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Ballard's Bestiary – Tales of Hyper-Organizational Space

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Abstract

This paper explores three hyper-organizational spaces: the skyscraper, the resort and the office-park. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's account of the production of space, we consider how these spaces are socially produced, how they materialize relations of power and how inhabitants engage in struggle to change these spaces. Three novels by J. G. Ballard are selected to explore each of these spaces. We argue that in each of these novels, such hyper-organizational environments can be understood as the product of ongoing struggle between central planned and practiced space and peripheral lived space. This both animates these spaces and the lived relations that comprise them, as well as potentially destroying them.

Key words: Space. Architecture. Struggle. Literature.

Introduction

Organization and systems of management control are embodied in the spaces in which we produce and consume (Baldry, 1999). For instance, central to the success of scientific management was the way in which it achieved material expression through the large, rationalized factory environment within which work processes could be carefully and efficiently laid out (Guillén, 1997). Similarly, the development of human relations was accompanied by efforts to 'humanize' the physical workplace, exemplified in the rise of the office landscape within which generous spatial allocations are combined with relaxing vistas, indoor plants and soothing colour pallets (Sundstrom and Sundstrom, 1986). More recently, architects have been inspired by systems of knowledge management in their attempts to develop the 'new office' (Duffy, 1997; Myerson and Ross, 2003), whereby workers are often treated as techno-nomads who occupy a 'docking station', the in-company café or a business class aeroplane seat during chaotic bouts of project working. In each of these instances, we notice that new systems of management such as scientific management, human relations and knowledge management have been materialized through particular forms of spatial planning.

It is notable that such 'hyper-organizational' work spaces – a term we employ to refer to the overtly, and often strictly, designed and regulated features in the physical environment of organizations – have often been experimental in nature (Darley, 2003). That is, they have been highly speculative attempts to explore new forms of workplace behaviour, often designed to demonstrate to the sceptical public that systematic processes of production and consumption might actually work. For instance, early factories constructed during the industrial revolution were risky experiments which housed large workforces and heavy machinery in spaces of previously unimaginable proportions. Some of the first factories such as Arkwright's cotton mills in Derbyshire, England, were so outlandish that they became popular tourist attractions. Similarly, Cadbury's Bournville housing in Birmingham, England, and Robert Owen's 'New Lanark' in Scotland were experiments with building modern workers' communities, and the large Fordist factories of early twentieth century North American and Soviet Russia were experiments with Taylorism at work. The post-war offices, such as the Eero Saarinen's buildings of IBM, were futuristic

illustrations for an age of complex systems (Martin, 2003). Today, this experimental tradition continues with new workplaces such as Volkswagen's Dresden plant attempting to render the entire production process transparent and visible.

As well as being associated with new forms of management control, however, such experiments in organizational space also gave rise to new possibilities and forms of struggle by organizational inhabitants. For instance, the construction of the factory and the industrial city concentrated previously unthinkable numbers of workers into one place, thereby producing the possibility of worker unionism (Harvey, 1989). Similarly, the twentieth-century office provided all sorts of spaces where bored staff could hide, gossip and perhaps plot revenge (Pringle, 1988). Today, fluid 'knowledge spaces' are often taken over by employees who choose to barricade themselves into particular cubicles rather than nomadically move between desks (Warren, 2005). This reminds us that hyper-organizational spaces will also produce practices of resistance and struggle amongst those subjected to them.

In this paper we want to explore a number of these hyper-organizational spaces and the kinds of resistive and oppositional practices which they might engender. We want to ask *how might people occupy, dwell within, and struggle with such spaces?* We will attempt to answer these questions by examining some extreme examples of hyper-organizational space, and the tensions they generate. This is not a paper solely about spatial practice, however. It is also reflects an interest in the utility of the literary form, and experimental ways of thinking about and exploring organizations. Because of this, we have decided to base it on an analysis not of currently organized spaces, but on those utopian spaces of production and consumption which appear in the science fiction writings of J. G. Ballard. In particular we have selected three influential novels which delve into what are presented as three quintessentially hyper-organized spaces – the Skyscraper (in *High-Rise*), the Resort (in *Cocaine Nights*), and the Technology and Business Park (in *Super-Cannes*). We focus on these novels not because they accurately represent the 'empirical reality' of the skyscraper, resort and technology park (for this see: Goldberger, 1981; Zukin, 1991; Massey, Quintas and Wield, 1992), but rather because of their ability to alert us to organizational possibilities through their tendency to exaggerate and clash with contemporary reality (DeCock and Land, 2005).

Through this exaggeration, we would argue, these three novels clarify and explore some of the emergent tensions and potentially disturbing consequences of the hyper-organization of space. In particular, we find that these carefully planned spaces harbour an underworld of peripheral 'lived' spatial processes where disgruntled groups struggle to resist the encroaching spatial hyper-organization. In each of the novels we find that these peripheral lived spaces grow until they actually consume those planned spaces and associated practices that the architects and planners had intended, with the skyscraper, the resort and the business-park each degenerating rapidly into a dystopian space of unrestrained deviance.

The structure of the paper proceeds as follows. We begin with the existing literature on organizational space and argue that such spaces are the product of the interactive processes of spatial practice, spatial planning, and 'lived' spatial experiences (Lefebvre, 1991). We then suggest that such spaces are far from homogenous or harmonious, but rather are wracked by tensions and contradictions that exist between the dominant central spaces of planning, and the peripheral lived space (Soja, 1996). After considering the methodological implications of working with literature and introducing the oeuvre of J. G. Ballard, we examine the spatial struggles that take place within a skyscraper in *High Rise*, a residential resort in *Cocaine Nights*, and a techno-business park in *Super Cannes*. In each of these locations, we find a consistent dynamic between what we conceptualise as central spaces which are carefully calculated and planned by architectures and managers, and peripheral spaces, increasingly populated – as the tensions between ordered and lived spatial processes play out – by deviants and malcontents. This dynamic gives rise to a circle of transitions between the social centre and periphery within a physical space. We conclude by drawing out the implications for study of organizational space and highlight the role the study of literature might play in this.

The Construction of Organizational Space

Despite recent talk about 'virtual organizations', the 'death of space', and 'space-time compression', we still tend to identify an organization with physical premises. Indeed, a range of organization theorists have recognised the continued importance of physical space in how we think about and engage with organizations. This has produced a growing body of research considering the spatial aspects of organization (Jones, McLean and Quattrone, 2004). This work has investigated the whole gambit of organizational spaces including the global economy (Castells, 1996), international regions (Yeung, 1999), the nation state (Whitley, 1999), intra-national regions (Saxinen, 1993), neighbourhoods (Baum and Meizas, 1996), work stations (Warren, 2005), the body (Dale, 2005) and more hybrid spaces such as action-nets (Czariawska, 2004). However, the central focus of many studies of organizational space has been the building or workplace itself (Guillén, 1997; Yanow, 1998; Baldry, 1999). In this paper we intend to both follow this work, making the immediate built form our central unit of analysis.

There are at least three different philosophical approaches underpinning studies of organizational space (Hernes, 2004; Spicer and Taylor, 2004). The first treats it as a purely physical entity, an approach which can be largely found in modern mathematics and physics (Casey, 1997). From this perspective, space is assumed to comprise of measurable distance and proximity between people, walls, tools and other objects and artifacts. Analysing a space, therefore, simply involves enumerating its basic physical description. For instance, ergonomic studies chart the appropriate distances between workers bodies and the tools they use during their work day (Allen, 1977). Others examine how the spatial positioning of workers results in different patterns of social interaction (Oldham and Brass, 1979; Hatch, 1987). While this first approach may provide physically accurate mapping of the work environment, nonetheless, it is unable to account for the significance and meaning that actors give to patterns of distance and proximity. Nor is a physical approach able to explain adequately the relations of power that patterns of distance and proximity materialize and maintain.

A second approach examines organizational space as a 'mental' chimera; one that manifests itself in individual and collective patterns of perception. These patterns of perception are coloured by representations and symbolic systems we encounter. Such a 'mental' theory of spatiality largely developed out of phenomenology research that places considerable emphasis on our perception and experience of space (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962; Bachelard, 1957; Tuan, 1977). According to this approach, space is constructed during our experience and perception of it, coming to life through symbols scattered in space; for instance when the glass walls of the corporate office block calls up ideas of transparency and accountability. Indeed, a range of studies have examined how workspaces are designed to speak to us through certain symbols and aestheticized regimes of meaning (Berger and Kriener, 1990; Burrell and Dale, 2003). Because of these dense layers of meaning, the symbolism invested in various spaces can 'tells tales' about how they were built (Yanow, 1995; 1998) and the purposefulness that lies behind them. The central point here, therefore, is that organizational spaces embody a complex set of symbols and experiences that must be interpreted by the researcher. Nonetheless, while this approach certainly draws out the rich experiential and interpretive aspects of space, it often underplays the relations of power and domination that are so important in the design of organizational spaces (Baldry, 1999).

A third theoretical approach recognises that the construction of organizational space is first and foremost about establishing and maintaining patterns of social domination. Building on Marxist (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 1989) and more recently Foucauldian motifs, such 'critical' theories approach organizational space as the solidification of systems of control. Researchers working in this tradition have investigated how modern organizational spaces display a form of *hyper-organization* in that they strictly ascribes status and hierarchy into physical space (Baldry, 1999), facilitate managerial surveillance and control (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Jacques, 1996), and advantageously manipulate the boundaries between home and work (Nippert-Eng, 1995; Perlow, 1998; Surman, 2002; Fleming and Spicer, 2004). This body of research has begun to yield significant insights into how both the physical configuration of such hyper-organizational spaces of production and consumption, as well as experiences and perceptions of such spaces are the product and materialisation of relations of power.

In this paper, it is our concern, while drawing on all three of these emergent traditions, to focus largely on a combination of the second and third approaches in terms of developing a series of critical reflections on the ways in which power relations are both physically and conceptually manifested through the built environment in general, and such hyper-organizational spaces in particular. In doing so, we also ask how such relations are themselves subjected to practices and processes of resistance and struggle and how these might potentially play themselves out.

Theorizing Social Space

In order to formalize treatments of organizational space as a social product, a range of researchers within organization studies have turned to Henri Lefebvre's (1991) conception of social space (Cairns, McInnes and Roberts, 2003; Spicer and Taylor, 2004; Hernes, 2004; Ford and Harding, 2004; Watkins, 2005). Building on the assertion that space is socially produced, Lefebvre identified three significant sets of processes – refereed to as 'spatial trilectics' by Soja (1996) – that give rise to social space.

The first process is spatial planning which is 'tied to the relations of production and of the 'order' which those relations *impose*' (Lefebvre, 1991: 33: our emphasis). As the name suggests, spatial planning involves the careful application of technocratic knowledge and rationality in the distribution of objects, symbols and people within a physical space to ensure order and control. It typically involves a whole range of expert activities such as office allocation planning, architecture, interior design, and production flow planning to name just a few. Since spatial planning is the outcome of the dominant relations of production, it represents the interest of the *central* strata of a given society.

Contrary to spatial planning is the process of 'lived space'. Rather than accepting buildings or towns as they are intended – *imposed*, in Lefebvre's word – by the designer, lived space signifies ways in which spaces are 'directly *lived* through [their] associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users"' (Lefebvre, 1991: 39, original emphasis). Lived space emerges through the meaningful and indeed, phenomenological aspects of human experiences, embodied in actors'

dynamic engagement with a given physical space. Following Lefebvre, this process is often 'linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life' (1991: 33), thus representing the interest of *peripheral* groups of a society.

According to Lefebvre, both spatial planning and lived space are mental in nature, for they tend to show themselves as 'verbal signs and symbols' (language, mathematical figures, and etc.) and 'non-verbal' ones (visual images and etc.) respectively (1991: 39). Both, however, do have physical manifestations, and these are signified by the third process of spatial practice. Spatial practice is temporal and made up of everyday acts of movement, interaction, and dwelling within a given space – 'the daily life of a tenant in a government-subsidized high-rise housing project', to use Lefebvre's own example (1991: 38). Unlike the previous processes, spatial practice is perceivable, thus constituting the domain where spatial planning and lived spatial experiences, as well as their clashes and interactions, can be easily observed.

Lefebvre's theory enlightens us, first and foremost, to how we might define space. Space, according to Lefebvre, cannot be treated as a homogenous entity; rather, it has a tripartite quality – mental, physical and social – each constituting *a* manifestation of the overall concept of space. As mentioned earlier, this article focuses on physical space, and in doing so it automatically links us to the other aspects, in particular, the social aspect of space. This linkage is important, for it is here that the trilectics provide a framework for theorizing how relations of power are produced and sustained within space through the manifestation of its physical appearance.

In his later work, Lefebvre (2004) suggests that lived space stands in opposition to planned and regulated space. This is because instead of relying upon abstract logic, lived space emerges through an ephemeral collection of symbols, experience and rhythms of daily life that responds to and resists the rationalized planning. Picking up on the theme, Soja (1989, 1996) holds that spatial planning and practices associated thereof generate spaces of domination insofar as they are controlled and shaped by powerful groups through technologies of professionalization and rationalization. In contrast, lived space is a 'terrain for the generation of "counterspaces", spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginal position' (Soja, 1996: 68). Lived space creates 'temporary autonomous

zones' of underground and marginal spheres of social life where struggles against the dominant social strata are constructed and launched (Shield, 1999: 195; also see Toyoki, 1995).

Lefebvre's 'spatial trialect' suggests, therefore, that hyper-organizational spaces such as the industrial factory or the 'new office' do not only create conceived patterns of domination and control, but also generate novel forms of lived space; that is, new configurations of tension and contradiction, struggle and freedom. What remains unclear, however, is exactly how these new 'lived spaces' are forged and maintained within what can appear to be highly regimented spaces, and what consequences they might have in terms of the dominant configuration of such spatial territories. In what follows, we explore this problem.

Method

Studies of the social production of organizational spaces have drawn on a number of methodological approaches including architectural analysis (Martin, 2003; Kersten & Gilardi, 2003), and ethnographic studies (Surman, 2002; Ford and Harding, 2004; Fleming & Spicer, 2004). These methods emphasise the potent mixture of systems of control and resistance within existing organization. They are, however, largely unable to access those images and representations that might inform the development and negotiation of organizational space. One method that has provided particularly useful in unearthing these potent images and representations of organizations, however, is literary analysis (Czarniawska and de Monthoux, 1994; Zald, 1996; Easton and Arjuro, 1997; Knights and Willmott, 1999; De Cock, 2000; Rhodes, 2001; Jones, 2002; Rhodes and Brown, 2004; De Cock and Land, 2005). It has been argued that literature and literary analysis are useful because of their realism and proximity to actual experiences (Knights and Willmott, 1999). Nonetheless, somewhat more recent accounts have also suggested that literature may also prove valuable for the study of organization because, somewhat conversely, it exaggerates and clashes with existing reality (De Cock and Land, 2005). Thus, by engaging with exaggerated reality it becomes possible to illuminate the 'not immediately obvious' aspects of organizational life, those which might be overlooked by more traditional modes of

analysis. This allows organizational literary critics to open up potent aspects of organizational life which typically lurk in the shadows (De Cock, 2000: 603).

Interestingly, the growing body of literary analysis in organization studies reminds us that there is a wide range of literature on organizational life and organized spaces such as the office and the factory. One genre which has been particularly vigorous in exploring such spaces is that of science fiction (Smith *et al.*, 2001). In this genre, we find hyper-organizational spaces such as space stations, futuristic cities, virtual mindscapes or improbable under-sea vessels. Many of these spaces are clearly fantastical, and are separated from ourselves by huge distances in time or space. However, the hyper-organizational spaces we find in the work of the English Science Fiction novelist, J. G. Ballard are somewhat closer to home (Fitchett and Fitchett, 2001).

Unlike, for example the work of Arthur C. Clark, Ballard's novels feature instantly recognisable spaces such as the shopping mall, the motor-way, the high-rise apartment and the office park. They are often set in a near future or alternative present, and are populated by characters which bare a stark resemblance to people we might know. Of particular relevance here is that a consistent theme throughout much of Ballard's work is the dystopian results of highly utopian and hyper-organizational spaces, the 'misguided reaction to repressed – capitalist or bureaucratic – abuse of science' (Suvin, 1979: 67). Indeed, some claim that Ballard's novel teem with 'post-modern resistance' and forms of excess that are disturbing and engaging in equal measure (Wagar, 1991). To explore some of these themes as fictional representations of spatial conflict within such spaces, we have decided to focus on three of Ballard's novels that place hyper-organizational spaces and their inhabitant's reactions at the centre of the story. These are: *High-Rise*, *Cocaine Nights* and *Super-Cannes*. In what follows then, we shall explore the dynamic between the ongoing planned reproduction of hyper-modern spaces and how these spaces are resisted and challenged by the processes of lived space that also constitute them.

High-Rise

Published in 1975, *High-Rise* resonates with many of the motifs of gothic literature (Parker, 2005); only this time, there is no cathedral or catacomb, but a forty-storey modern high-rise, situated somewhere in the docklands of east London. While the novel is set in the 1970s, it is meant to be futuristic rather than realistic (McGrath, 2004). Isolated from the world at large with its self-sustaining facilities and highly successful bourgeois inhabitants, the high-rise rapidly degenerates from a highly organized experiment in modern living to a carnivalesque orgy of destruction and barbarism. Women butcher people alive for pleasure, men seek food (occasionally human flesh) and shelter among garbage, and children play with human bones pickled clean by scavengers. It is indeed a space of the macabre.

Originally conceived of as a hyper-organizational space that would not only ensure that the needs of its inhabitants would be systematically and efficiently met, but equally one that would maintain social order and stratification through a rigid spatial hierarchy, the high-rise is taken to embody the ultimate victory of systemic modernity. In particular, this hierarchy is achieved both symbolically and functionally. On the symbolic level, the high-rise epitomizes culture's triumph over nature, for it enables man to look 'down at the sky, rather than up at it' (10), and as such, an occupant's height in the 'vertical city' (9) serves to assure her/him of class position relative to other occupants. On the functional level, occupants' accesses to different facilities of the building that are apparently designed for the sake of convenience strengthen social distinctions in a more concrete manner. Despite their 'virtually homogeneous' personal and professional backgrounds (11), residents of the high-rise easily adapt themselves to these built-in social codes and divide themselves into distinct social stratum. For instance, people who occupy the highest five floors, with their exclusive accesses to fast elevators and nearest parking spaces, regard themselves as the ruling elites of the building, while occupants on the lowest ten floors are denigrated as the 'rowdy' peripheral mob (35). Thus spatial planning exerts a particularly strong influence over how space is practiced and, initially at least, lived.

Yet as processes of lived space increasingly come to exert themselves through everyday spatial practices, what we witness is a degeneration of the very order and stability that such spatial hyper-organization was implemented to maintain. What is

less expected by the designer, however, is that daily bickering over noise and garbage disposal soon gives rise to guerrilla warfare. Initially, such behaviour – dropping beer bottles from the balcony and drowning other people's dog in the swimming pool, for instance – remains relatively covert and is spatially confined to personal or secretive spaces untraceable to any particular individual. Ultimately though, spatially subversive processes emerge into the open: corridors and stairways are blockaded with broken furniture, raiding parties are formed and undertake pillages, and residents defend their 'own' territories with any weapon they can find, with garbage bags used as chemical fumes, kitchen chairs as grenades, and golf clubs as bayonets.

Designed on the principle of cost-efficiency and equipped with the most up-to-date technologies, the high-rise is the very embodiment of scientific rationality. In this sense, therefore, the occupants' violent penchants, initially directed at the building itself – graffiti, vandalism of elevators and air-conditioning and destruction of public phones – can be viewed as 'lived' struggles against the over-rationalization of late-capitalist society (Delville, 1998). Yet such struggles quickly reveal themselves as janus-faced, for not only is resistance expressed towards the rationalisation, and to draw on the Weberain terminology, disenchantment of everyday lives, it also comes to be targeted at other occupants, as residents are increasingly lured by their intrinsically lived desires to 'remove the need to repress every kind of anti-social behaviours' (43), which the high-rise helps to satisfy. Residents are all too happy to join the 'secret logic of the high-rise' (142), allowing the free-reign of libidinous impulse as incest, masochism, voyeurism and murder stake their claims to territorial dominance. Eventually, the high-rise dwellers regress through feudalism and the polygamist stone-age, until finally they revel in pre-historical barbarism as all traces of modernity and civilization are lost.

What, in our view, *High-Rise* suggests therefore, is how patterns of domination and power are written into such a hyper-organizational space through careful, rational planning which imprints a strict social hierarchy onto such territories and those who occupy them. In this extreme, if albeit fictional example of planned space, such spatial technologies of control are, in the first instance, rapidly taken up and maintained through the daily spatial practices of its occupants. However, these rationally planned spaces also harbour peripheral processes of 'lived space' through which residents are

able to struggle against the formalisation of their spatial practices, plotting revenge and retaliation, firstly against the building and ultimately against each other. As this lived space becomes increasingly widespread, it tends to move from hidden, peripheral spaces – secret chambers if you will – into central space. Yet what perhaps makes the high-rise so eerie is that, ultimately, it becomes a space without any exit. For despite its feigned nature, it gradually appears more real than the outside world and totally encloses its occupants. One after another, the residents give up plans of moving out and promise themselves that they will 'never again try to leave the high-rise' (123). This space of bloody contestation, as the ending of the novel implies, is on its way to becoming central, or even total, and, in doing so expelling 'all peripheral elements with a violence that is inherent to the space itself.' (Lefebvre, 1991: 332)

Cocaine Nights

Like *High-Rise*, *Cocaine Nights* also takes place in a quasi-futuristic space of hyper-organization and control. Set in Estrella de Mar, a residential retreat for the professional class situated on the Costa del Sol of Spain, it is a story of life in a closely regulated environment bestrewn with mock-Roman apartments, half-timbering *bureau de change*, and filling-stations disguised as cathedrals. The community provides a model of the 'leisure societies [that] lie ahead of us' (180) and an 'experiment' in 'Europe's future' (209, 23). Once again, therefore, this is a hyper-organizational space of the first order.

The central and peripheral social orders of this particular territory are delineated throughout the novel in the form of confrontations between reason and unreason, and morality and immorality. The central character, an amateur detective named Charles, sets out to enquire about an arson case in the resort, and through his investigations uncovers two distinct spatial processes within the residential retreat. On the one hand we observe a healthy Estrella de Mar, much aligned to its initial purpose of reproducing a healthy, civilised space, exemplified by its crowded sport centres, an almost empty clinic and a thriving art community that feasts on Harold Pinter and T.S. Eliot. On the other hand, however, this is a residential retreat 'wired up to crime like a cable TV network' (158). Gambling, illegal sex, drug abuse and burglary are rife.

What is perhaps most telling in the world of *Cocaine Nights*, however, is the more explicit, and indeed necessary interrelationship between order and chaos, civilisation and degradation. Hyper-organization is portrayed in starkly dialectical terms as an almost necessary precondition for its own antithesis of systemic breakdown and a decent to lawlessness and deregulation as the resort seems to nurture boredom and brain death. This is perfectly captured by a familiar yet deeply unnerving scene of television viewers:

> [T]heir faces lit by the trembling glow of a television screen. No expression touched their eyes, as if the dim shadows on the hessian walls around them had long become a satisfactory substitute for thought (215).

Crime, therefore, becomes the emergent and seemingly inevitable solution to this zombie-like state of being. It pumps adrenalin into resident's deadened bodies, 'quicken[s] the nervous system and jump[s] the synapse deadened by leisure and inaction' (180). It therefore comes as no surprise that the saviour of this resort is a rapist, drug-dealer, porn film director, car thief, shoplifter, burglar, vandal, and arsonist called Crawford whose war against the rationally planned spaces of Estrella de Mar is unfolded through a series of felonious spatial practices.

He starts as a lone (anti)hero, who ventures to save the world with personal, and therefore 'lived', struggles. As was the case in *High-Rise* initially great caution is taken to conceal his criminal deeds from the attention of the general public – stolen articles are returned to their owners shortly after each theft, and instigators of attempted rapes and public arsons are never identified – and the physical spaces employed are just as elusive. For instance, Crawford's Porsche is a highly mobile space that enables him to lose any followers during looting trips, while his apartment in which a porn film is made is redecorated afterwards to eliminate traces.

Crawford, however, soon finds sympathy with almost every other resident that he comes across, and his criminal practices extend to the whole of Estrella de Mar. The initial 'secret chambers' within which such oppositional spatial practices take place thus become more widespread as pamphlets containing heroine sachets appear on doorsteps, gambling brochures find their ways into personal email accounts of residents, and advertisement of 'deep, intimate, discreet' massage services appear on

telephone kiosks (284). Once again, this expansion of the peripheral is paralleled by the shrinking of rationally planned and regulated spatiality; a process which appears complete when crime replaces morality as the rule of the game and becomes the hegemonic rationality of not only general spatial practices – we find to our horror that five people are burned alive just because the sight of fire keeps everyone revitalized – but ultimately of planned space as well. Thus, blueprints for restaurants, nightclubs, residential retreats are laid out by Crawford and his colleagues; each one *designed* to be the 'infrastructure' of future networks of crime (257). As such, criminal immorality not only becomes the dominant social force, but it begins to materialize itself through processes of spatial planning. Indeed the spread of these new planned spaces of opulence and indulgence is only challenged at the end of the book when Crawford is shot dead – yet even then the perpetrator, or the ultimate motive is withheld by the author.

In a similar vein to *High-Rise*, *Cocaine Nights* explores the transition between the central and peripheral social spaces as a result of spatial trialectics that emerge between rationally planned spaces, the civil spatial practices, and the underground processes of irrational and pulsating murderous 'lived space'. In the first place, the ambiguity between reason and unreason makes such transition not only possible, but in a sense unavoidable. As the novel proceeds, the marginal lived space of secret crime, pornography and murder slowly gains the upper-hand in a struggle against the planned and rationalized social order. Such a struggle is materialized in the spatial practices of Estrella de Mar and is supported by changes in the physical spaces that the centre and the periphery each appropriates. Finally, the transition consummates as peripheral lived struggles inform the reconceptualisation of existing spaces, and the creation of new space of debauchery. By the end of the novel, we are asking what happens when the seemingly antithetical rationality of debauched lived space takes over the entirety of the community. It is to this theme, as explored in *Super-Cannes*, that we shall now turn.

Super-Cannes

As we have seen, the high-rise and Estrella de Mar are designed in such a way that they in fact encourage or even necessitate power struggles. In the novel *Super-Cannes*, Ballard provides a more extreme version of future, hyper-organizational spatial design

in which the very possibility of peripheral resistance is, or so it is assumed, institutionally nullified. The story itself takes place at Eden-Olympus, Europe's largest and most advanced business park. The name of Eden-Olympus, a weird concoction of Christian and Pagan shrines, is suggestive of the dubious 'perfection' that the business park boasts. With pleasant artificial lakes, time-saving bathrooms in each office, and kitchens each with a 'control panel more complicated than an airliner's cockpit' (24), Eden-Olympus is a masterpiece of modern rationality, owing, not so much to its maximum efficiency and aesthetic pleasure as to the rigid code of behaviours that it prescribes. 'Civility and polity [are] designed into Eden-Olympus, in the same way that mathematics, aesthetics and an entire geopolitical world-view [are] designed into the Parthenon and the Boeing 747' (38).

To uphold this code of ultra-civility, Eden-Olympus adopts two measures. First, it seeks to meet all possible needs of its inhabitants. It provides ample material comfort such as three times the normal salary, a free villa with swimming pool, and benefits for employees' relatives. It also provides for the less reputable needs of employees and encourages residents to 'explore [their] hidden dreams' (96). These secret wishes and desires are actually delivered through measured 'doses' of organised crimes in the form of 'therapy programmes' (251). It is a routine pastime for executives and accountants at Eden-Olympus to descend into the streets of Cannes, beat Arabian immigrants to half-death, rob tourists, and strangle prostitutes. The following rationale is offered: residents of Eden-Olympus have decaying health from overwork, and only violence can restore their eternal youth. Thus crime is justifiable because it helps to maintain the perfect formality of this rationalized space:

> Eden-Olympus and the future. Richer, saner, more fulfilled. And vastly more creative. A few sacrifices are worth it if we produce another Bill Gates or Akio Morita. (297)

As well as such processes of what Marcuse (1988) might have termed 'repressive desublimation' – whereby instinctual liberation is a necessary prerequisite of control – 'harder' and more direct measures of control also ensure order at Eden-Olympus. Eden-Olympus boasts a state-of-the-art clinical network that keeps the latest medical record of all residents. This network enables an analysis of the physical health and the even mental state of members to be fulfilled with 'one prick of the finger on a small

scanner' (67). This panoptic system of bio-surveillance sits alongside a more traditional visual surveillance system made up of four hundred surveillance cameras scattered across the settlement. Altogether, this stifling system ensures that any attempts of resistance are forestalled well in advance. If resistants' behaviours do in fact break loose from this extensive network of monitoring, there is yet one last resort: legitimized killing. Eden-Olympus' armed police ensure that militants, whether potential or actual, are perpetually silenced and that the outside world does not receive the true story of their death.

With superior rewards alongside brute punishment, Eden-Olympus thus appears to constitute a *totally* planned space. The spatial practices of residents in general perfectly mirror the intentions of the business park's architects. Even their moments of abandon, madness and violence are carefully calculated. It would seem that such a rigorously planned space where 'even nature knows her place' (83) would edge out all processes of lived spatiality. Yet moments of lived space continue to be present in the inner-world's of some of Eden-Olympus' inhabitants: Greenwood, one of the early subversive characters in the novel is, for instance, just a step short of being successful before his institutional death.

While the totally designed space of Eden-Olympus provides, unlike Estrella de Mar, few hidden secret chambers where struggle can be plotted – indeed spaces of deviance are already part of the planned space – what emerges is the option of *re-interpreting* the existing spatial configuration. Greenwood's library, for instance, is initially part of the overall plan of Eden Olympus as it serves the dual purpose of a scholarly retreat and as the booking centre of an under-aged sex service. But it is here where Greenwood repents and first decides to act in rebellion. His computer contains becomes a space where a hit-list that looks like a medical appointment schedule is stored. His entire outfit of an amiable and docile doctor – name tag, electronic door pass and white cloak – is re-employed as the most deceitful and deadly weapons in his war against Eden-Olympus. Another character, Paul, employs similar strategies such as joining one of the corporation's therapy programmes to get closer to the most corrupted core of Eden-Olympus. In the final scene, Paul drives to Eden-Olympus, ready to start a bloody shoot-out. He is equipped with the car, gun, uniform and door pass that belong to a security guard.

What is significant here is that Paul uses many of the mechanisms which are so central to the planned space of Eden-Olympus for his own purposes. Indeed, his battle with the intricately planned space is undertaken with its own tools. What we therefore find at the heart of *Super-Cannes* is an indication that even in the most repressive and dominating spaces, processes of re-interpretation and creative misuse create a zone where experiments with lived space can be undertaken and struggles for a redefinition of spatial hegemonies might be undertaken. Thus, even the most hyper-organizational of spatial landscapes appear to be driven by the dynamics they seek to attenuate, as the processes of lived spatiality vie for dominance as an outcome of the very regulation which defines them.

Discussion

Just as Dante's images of hell bore a striking resemblance to the manufactory of the Venice arsenal, the images of hyper-organized space we find in Ballard touch us because they are so close to the world of shopping malls, office parks and security spaces that we inhabit. In many respects, of course, it should be no surprise that these scenes bare an 'accurate' resemblance to the 'empirical reality' of such spatial landscapes. After all, *High-Rise* was written in 1975, when massive urban development was just beginning to occur in London docklands (Hurst, 1996) while *Super-Cannes* is seen to be 'loosely mirrored on the existing Business Park of Sophia Antipolis' (de Cock, 2001: 83). But, for Ballard these writings are largely 'speculative fiction' because they explore the worst possible fate that could befall those occupying such contrived and regulated spaces (Delville, 1998; Hall, 2000).

Nonetheless, the hyper-organizational spaces in each of the three novels are intricately planned to provide efficient and rational rhythms of work and pleasure. The high-rise has a careful status hierarchy built into every aspect of the building. Estrella de Mar provides a seamless network of pleasure spaces. In Eden-Olympus, spaces of deviance are even designed into the fabric of the business park. Each of these novels presents us with a world where 'Town-scapes are changing. The open-plan city belongs to the past – no more *ramblas*, no more pedestrian precincts, no more left banks and Latin quarters. We are moving into the age of security grills and defensible space' (*Cocaine-Night*: 219). Thus, the spaces in each novel are carefully designed to

restrict access from outsiders, ensure utter cleanliness and efficiency, and provide a stress free environment which is privatized, defensive, disintegrated, and above all secure (Bauman, 1999; Sennett, 1992; Kornberger and Clegg, 2004). They offer environments in which where busy executives can move about without encountering the poor or the cultural transgressor, and where communities and public events are either 'designed out' due to fear of crime and pollution, or 'designed in' so as to assert maximum regulation, even with masquerading as untrammelled spontaneity.

In so many respects, then, such fictional spaces, or so we would assert, cannot help but resonate with the very real world of the contemporary organizational space. Shopping malls, business parks and indeed even office spaces are increasingly coming to display such hyper-organizational characteristics as everything from the productive, through the ludic to even the non-waking dimensions of human activity are integrated into the planned spatial landscape. Thus new office spaces, for instance, design in play zones, informal exchange zones and even sleep zones (Myerson and Ross, 2003) in an attempt to incorporate processes of lived space into a set of central or dominant spatial plans and practices. Yet what each of Ballard's novels reminds us is that even the most carefully planned spatial environments engender the kinds of trialectcial relationship alluded to by Lefebvre, leading to the emergence of antithetical practices that challenge the supposed centralised hegemony of the planned and practiced.

We witness, therefore, the high-rise becoming a den of cannibalistic, pre-modern barbarians, a family in Estrella de Mar burned to death in an act of arson so to entertain the crowds, and bloody shoot-outs counted as the final resort for a wakened humanity. For Ballard these excesses are produced by the subversive force of human desires being coupled with the opportunities provided by a hyper-organized society. While these lived spatial processes of excess are, or so it would appear, relatively omnipresent, what we actually observe as each of the novels progresses is a gradual shift in the primary location of these processes from the periphery to the centre of social life. This movement appears to occur in several stages which we will explore below.

To start with, strict codes of behaviours, representing central social orders (over-rationalization and systematic modernity, as with all three novels), always constitute planned spaces, and these codes do in fact exert strong influences on spatial practices

in general. However, homo sapiens' animal instincts and their secret cravings for socially unacceptable conducts (a constant motif of Ballard's fiction), and more importantly, the very fine line between reason and unreason (most clearly demonstrated in *Cocaine Nights*), undermine and challenge the dominant position of these orders the moment planned spaces realize their material forms. As such, planned spaces, be it a high-rise, residential resort or business park, harbour the existence of their potential un-doers – the peripheral, resistive lived space and its associated spatial practices.

Initially, the forces of lived space appear most prevalent within a series of secret chambers which are well hidden from those who control the dominant spatial practices. Throughout the novels these take a range of forms such as a private room, a personal computer or a car. These peripheral sites of lived space then gradually encroach upon centrally planned and practiced space as more people are lured into the various secret chambers. There is also a qualitative change in space as new types of secret chambers emerge. With this expansion, the power of the peripheral sites of lived space grows, allowing such processes to operate within the arena of trialectic struggle with far greater efficaciousness and impact.

The expansion of peripheral forces, however, is not un-countered by the social centre, as the latter becomes aware of the approaching danger. A good example is provided by *Super-Cannes*, in which a refined form of *total* space is planned and materialized. Yet even here secret chambers of resistance continue to exist, thanks to people's ability to re-interpret and creatively misuse planned spaces. Thus, the ever-existence of lived space is guaranteed by the very lived-ness – the subjectivity, in other words – of space users.

This leads to the final stage in which those occupying the peripheral spaces develop counter-strategies to avoid attempts to eliminating resistance in an attempt to 'occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those defined [by] oppression and exploitation' (Pile, 1997: 3) and reproducing the dynamic tensions of 'oppositions, contrasts and antagonisms' (1991: 39) that define the quality of lived space. As such, the exposure or even the appropriation of lived spatial processes does not mean the end of struggle. Rather, actors may use the very physical manifestations of planned

space to mount counter-attacks. Success of lived space culminates when spatial designs representing the interest of peripheral forces replace those of the central social order and become the blueprint for the entire community. The circle of the Lefebvre's trilectics is now complete.

Yet while one might be tempted to celebrate such tales of human will and the desire to reassert a constitutive relationship to the spatial constitution of such hyper-organizational environments, one is also left feeling somewhat ambivalent as to the direction such narratives appear to take it in. For while these are, on the one hand, tales of spatial struggle between the territorial aspirations of hyper-organization and ongoing processes of lived spatiality, they are also a warning of the descent of organizational modernity into its barbaric other. In each of the novels, the rational planned spaces of work and leisure actually turn out to be closely interwoven, if not indeed *constitutive of* the 'irrational' violence of peripheral, lived, spatiality. They display the growing violent response of lived spatial processes as the rational response to the irrationality of an every ubiquitous hyper-organizational environment to the extent, as say in *Cocaine Nights*, the criminal underworld begins planning spaces of its own as a form of counter-rationality

Very much, therefore, as myth became enlightenment and enlightenment myth for Adorno and Horkhiemer (1973), what Ballard reminds us is that the internal to the spatial processes of such hyper-organization are the seeds of a destructive irrationality which is not only characteristic of the drive to formalisation and instrumentality, but which can also be said to shape and permeate its other, in the form of resistive processes of lived spatiality. This spatial dialectic (or perhaps trialectic) of enlightenment is, therefore, both an outcome as well as precondition for the exertion of lived spatiality; offering both a libidinal amelioration of the repressive formality of hyper-organization while, at the same time, risking descent into an even greater state of despair and, ultimately barbarism.

Conclusion

In this paper we have journeyed, via the realm of literary fiction, through three hyper-organizational spaces of production and consumption; the high-rise, the leisure

community and the high-tech office park. In each of these spaces we found many of the techniques of contemporary organizational management were materialized in a spatial form. They were all aesthetically pleasing, provided the occupants with generous benefits, and invited them into a life of hyper-efficiency and hyper-creativity. The planners had even, to a lesser or greater extent, taken the opportunity to build fun, indulgence, and deviance into these communities. They were, in effect, the spatial materialization of the modern quest for order and security through the techniques and technologies of rational planning and environmental control.

What we found, however, is that these spaces did not remain bastions of rationality, order and defence for long. In each case, processes of lived space began to assert themselves as their occupants sought to deface and challenge the carefully planned edifices which encased them. Furthermore, as the ferocity of these challenges increased, various forms of ultra-violent resistance rapidly became the norm. Indeed in some cases (such as *Cocaine Nights*), those engaged in resistance no longer simply appropriated the existing spatial terrain, but actually began planning new spaces of deviance. Ultimately, what each of these three novels suggests is that the quality of such hyper-organizational spaces is constituted not just through careful planning on the part of visionary architects and entrepreneurs. Rather they emerge through ongoing tensions between the planned space dominated by architects on the one hand, and lived spatial processes of their participants on the other, as the two are mediated and demonstrated by processes of spatial practices. Thus, the first central contribution of this paper to debates about organizational space is to suggest that spaces are not simply accepted, but are actively contested. Moreover, this process of active contestation and struggle is animated by interaction between planned spaces, spatial practice and lived spatiality.

A second contribution this paper makes has been to chart the temporal process through which struggles against such space move. This involves the establishment of a new planned space and associated spatial practices, the development of new peripheral lived spaces, the reform of planned and practiced spaces to react to patterns of resistance, and finally, lived space materializing itself through the development of new planned spaces. Thus, while struggle against planned spaces appears to initially arise in the various crevasses and secret enclaves created by dominant – yet peripheral

– processes of lived space, at times it can launch direct attacks on this planned space using any means that come to hand, eventually attempting to configure planned spaces of its own. This reminds us that struggle around space will transform through time, and as it is transformed, change the space it is targeted against; an observation supported by studies of the development of open-plan offices which found that intentions of mobile hot-desking were rapidly resisted by employees who 'nested' in one desk, subsequently giving rise to new standards of legitimate desk use on the part of management (Warren, 2005; Halford, 2004).

Penultimatly, this paper asks the reader to further consider the role literature can play in the study of organizational spaces. Although the spaces that Ballard explores bear an eerie resemblance to spaces we are familiar with, the extreme reactions of those who dwell within these spaces is highly unfamiliar. Although vandalism is part of the daily life of the city, the kind of violence and struggles which features in these novels is not. It is not the realism of these reactions which is valuable in each of novel. Rather, it is precisely its clash with existing empirical reality that is so engaging (De Cock and Land, 2005). Because the hyper-organizational spaces that Ballard presents us with are at the same time familiar and strange, he is able to enliven our perceptions and understandings of what *might* happen in such experimental spaces. By drawing out the potentialities (rather than the actualities) of such spaces we are reminded of the consistent threats and problems of disorder, violence and breakdown which lurk in the corridors of say the modern office building. Moreover, by turning to literature, we have been able to draw out the apocalyptic images of violence and destruction which haunt our understandings and imaginings of even the most mundane organizational environment.

And it is this latter observation that draws us to our final, and perhaps most unsettling thoughts. For what is suggested from our reading of Ballard is that integral to such a spatial trialectic is the reassertion of a well established diagnosis of hyper-organized modernity; which is that such a fetishisation of the rational itself ultimately gives birth to its own self-destructive forces whereby, as Adorno (1992: 320) observed, progress is characterised by the journey from the slingshot to the atom bomb. Certainly in each of the three novels we are reminded that hyper-organizational spaces do not only produce the future found in architectural plans of well dressed individuals roaming

freely in an orderly, clean and airy environment. Rather, these highly rationalized spaces may actually produce extensive 'irrationality' and an extensive breakdown of civility. This may come in the form of aggressiveness (*High-rise*) or extreme pleasure seeking (*Cocaine Nights*) amongst occupants. These reactions may also be carefully accommodated by planners (*Super Cannes*). But underlying the various descriptions of violence the thesis is retained that such spatially contested territories such as the high-rise, resort and hi-tech business park give rise to deeply troubling reactions on the part of their occupants – perhaps a dark warning to the those over-enthusiastic designers of the total mall, the gated community and the 21st century office.

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