightened community. A controlled psychopathy is a way of resocializing people and tribalizing them into mutually supportive groups.” (Ballard *Super* 264-265)

The idea of crime as a stress remover is not new. Chris Rojek in his book titled *Leisure and Culture* (2003) recalls Jack Katz’s² postulation of criminal activity as a desire for moral transcendence. Rojek explains Katz’s perspective of criminal action as “an attempt to release emotions that have been pressed down by the standardization and timidity of the dominant moral order.” Rojek outlines three different forms of abnormal leisure, all of which involve one or the other form of criminal activity: 1) Invasive leisure; 2) Mephitic leisure; and 3) Wild leisure. Of the three, mephitic leisure comes close to the activities organised in Eden-Olympia in the sense that “The gratification of pleasures of the individual is organized around techniques of socially excluding others.” (151, 185).

² See Ch. 1, Katz, Jack. *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil*. Basic Books, 1988.

The paedophile activities and ratissages fall under this category since the gratification is achieved at the expense of others.

The crimes organised by Wilder Penrose at Eden-Olympia have a far more disturbing impact than those organised by Crawford at Estrella de Mar. Further, it rings alarms of caution against more serious issues than those Newman outlines in his plan for defensible space. The crime and violence unite the citizen of Eden-Olympia, and the orderly running of the community is heavily dependent on such acts of deviance. It builds a community and creates some sense of territoriality which, according to Newman and Katyal, are essential for deterring crime. However, this cuts them off from the rest of the world, and the violence against outsiders gets normalised. So, when Halder tells Sinclair that people are happy with the ratissages “As long as they stay well outside the business park. In fact, it does everything it can to help.” (Ballard *Super* 202), it reminds us about the segregation created by gated communities in the society: “Gated communities churn a vicious cycle by attracting like-minded residents who seek shelter from outsiders and whose physical seclusion then worsens paranoid groupthink against outsiders.” (Benjamin)

Gated communities are known for pushing the crimes from its premises to the less secure neighbourhood. Lynn A. Addington and Callie Marie Rennison acknowledge the fact that crimes such as burglary might have reduced or moved outside the walls of walled enclaves but points out how “intimate partner violence, bullying, or other assaultive violence that occurs near or in the home” (187) can increase inside such locked up premises. This brings us back to where we began the discussion: the presence of the enemy within the community. Ballard, as usual, goes one step further and presents us with the case of crime not only being pushed to the neighbourhood but also how the people inside the gates may show criminal behaviour towards the less privileged.

Let me take a short deviation here to take a look at the mass murder carried out by Dr. David Greenwood at Eden-Olympia, which brought Jane and Paul Sinclair to the business park at the first place. Once again, the criminal was an insider. Greenwood had made his contributions to Penrose's plans in the initial stages, but after realising the seriousness of the crimes conducted, he was filled with remorse and shot everyone who was a part of the crime sequences. Unlike *Cocaine Nights* where the bigger crime that attracted the attention of the whole community (the Hollinger fire) was the final act of a set of minor crimes that acted till then, in *Super-Cannes*, Greenwood's murders were a reaction against the crimes organised till that point. As it was with the case of the Hollinger fire, the familiarity of the criminal with the premises helped the acts to be carried out without much trouble. David Greenwood was a senior doctor with a top-level clearance which gave him free access to the buildings.

In addition to that, the limitation of technology-based surveillance/defence mechanism provided Greenwood the extra time to carry out the murders in what is supposed to be a secure haven. When Sinclair makes a statement about the surveillance cameras that "You're taking part in an extraordinary film that no one will ever see," Halder replies: "I hope not. That would be a sign of failure by the security system." (Ballard *Super* 134). This tells us the limitation of the camera-based surveillance in preventing crime as against the natural surveillance where an immediate action can be taken against any suspicious behaviour. In Greenwood's case, although he was spotted on the cameras, the time authorities took to figure out what was happening provided Greenwood the additional time to carry out other murders. Further, the impossibility to install metal detectors in hospitals where "Metal objects are everywhere - emergency trolleys, hip replacement pins, oxygen cylinders" shows the limitations of technology. In Dan Brown's latest novel, *Origin*, that deals with the most advanced level of artificial

intelligence, we see the murderer carrying out his act using a plastic gun which goes unnoticed by all the metal detectors. Therefore, the hospital scenario used by Ballard cannot be treated as an isolated case of the failure of technology-based surveillance.

Coming back to the point of gated communities isolating themselves from the rest of the world, what we witness in *Super-Cannes* is a case of mephitic leisure imposed upon a set of people who consider themselves as superior to the outside world. I say imposed because Rojek's idea of mephitic leisure is studied at an individual level. Here, an entire community is made to practice the same by a psychiatrist in the name of a therapy. In Hannah Arendt's words, 'the banality of evil' of these people are "terribly and terrifyingly normal." (278). In a way, the residents of Eden-Olympia are similar to Eichmann in Arendt's case study as they had no real motives for carrying out those acts. Rather, they were merely obeying orders on a strict schedule assigned to them by Wilder Penrose.

Ballard's surreal imagery is suggestive of the possibility that a normal community life will be absent in gated communities, and chaos (crime and violence) is what would bring people together in such closed enclaves. In Newman's perception "The well-off citizen, by isolating himself in a secure fortress, by restricting his own ventures into the streets, and by demanding that authority assume all responsibility for ensuring the safety of streets, has effectively set the stage for the defeat of his own demands" (14-15). Newman's criticism of the upper middle-class and the elite was based not only on their indifference towards community building but also on the constraints which the gated communities were likely to impose upon his housing project. With territoriality and natural surveillance being key components of his idea of defensible space, the presence of a gated community in the same area may prove unhelpful for the cause. What happened inside the enclaves was not his concern. Ballard, on the other hand, builds on Newman's

notion that the gated communities are entities cut-off from the mainstream life. Acts that would otherwise be considered as a deviation from accepted social norms are not only normalised but eventually go on to become the new rules of life that keep the life running in Estrella de Mar and Eden-Olympia.

4.2. Organised Crime in *Millennium People*

David Ian Paddy, in his analysis of *Millennium People*, raises the question whether the novel “*Millennium People* presents an idea we should take seriously – that of a potential middle-class revolution – or whether much of the book should be read as satire.” (Ch. 8). The idea of middle-class being the new proletariat sounds superficial for him. Adhering strictly to the Marxist definition of the term bourgeoisie as the owner of means of production, he notes that while the residents of Chelsea Marina are highly paid, their life is not secure. They are not the owners of any sorts of means of production which categorically keeps them out of the bourgeoisie tag. At the same time, he also points out the satirical elements included in Ballard’s writing which makes him consider that the novel is satirical in parts.

Ballard, on the other hand, seems to be very much convinced about the possibility of middle-class turning out to be the new proletariat. He has echoed it in his previous novel, *Super-Cannes*: “The middle classes have run the world since the French Revolution, but they're now the new proletariat.” (Ballard *Super* 97). Further, in an interview given to Mariella Frostrup, Ballard explains his views on the middle-class revolution in *Millennium People*:

Well, some of the characters in *Millennium People*, certainly feel that they're the new proletariat. The thing is that — I suppose 150 years ago or so, in the middle of the 19th century — the middle-classes made a sort of contract, an unwritten

contract, in which they were given status, slightly higher salaries, and in return they gave: civic responsibility, they ran the civil service, they ran the professions, they were the doctors, solicitors, middle-managers and the like. And the middle-classes have always honoured this contract, right up to the present day, but you can see tremendous signs of restlessness; a lot of the middle-class professions are dissatisfied, they feel they've been taken for a ride, taken for granted — and if the middle-class professionals withdrew their consent to the original contract they signed with society — everything would collapse, literally, the water would stop running in the taps. ("Middle-Class Revolution")

My concern in this context is in the acts carried out by the characters in the novel which are violent and a clear deviation from the existing norms of the society. The acts are criminal in nature with intended political and personal goals which must be looked upon as acts of terrorism rather than revolution. I will lay down the reasons for which the acts of Richard Gould, Kay Churchill and other protestors of Chelsea Marina are looked upon as acts of domestic terrorism. I will then go on to explain the importance of the architectural structures in understanding the same.

Terrorist activities are organised crimes. The distinction between both organised crimes and terrorist activities is often separated by the perceptions of individuals or institutions who are affected by such acts. Jack Levin gives a useful definition of terrorism: “the unlawful use, or threatened use, of violence by a group or individual... committed against person or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political, social, or *personal* objectives.” (6; emphasis original). This is an expanded version of the definition maintained by FBI after taking into consideration the possibility of personal intentions in carrying out terrorist activities (for example hate crimes). While both organised crimes

and terrorist activities are calculated acts of deviation, terrorism intends to create an atmosphere of fear and tension by drawing attention to the particular act. Organised crimes do not intend to draw public attention in every case. Further, organised crime groups need not necessarily have any particular ideology. In Finckenaue's words: "They did not espouse a particular radical, liberal, conservative, or other political ideology. Their interest in government was only in its nullification – through bribery, payoffs and corruption." (65)

In the context of *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes*, the criminal activities were hidden from the authorities. Wilder Penrose's plans were known only to the limited number of people within the community. The Hollinger fire was the final act of a series of crimes started by Bobby Crawford to unite the community. However, the people of Chelsea Marina in the *Millennium People* were trying to bring about a radical change in their lives. They wanted to break traditions and civic duties that had been in practice for over a century. In the process, they used bombings and arson to gather public attention from the whole of London if not the whole country.

The other distinction to be made here is between revolution and terrorism. Resistance against tyranny and oppression is the base of all the major revolutions that have happened in the history of humanity. 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen'³ that came out in 1789 and 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights'⁴ that came out in 1948 stresses on the importance the right to resist against oppression. People's "right to resist is triggered by cases where the minimum conditions for a just

³ Kreis, Steven. "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (August 1789)." 09 April 2014 <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/declaration.html>. Accessed 09 Nov 2017.

⁴ "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>. Accessed 09 Nov 2017.

society could be met (or could be met better) but are not.” (Finlay 27). When the policies of any governing system create or permit conditions that lead to discrimination and harm to the society, demand for resistance is raised which may or may not be followed by a revolution. This broad division based on the notion of ‘oppression’ and ‘resistance’ is not helpful in all cases. For example, the armed resistance and guerrilla warfare of Maoists in India or LTTE in Sri Lanka are often branded as terrorism. Suthaharan Nadarajah and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah points out how the questions of Tamil ethnicity and the struggles of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka were successfully masked by the Sri Lankan government by branding LTTE as a ‘terrorist organisation.’ (99). In these cases, the differing perceptions of the population towards the demands of these organisations become the factor that helps the authorities to brand something as ‘terrorist activity’ and curb them with varying support of people.

However, in the context of *Millennium People*, the concepts of ‘oppression’ and ‘resistance’ can serve the purpose of making the distinction between revolution and terrorism. David Ian Paddy had already raised the question about the case of the real working class being ignored when the middle-class chose to brand themselves as the new proletariat and set out for the revolution. I will rather place my queries on the motives of the people involved in the movement to get a clearer picture of the scenario. To begin with, Dr. Richard Gould who has masterminded the whole activities around Chelsea Marina is a paediatrician fired for sexually mishandling children. His fight is born out of his hatred towards the property company designed by his father that has taken over the property rights of the Bedfont Hospital where he used to work. He fears that “One day they’ll cover the whole of England.” (Ballard *Millennium* 133). He is not specifically interested in Chelsea Marina or the middle-class revolution, but he is dissatisfied with the rules and norms existing in the society which does not suit his way of thinking.

The case of Kay Churchill is not very different either. She, a lecturer by profession, uses pornographic materials in her classroom which invites disciplinary actions from the authorities. However, her arguments that the middle-class is kept under control “Not with guns and gulags, but with social codes,” sounds reasonable. Stephen Dexter’s observation that “The system is self-regulating. It relies on our sense of civic responsibility” (Ballard *Millennium* 89, 104), adds credibility to Kay’s reasoning. However, Kay and Dexter seem to forget that an established system is responsible for the whole society. The arguments they put forward apply to the rest of the society as well; any other person at Kay’s position would have been treated the same way for promoting pornography in the classroom despite his/her social status. More importantly, the entire community of Chelsea Marina still enjoys their privileges while calling for a revolution. In the thirteenth chapter of the novel, we find that the entire revolution is rescheduled for the sake of convenience: “The middle-class rebels valued their leisure, and the assault on the barricades would be squeezed between concert and theatre visits and the pleasures of fresh seafood.” (Ballard *Millennium* 99)

If the query into the motives is good enough to raise doubts, a look into the choice of sites for arson and bombing strengthens them. It began with a bombing at Heathrow airport that killed David Markham’s wife. It was followed up by bombings at NFT, Tate Modern, some video shops and so on. However, in Richard Gould’s vision, these are meaningless acts carried out to create chaos and confusion. He refers to the most notoriously famous terrorist attack of the twenty-first century, the World Trade Center attack of 2001, as “a brave attempt to free America from the 20th Century. The deaths were tragic, but otherwise it was a meaningless act.” (Ballard *Millennium* 139). One may argue that to make a political statement the White House or the Capitol in Washington would have been a better choice. Even as a status of America’s economic domination

over the rest of the world, I would have personally considered the Empire State Building ahead of the Twin Towers before the 9/11 attack. That is an outsiders' perspective and the fact that the same building was attacked in 1993⁵ tells us that the World Trade Center was not a totally random choice. Further, the attack did affect the lifestyle of the Americans who "refused to take a plane or travel abroad; for a period of time, they wished to stay close to home." (Levin 8). Moreover, an attack on political targets may not have created the same level of shock among the civilians as much as it on the Twin Towers. Victor H. Asal et al., explains why terrorists prefer civilian targets: "the image of civilians dying can be much more powerful than the image of an attack on soldiers or police officers, as this risk is considered to be an element of the job." (261)

The violence instigated by Richard Gould, Kay Churchill and others must be read in this light; one that raises cultural questions rather than political one. As discussed earlier, their motives are personal than political. They are not driven by any particular ideology; their activities can be better categorised under what Jack Levin calls as 'single-issue terrorism'. In this type of terrorism, people are "operating on their own or as part of a group that argues that the "evil" they hope to undermine has received the protection of society's legal system." (59). In the case of *Millennium People*, the perceived evil is the rules and norms of the society which prevents Gould and Churchill from practising their professions in the kind of radical ways they want to do it.

The Bedfont Hospital where Gould used to work was located somewhere near the Heathrow Airport. After the NFT bombing, Markham is taken to that location, and he describes the place and its architecture to the readers:

⁵ Lambert, Laura. "World Trade Center Bombing of 1993." Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-Trade-Center-bombing-of-1993>. Accessed 18 Dec 2017.

“Somewhere near the airport we stopped by a cluster of high Victorian buildings that stood beside a vast construction site.”

“I scanned the huge buildings, immense masonry piles with gables like the superstructures of battleships. This was the architecture of prisons, cotton mills and steel foundries, monuments to the endurance of brick and the Victorian certainties. Three buildings still remained, beside a neglected park where patients had once been wheeled by starch-obsessed VADs.” (Ballard *Millennium* 129)

From the conversation that follows between Markham and Gould, it is understood that the Heathrow Airport is built over one of the old asylums. The vast construction site where the remaining buildings including the Bedfont Hospital are situated is owned by the property company started by Gould’s father. Sooner or later, the rest of the buildings too will be replaced by modern buildings. Hence, the choice of the airport for the bomb blast is not as meaningless as he claims it to be.

Similarly, the attacks carried out by Kay Churchill also holds her vested interests in them. The BBC, Tate Modern, NFT, and video libraries are all directly related to Kay’s profession. At one point in their discussions, a far more obvious statement is made: “Tate Modern, the Royal Academy, the Hayward ... they’re Walt Disney for the middle classes” (Ballard *Millennium* 61), and these institutions are the real reason behind the docile nature of the middle-class. However, this is the perspective of Gould, Churchill and other leader figures. Nowhere in the text are we told about the discontent of the rest of the middle-class on these institutions. Rather, their concern is the rise in the cost of living and worsening living conditions in the Marina (I have already mentioned Vera Blackburn explaining these issues to Markham in the previous chapters).

I do not intend to look past the fact that the attacks carried out by the rebels of Chelsea Marina on random targets such as “the Penguin pool at London Zoo, Liberty’s, the Soane Museum and the Karl Marx tomb at Highgate Cemetery” (Ballard *Millennium* 204-205), were successful enough to grab the attention of the people and the authority. However, these were carried out after Richard Gould moved away from the forefront of the protests. Significantly, these attacks happened more on a random basis unlike the careful pickings of Kay Churchill. These later attacks which involved more of the residents of Chelsea Marina and fewer leaders caused no casualty. The smoke and paint bombs used for the protests did no considerable damage to any of the architectures either. While it failed to achieve the targets envisaged by Gould, Churchill and others, it succeeded in convincing the authorities to withdraw the rise in maintenance charges which created tension and unrest among the residents of Chelsea Marina.

4.3. Fanaticism in *Kingdom Come*

Brian Appleyard published an article in the year 1993 titled “Shopping Around for Salvation: The New Religion is Consumerism and Massive Malls are its Cathedrals. Let us Bow Our Heads and Pay.” Based on his interaction with Professor Jonathan Gershuny of Essex University, Appleyard formulates that modern shopping is “our only communally agreed path to salvation.” While the article deals essentially with the increasing consumption among the British, the religious metaphor demands equal attention. Drawing parallels between consumerism and religion are not altogether new. William Kowinski had pointed out the increasing significance of shopping malls in 1985. He indicates that even though shopping malls cannot be accounted as a community centre, it has achieved more than financial significance and “they are becoming a way of life.” He further elaborates that these places are “designed to fulfil wishes and longings

and to allay fears...to embody a dream and keep out nightmares” (21, 68). In many ways, the description of Kowinski invokes the image of an ancient temple or a cathedral.

The shopping mall is an oft-repeated example of a ‘non-place’ and Spurr’s analysis of the Metro-Centre is apt and precise in that sense. At the same time, it is also the best architectural metaphor that we would find across the four novels. The Metro-Centre in *Kingdom Come* is introduced to the readers in religious terms, and Ballard builds on this image heavily to develop his narrative: “Dominating the landscape around it, the immense aluminium dome housed the largest shopping mall in Greater London, a cathedral of consumerism whose congregations far exceeded those of the Christian churches.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 22). The crimes in the form of football hooliganism are organised around this structure which invokes the impression of a religious shrine.

Richard Pearson enters the suburbs of the M25 motorway of Brooklands to deal with the formalities of his father’s murder at the Metro-Centre. Travelling through “a terrain of inter-urban sprawl, a geography of sensory deprivation, a zone of dual carriageways and petrol stations, business parks and signposts to Heathrow,” he was left with one question— “How to rouse a dormant people who had everything, who had bought the dreams that money can buy and knew they had found a bargain?” (Ballard *Kingdom* 12, 19). He was pondering over this question even before meeting a single person from the suburbs. He finds the answer to this question on the very same journey when he witnesses a car getting burnt by men dressed in St. George’s shirt.

As the narrative progresses, we find out that the people in St. George’s shirt represented one of the sports clubs sponsored by the Metro-Centre. They conduct rallies after the weekend matches which often turns violent resulting in raids and other criminal activities. The psychiatrist figure in the novel, Tony Maxted, explains the behaviour of

the football supporters as a case of elective psychopathy. He says “Elective insanity is waiting inside us, ready to come out when we need it.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 122). Maxted cites examples of the superstitions that existed during the Dark Ages and the case of 1930s’ Germany under Adolf Hitler to argue that humans always had the tendency to go back to primate behaviours. He says that in a world where religion does not possess the same influence which it had in the past, consumerism provides people with the chance to go back to primate behaviour. He says:

“Close your eyes a little and it already looks like a Nuremberg rally. The ranks of sales counters, the long straight aisles, the signs and banners, the whole theatrical aspect... Anyway, they belong to the politics of the street. Our “streets” are the cable TV consumer channels. Our party insignia are the gold and platinum loyalty cards...fascism is the form that consumerism takes when it opts for elective madness.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 123)

Ballard uses the phrase ‘football hooliganism’ to refer to the violent activities carried out by the supporters of the club. The definition of the term is contested by various theorists over the years for some reasons. Steve Frosdick and Peter Marsh, in their study have provided some variables that have caused troubles in defining the phrase. They point out that one has to take into consideration the sports involved, criminal offence categories, the extent of criminal behaviour, the location at which the act happened, and the cause of provocation. (28). Since Ballard’s focus (as is the case of this research) is on the Metro-Centre, he had employed the term to refer to the violence but did not give much importance in explaining their activities or its consequences. Therefore, I will not indulge into the theoretical nuances of the term as it is impossible to analyse the variables mentioned by Frosdick and Marsh in Ballard’s narrative.

Based on Charles Tilly's⁶ studies on collective violence, N.A.J. Taylor considers football hooliganism to be a violent ritual where a well-defined and coordinated group inflicts damage on others to achieve priority within a recognised area. (1753). Here, the followers of the St. George's club were targeting the Asians and other immigrant population along the suburbs of the motorway. In fact, these attacks were started off with a target of making some profitable real-estate deals with the immigrants. The Metro-Centre used "the supporters' clubs in their patriotic livery, they were moving against the immigrant population, harassing them out of their run-down streets to make room for new retail parks, marinas and executive estates." (Ballard *Kingdom* 94).

The elevation of the shopping centre into a religious icon by Tom Carradine and David Cruise plays a crucial role in changing the nature of the violent activities of the club. At the very introduction of Pearson to the Metro-Centre, we find its manager Tom Carradine maintaining that the place "isn't just a shopping mall" but it is more like a "religious experience." Pearson himself says that "It's almost a shrine" (Ballard *Kingdom* 51, 53), on seeing the three huge teddy bears which were considered as the mascots of the Metro-Centre. Two of those bears were hit by the bullets in the attack that killed Pearson's father. People were so moved by the attack on the teddy bears that they responded by sending letters and get well soon cards to the dolls. Interestingly, Pearson could not find many people sympathising with him for the loss of his father.

We can see how the idea of sacred is getting attached to the Metro-Centre making it the loci of power. The extent of this power is visible when Maxted says "Not a diamond stud pinched, not a Rolex trousered. Look around you. These aren't consumer goods-they're household gods. We're in the worship phase, when everyone believes and

⁶ Tilly, Charles. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

behaves.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 270). Lefebvre’s idea of how an object becomes holy when kept inside the space of sacredness is operational here. The diamond or the Rolex is given a holy image not only by the promoters of the consumer culture but even the hostages. The Metro-Centre was a monument built to celebrate and glorify consumerism. The hegemony it created affirms Lefebvre’s point that a “monument is essentially repressive.” (Lefebvre *Urban* 21)

Further, the tension generated by the death of David Cruise created a sense of insecurity among the supporters of the sports club. As a result, Tom Carradine recruited them to form a paramilitary force whose job was to protect “hypermarkets and retail parks from 'thieves and outsiders', who were blamed for the drunken damage.” (Ballard *Kingdom* 213). From the burning of the car that Pearson witnessed on the first day along the motorway, the violence grew exponentially over time. Starting with mere harassment of the shopkeepers, they went on to intimidate and threaten people to pay ‘voluntary’ contributions to the club/Metro-Centre, physical abuse, attacking the family members, and the destruction of properties. By the time Tom Carradine and the followers of the St. George’s club turned into complete fanatics, it became more of hate crime towards those people who stood against the idea of consumerism. Jon Garland and Michael Rowe argue that ‘football hooliganism’ is often the product of an aggressive sense of local identity combining with the violent mentality to defend their territories. They can be categorised as hate crimes only if they “feature actions that are inspired by prejudicial views and are directed against a certain section of society.” (19). In the case of *Kingdom Come*, violence is targeted at the immigrant population. Although the claim is to clear land for new retail parks and executive estates, it is worth noting that only the immigrant population were attacked in the process.

Moreover, the rise of Metro-Centre as a religious shrine changed the outlook of the racist aspect of attacks. Earlier, they were attacked for being immigrants; they were considered as outsiders who should be thwarted out for the expansion of consumerist spaces. Later, it became a question of belief. The followers of Cruise believe in the Metro-Centre but the Asians prefer not to go there and it is accounted for blasphemy. The immigrants have a parallel life of their own and they are made to pay the price. Once again, we are reminded of Lefebvre who asserted that the space around a monument is oppressive in nature. A new form of colonisation is born, it creates new kind of hatred and new forms of violence. In Ballard's own words: "a racism tempered by loyalty cards and PIN numbers." (Ballard *Kingdom* 18)

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1. Inferences

A study which analyses the relationship between architecture and society can move in two directions. First, it can examine the role of buildings and physical environment in understanding the nuances of society. Second, the society can be examined to understand the role the architecture it encompasses. I chose the former to analyse J.G. Ballard's final quartet of novels.

In the introductory chapter, I had pointed out how the architecture of the contemporary period is dominated by the utilitarian values. The dominance of the functional aspects of the architectural practices is so high that it is almost impossible to make categorical distinctions based on the region or the time period during which these practices existed. The social and cultural implications an individual could associate with an architectural form or practice when s/he encounters 'Italian Architecture' or 'Renaissance Architecture' is almost completely absent when it comes to the modern architecture. This has limited the study of architectural symbolism in literary texts to a good extent. David Spurr argues that "Architectural forms of the past are more conducive to narrative form, partly because of the richness of their symbolic associations and partly because each of these forms, as well as each concrete instance of it, has a history of its own." (224)

The current research aimed to look beyond this argument and bring out the possibilities of relying on the description of architectural forms in the text to understand the socio-political scenario mentioned in the narratives. Given that the urban and suburban regions were quick to adopt the new forms of architectural practices, J.G.

Ballard's novels were an apt choice since his affinity towards urban lifestyle and architecture is well known.

In an interview given to Hans Ulrich Obrist, Ballard says that “the totalitarian systems of the future will be subservient and ingratiating.” In his perspective, the gated communities, parking and traffic restrictions, transient airport culture, modern surveillance mechanisms etc., are all nothing but “an Orwellian nightmare come true, but disguised as a public service.” (Ch. 36). His observation on the normalisation of control mechanism in the present-day society is of utmost importance. However, it is his vision for the future society—the normalisation of crime, violence and transgressive behaviour—that forms the crux of the novels selected for this study.

What does the future look like? This is the question that Ballard is implicitly trying to answer through the final quartet of his novels. Ballard utilises dystopian scenarios to point out a grim future that is awaiting the human race which has centred its life around capitalism and consumerism. He portrays urban societies of near future that are dominated by crime, violence, and psychopathy. In doing so, Ballard ensures that the novels do not end in the complete degeneration of the society. Rather, he gives them an open ending or an ending that maintains the status quo which is acceptable to the present-day society. In one of his interviews that appeared after the publication of *Kingdom Come* in 2006, Ballard says that his “work is superficially dystopian” but “affirm a more positive world view.” (Sellars Ch. 40). This aspect of the selected novels puts them categorically in the critical dystopian tradition rather than the classical ones.

Cocaine Nights and *Super-Cannes* are novels based on the life inside the gated communities. Gated communities are an end product of the commodification of crime. It is the fear of increased crime rates that force people to lock themselves in such walled

and fortified enclaves, cutting themselves off from the rest of the world. Oscar Newman has expressed his dissatisfaction over the concept gated communities while explaining his concept of 'defensible space'. He believes gated communities act as obstacles in the pursuit of creating a sense of community and territoriality in a society. Ballard shares a similar view on gated communities. He says, "Gated communities are springing up everywhere, and the moment they can, people are opting for private medicine, private teaching, private hospitals – cutting themselves off from the rest of society, and that's not a healthy development." (Sellars Ch. 40). Nevertheless, he explores the life inside gated communities which are often advertised as havens of prosperity and security.

Estrella de Mar and Costasol Complex in *Cocaine Nights* and Eden-Olympia in *Super-Cannes* are examples of lifestyle communities; the former a residential retreat for retired professionals and the latter a sophisticated township meant for business class people. One of the main characteristic features of lifestyle communities is its affinity towards leisure. Based on Chris Jenks' and Chris Rojek's studies on the relationship between leisure and crime, I have established how improperly managed leisure has led to the proliferation of crime in Estrella de Mar. Further, leisure-based activities are a major source of revenue inside gated communities. The increase in crime rates heightened the sense of community at Estrella de Mar and Costasol Complex which in turn resulted in people frequenting their respective sports clubs, restaurants, boutiques etc. This factor explained why the owners and administrators of the gated communities maintained a passive attitude towards vandalism and transgressive behaviour inside their premises.

In Eden-Olympia, forms of mephitic leisure are prescribed to the higher officials of various multinational companies to increase their productivity. Paedophilia, child pornography, manhandling people from the lower strata of the society etc., are practised

under the supervision of Wilder Penrose, the psychiatrist of the business park. However, these activities are conducted outside the business park to ensure that Eden-Olympia lives up to the image of a modern-day utopia. Huge sums of money are paid to the affected people as amendments for the damages caused during such instances of transgressive behaviour. Evidently, the people from the outside world are mere objects of leisure to the residents of Eden-Olympia. This strengthens Newman's and Ballard's argument that the people inside the gated communities are cut off from the rest of the society.

Gated communities operate with a separate administration of their own, and the intervention of external policing force is almost minimal. In the case of the selected novels, it is almost nil. This seclusion from the outside world has also contributed to the growth of crime inside the gated communities. Only when multiple murders happened inside the community, crimes that are too big to be covered up, we find an intervention from the outside forces. These murders were carried out by people who were the residents of the respective gated communities. These acts inform us that the security measures adopted by the gated communities are effective only against outsiders. If the enemy rises within the walls, which is very likely with the consumer and leisure-based cultures replacing the civic virtues, these fortified enclaves fail to fulfil the promises it has advertised to lure customers.

Millennium People shifts the focus to the lives of the middle-class in Chelsea Marina. The revolution started by the residents of this urban enclave in London claims that the middle-class has become the new proletariat. The claim is debatable in the conventional Marxist point of view because the working class still exists in the society. However, from the perspective of consumer culture, the people of Chelsea Marina are denied the freedom to choose their services; in fact, they are denied most of the essential services. This makes them occupy the bottom of the consumer setup thereby qualifying

them to be the new proletariat. Hence, their revolt intent to bring them the status of a privileged consumer. At the same time, it is the capitalist forces that have denied them the same services to evacuate them from the place. They wanted to erect starter homes—architectures of mass consumption—at Chelsea Marina once the residents have left the place for better and affordable living conditions elsewhere.

The crimes conducted by Richard Gould and Kay Churchill have more personal intentions than the victory of the revolution. They claim that the targets for vandalism and explosion are chosen on a random basis. However, a close analysis reveals otherwise. The Heathrow airport and its surrounded region were built over the asylums that stood there. The last of the asylum—the Bedfont Hospital—is about to be converted into starter homes. Hence, Gould's actions are more of a revenge against the building of such architectures of consumption by destroying the places where he used to work. In the case of Churchill, structures like the NFT and Tate Modern held the moral values that stifled her from practising her personal interests. Therefore, these acts become acts of domestic terrorism—‘single-issue terrorism’ to be specific—rather than an act of revolution.

In *Kingdom Come*, the people of Brooklands are united by consumerism rather than nationality, law or civic pride. They are consumers first and citizens second. With the rich religious symbolic associations, Ballard has converted the Metro-Centre shopping mall into a modern-day cathedral. Football hooliganism, which is often considered as a source of nationalist fanaticism takes the form of religious fanaticism in the text. The supporters of the St. George's club which is funded by the shopping mall vandalise the houses, shops and other properties of the immigrant communities. Initially, it was an act to evacuate them from the area so that the shopping mall can expand further. However, soon it became a fight against the non-believers (the immigrant community who hardly visited the Metro-Centre).

The focus on architectural descriptions provided a better understanding of the social situations existing in the novels. The analysis of the gated communities proved that the crimes that had happened inside the walls owed a lot to the architecture of the place. Moreover, the evil in these two communities originated within the premises of the so-called prospering communities reiterates the argument that every utopia comes with an implied dystopia. The relationship of Richard Gould and Kay Churchill to the places they were closely associated to in the novel and the relationship of the community of Brooklands to the Metro-Centre points to the fact that the relationship of an individual with the built environment affects their relationship with the society. These buildings shaped their perceptions of the society and consequently, the development of the narrative.

5.2. Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

In one of his earlier interviews that came out in 1970 Ballard comments, “The trouble with Marxism is that it is a social philosophy for the poor. What we need is a social philosophy for the rich” (“Inner Landscape”). It is probably for the very same reason that most of Ballard’s writings focused on the upper-class segment of the society. The case is no different in the selected novels either. His elaborative description of the lived space of the elite helped in understanding the social setup and lifestyle of these people in the urban areas. However, while elaborating on the prospering segment of the society, Ballard seems to have neglected the life of the downtrodden.

There are references to the characters from the lower section of the society in the novels but only at a minimal level. Paul Sinclair’s visit to Rue Valentin in *Super-Cannes*, David Markham’s and Richard Gould’s travel outside the city of London in *Millennium People*, and Richard Pearson’s drive through places dominated by the immigrant population in *Kingdom Come* are all diversions which provide a very brief description

about these places. Neither the life of the people nor the organisation of the space make a significant entry into the narrative. Hence, the study is limited to the life of the privileged class of the society.

The urban architectures that feature in this study—the gated communities, urban enclave and shopping mall—are all phenomena that are found across the globe irrespective of the regional and cultural differences. They speak only of one culture: the culture dominated by capitalism and consumerism. During his initial visit to Estrella de Mar, Charles Prentice observes the architecture along the coast; “Their shadows curved around a white onion-bulb roof, an invasion of new Arab architecture that owed nothing to the Maghreb across the Strait of Gibraltar.” (*Cocaine* 16). The phenomena of architecture transcending the boundaries of region, history and culture are becoming very common nowadays.

Considering that fact that all these forms of urban architecture has proliferated considerably over the last decade or so, it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate architectures that convey the cultural values specific to a nation or religion. For example, the mega-churches and large cathedrals that are built recently in the metropolitan centres have “sprawling campus like facilities frequently accommodate thousands in worship but have been designed to resemble suburban malls, with auditoriums, food courts, galleries, bookstores, and recreational centers that rival local fitness centers.” (Hoffman 2).

This does not mean that traditional architectural forms have disappeared completely. This research has focused primarily on urban and suburban architectural forms. The vernacular architectural forms still exist (however limited their presence may be) in the countryside and under-developed regions. The studies that have focused on

architectural traditions of specific period has relied heavily on the mainstream practices. In that sense, studies on vernacular architecture across ages holds immense possibilities.

Coming back to urban and suburban architecture of modern era, this study has explored the possibilities of only a few architectural forms. There are a lot more structures that have had literary representations and needs to be explored. The time demands new approaches which are conducive to study the modern and postmodern architecture, and its literary representations.

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Social Control and Formation of Dystopias in Ballardian Short Stories

Abstract:

The motto of modern urbanism, the ultimate ambition of every urban planner and architect is the production of a Utopian City. Postmodern critics of urban studies have pointed out how constantly evolving cities like New York, Chicago etc. are in constant battle to get rid of the traces of their past and challenge themselves to rise above future. Such cities, however, were not devoid of anxieties about the widening gap between social groups, increasing slums, gender and racial conflicts, crimes, poverty, misery etc. and on most occasions questions related to such issues are left unanswered. Literary works have always addressed these questions directly and had pointed out the possibilities of a resultant dystopia in our quest for utopia. J.G. Ballard is a writer known for his experiments with the genre of dystopian fiction and this paper is an attempt to analyse how he utilizes the urban landscape and architecture to elucidate how totalitarian form of government and technological dehumanization leads to the formation of dystopias and the aftermath of it.

This paper is an attempt to analyse the role of control mechanisms in the formation of the dystopian societies in two short stories by J.G. Ballard, "Chronopolis" and "The Ultimate City". By reflecting upon the Ballard's narration of the architecture of the cities, I will try to postulate how a lack of proper state apparatus can lead to the failure of effective social control measures and result in the formation of dystopias.

Keywords: Social control, Surveillance, Architecture, City, Dystopia

Social Control and Formation of Dystopias in Ballardian Short Stories

The state plays a crucial role in the normalisation of social life; the acts and behaviours of individuals are validated by the codification normalised by the state. While social control can be defined as an act that occurs at an individual level "when an individual intentionally alters the behavior of other individuals." (Gibbs 411), it is often the decisions made by the state apparatus that makes a larger impact on society. Since the state apparatus is a body that has access and influence on all kinds of capital (economic, human, cultural and military), the normalisation of social activities brings about uniform effects in the society. Balanced social control from the governing body is a necessity for maintaining order in any society. Nathaniel Coleman observes:

Rejection of politics tends toward one of two new organizational systems. One replaces political action with management and centralized decision making. The other replaces social obligations, normally negotiated politically, with the sovereignty of individual desire and action. The first tends toward tyranny, the second towards chaos (81-82).

By reflecting upon the Ballard's narration of the architecture of the cities, I will try to

COCAINE NIGHTS: A CAPITALIST DYSTOPIA?

Surya Kiran

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Abstract

Dystopian studies have evolved into a stream of social criticism in the twenty-first century. Adopting various ideas from Marxist, sociological and anthropological theories, it has become a useful tool to analyse people, culture and society, and the problems associated with these. In this paper, I will try to bring out various forms of dystopia presented by J.G. Ballard in his novel Cocaine Nights. My attempt here is to establish that the issues addressed in the novel are primarily an aftermath of the capitalist culture. In order to do so, I will be analysing the architecture of the space in which the novel takes place, specifically how the representation of the lived space reflects the lifestyle of the people who interact with it. This paper is expected to open new avenues in the research of dystopian studies within the realm of spatial discourses.

Keywords: Dystopia, Leisure, Crime, Capitalism, Architecture

Dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination.

-Tom Moylan

Cocaine Nights (1996) is a Ballardian¹ novel that deals with a technologically advanced community losing their human values and morals and slumping into a world of crime. The novel is set in a Spanish resort for expatriates called Estrella de Mar and a housing complex known as Costasol, both in Costa del Sol. The novel sets off more like a detective story but as the narrative develops the focus of the protagonist shifts to the life of a dystopian community to which he becomes a part of and solving the mystery behind the crime loses its priority. My attempt in this paper is to show how the novel fits into the genre of dystopia and the role of architecture in the development of the narrative.

The word Dystopia, Oxford Dictionary says, means "An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one." The word is supposed to have originated in the late eighteenth century from dys meaning 'bad' joined with 'utopia'. The dictionary lists the word as the antonym of utopia, but this view is questioned by many critics. Lyman Tower Sargent, in his studies, uses

both dystopia and anti-utopia² to refer to different societies that get represented in writing. Dystopia or negative utopia, according to him is, "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived." (Sargent 9). From this viewpoint, the reader or critic is supposed to juxtapose his own society against the one specified in the narrative. However, no real life society is perfect, nor any of them qualifies to be a utopia which makes it impossible to consider dystopia as a proper antonym to utopia.

This argument is further strengthened by Gordin, Tilley and Prakash, who observes dystopia as "a utopia that has gone wrong, or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society." (1). The notion that if certain requirements are fulfilled, human needs can be met to perfection is the driving force behind the attempts to build utopias. In the quest to tie up the loose ends of the existing system, there are more chances of the new policies going wrong or the current setup creating new loose ends. Again, this does not validate dystopia being termed as an antonym of utopia. They further argue that a "true opposite of utopia would be a society that is either completely unplanned or is planned to be deliberately terrifying and awful." (1).

Cocaine Nights, as a dystopian narrative fits, itself somewhere in between all these arguments. The etymological meaning of the word dystopia, 'bad place', is quite easily justified for the community at Estrella de Mar and Costasol Complex since their life is all about leisure,

¹ Ballardian- (adj). 1. of James Graham Ballard (1930–2009), the British novelist, or his works; 2. resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in Ballard's novels and stories, esp dystopian modernity, bleak man-made landscapes, and the psychological effects of technological, social or environmental developments

² non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia. (Sargent 9)

Architecture and Architectural Symbolism in the Fiction of J.G. Ballard

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