Dream and Nightmare in William Gibson's Architectures of Cyberspace

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"Like City Lights, Receding…"

'…the cyberpunks…are fascinated by interzones: the areas where..."the street finds its own uses for things"'. (Bruce Sterling, Mirrorshades xiii).

'Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions… Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding…' (William Gibson, Neuromancer 67).

'Cyberpunk', which forms the central theme of this paper, has been described by one of its best-known practitioners as '(a)n unholy alliance of the technical world and...the underground world of pop culture, visionary fluidity and street-level anarchy' (Sterling xii) 1. Françoise Choay insists that utopia must consist of a narrative description of a model society, and that, 'the model society (must be) supported by a model space which is a necessary, integral part of it' (34). Does Cyberpunk qualify as a 'utopia' in this sense? The privileged site for Cyberpunk, as both fiction and social criticism, is 'cyberspace', the notional space within which digital communication occurs. In the vast literature that has sprung up on the subject in the last decade, this space takes on the aura of that 'nowhere-somewhere', which is one sense of the term 'utopia' (Robins 36).

Cyberpunk is not only possessed of a utopian space-how it articulates its sense of such a space connects to an older utopian tradition. As Marcos Novak has noted, the sense of cyberspace as a 'liquid', emergent and temporalised spatiality recalls earlier 'visionary' architectures, including those of the Futurists and Situationists ('Liquid Architectures' 246-7). This connection renders Fredric Jameson's assertion that Cyberpunk represents 'the supreme literary expression, if not of Postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself' (Jameson 419), highly problematical. Using Novak's insight as my starting point, I want to concentrate on the work of perhaps the best-known Cyberpunk author, William Gibson, tracing his use of utopian architectural metaphor from his first novel Neuromancer, to his most recent, All Tommorrow's Parties, published in 1999. Gibson's understanding of cyberspace, as a confused tangle of forms, 'like city lights receding', is profoundly architectural. Much of this architectural imaginary recalls earlier visions: from the Surrealists in the 1930's to the Situationists in the 1960's. This sensibility is also present in Gibson's description of non-virtual environments. From these sources, Gibson derives his 'utopia'-a fluid, organic spatiality constituting a rich web of adventures and encounters, and also marked by a sense of the 'uncanny' and the collective unconscious (space as dreamscape).

However, where the earlier visionary traditions Gibson draws upon were resolutely utopian, understanding their dreamscapes as both latent in the present, and as hoped-for future, his own writing takes a far more negative view than some of these earlier visions. In his future, alternative spatial orders are hemmed in by the 'geometry of instrumental reason' of cyber-technocracy. Thus, his work has an ambiguous character, oscillating between utopian hope and dystopian despair, between dream and nightmare. As such, it differs not only from the earlier 'visionary' tradition, but also from the rather more unqualified visions of some of his Cyberpunk contemporaries. This ambiguity present in his writings is, I shall argue, to be explained by the fact that our own time has close similarities to that experienced (and rejected) by earlier visionaries. Gibson differs from them mainly in his greater pessimism as to the possibilities for transcending the present.

Into the Terminal, out on the Street

Cyberpunk's core motif is the increasing interpenetration of culture and technology (Sterling xii). As technology becomes ever more pervasive within everyday life, it seems to increasingly escape human control, become 'virtual', and convert itself into 'the invisible circulations and movements of the electronic age', increasingly mediating human action (Bukatman 62). Here Cyberpunk makes perhaps its key contribution, the concept of Cyberspace-essentially any connection between electronic forms of communication (for example, two computers

engaging in a transaction). Crucially however, Cyberspace makes information visible. Thus, it is a way we can enter 'the invisible spaces of the computer' and connect to them directly, restoring a sense of control. In Gibson's Neuromancer, this has evolved to the point where we can download virtual reality constructs directly into the brain via 'neural jacks', creating 'a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions...lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding...' (67). As I have already suggested, this imagining of a space that cannot 'really' exist gives cyberspace utopian credentials (see Robins 135). Also of course, cyberspace as imagined by Cyberpunk is not yet with us. As Roger Burrows notes, what we can call 'Gibsonian' cyberspace is in effect a merger of the existing Internet with Virtual Reality (241). As we shall now see, cyberspace is also utopian in that it makes-explicit or implicit-reference to 'visionary' or utopian architectures and concepts of spatiality of the recent past.

Marcos Novak has suggested that cyberspace is a 'liquid' space, existing as much in time as space. It is a 'nonlinear and nonlocal' space, in which 'preferred modes of narration would inherently involve distributedness, multiplicity, emergence and open-endedness' ('Transmitting Architecture' 7). Such fluidity was anathema to 'High' Modernism, which sought rather-as Le Corbusier termed it-the Radiant City. This hierarchically ordered space represented a 'geometry of instrumental reason', a space created by, and a site for, centralised technocracy (Bukatman 69). Such Functionalist planning was legible and transparent, possessed of a single meaning unlike the liquid polyvalence Novak discerns in cyberspace. Legibility was to be achieved by means of the planner's comprehensive and detached 'birds-eye view' (Hughes 184). However, as Novak notes, the desire to transcend narrow Functionalist notions of 'utility', and create fluid, emergent spaces, both predated and prefigured the notion of cyberspace. It emerged as a parallel tradition to Corbusier, in the form of anti-Functionalist 'visionary architectures' of the Modernist period, including contributions from the Situationists, but also Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius and the Futurists (Novak, 'Liquid Architectures' 246). Therefore, Cyberpunk connects to a much older strain of thinking around spatiality, architecture and urbanism.

I shall now turn to William Gibson's use of architectural themes, reminiscent of these older traditions, in charting the 'nonspace' of cyberspace. At the forefront of Cyberpunk's (re)assertion of control over data are cyber-adventurers, hackers and 'cowboys' (where 'cyber' meets 'punk'). These marginal or outlaw individuals have a fluid and dynamic relationship to space, using the terrain to advantage. In Neuromancer, the central character, pursued through a real city, compares his evasive tactics to those he uses in cyberspace; 'it was like a run in the matrix…find yourself in some desperate and strangely arbitrary kind of trouble, and it was possible to see (the street) as a field of data... Then you could throw yourself into a highspeed drift...all around you the dance of biz, information made flesh, data interacting in the mazes of the black market' (26). What is interesting about this passage is the use of the term 'drift' to describe the relationship to space of Cyberpunk's protagonists. 'Drift' is the usual English translation of the term derive, used by the 60's postsurrealists the Situationist International to describe a means of '(letting oneself) be drawn by the attractions of the terrain, and the encounters (one) find(s) there' (Debord 50). Therefore, Cyberpunk is connected to this older urban 'avant-garde' through Gibson's notion of the street as epitomised by fluid, mobile practices and encounters. Such an emphasis was of course alien to Corbusier, who abhorred 'the Balzacian...drama of faces in the dark fissures of Paris streets' (Corbusier 112).

This sense of the street and the chance encounters it holds, reappears when Gibson uses an explicit architectural analogy for cyberspace, in his novel, Idoru. Here, Gibson imagines a corner of cyberspace as Hak Nam (or 'City of Darkness')-the erstwhile 'Walled City' of Kowloon. This was an extra-territorial anomaly within Hong Kong, which remained nominally under Chinese control after the 1898 treaty with Britain. The original city, torn down by the Japanese, was replaced by a gigantic high-rise favela, with its own churches, sewerage, factories and postal service, clustered around a labyrinth of dark alleyways (Popham 71-2). As Popham observes, this space was a propitious site for chance encounters and an exploration of the 'attractions of the terrain', offering 'an environment as richly varied and as sensual as anything in the heart of the tropical rainforest'. (75). In his virtual Hak Nam, Gibson stresses this element of street-life and encounter which marks the 'drifts' of cyber-cowboys

and the dérive which Corbusier sought to eradicate: 'they were not alone, others there, ghost-figures whipping past, and everywhere the sense of eyes…' (Idoru 182). Equally, he uses this architectural analogy to stress the multiplicity and dynamism of cyberspace. The 'real' Walled City, Popham argues, despite its terrible shortcomings, represented 'that rarest of things, a working model of the anarchist society…continually responsive to the changing requirements of its users' (75). As in real life, so in Virtual Reality. In Gibson's description of the 'virtual' Walled city in Idoru, the fluid complexity of cyberspace is given physical form: 'countless unplanned strata, nothing about it even or regular. Accreted patchwork of shallow random balconies, thousands of small windows throwing back blank silver rectangles of fog' (181).

The choice of Hak Nam as a metaphor for cyberspace also hints at the status of the latter as 'dreamspace'. A labyrinth of alleyways with dingy indirect sunlight, the Walled City was a classic 'shadowy zone' in Louis Aragon's Surrealist sense of marginal places, sites of furtive, possibly criminal, activity which serve as repositories of a repressed collective unconscious (Idoru 17-18). The greenish light pervading Hak Nam's alleyways (Popham 74) recalls the 'abyssal…blue-green glow' of the Paris Arcades, which Aragon saw as 'ghostly landscapes' of dreams and desires (19). Gibson has noted that the architecture of Virtual Reality can be imagined as an 'accretion of dreams' ('Academy Leader' 28).

Before developing the Hak Nam metaphor for cyberspace, Gibson had already taken the Cyberpunk aesthetic and mapped it onto 'real' space in the guise of the Bridge, located in a San Francisco of the near future, where an earthquake-damaged Bay Bridge has been squatted by the homeless, the undocumented, and the 'other' (Virtual Light 85-6). On the Bridge, there is the complex web of encounter, the sense of 'the street' execrated by Corbusier: '(i)t looked like a carnival, sort of. Or a state fair…the people…as mixed a bunch as their building materials: all ages, races, colors…' (Virtual Light 163). This ordered randomness mirrors the 'toxic diversity' observed in Hak Nam by Peter Popham. The Bridge also has the same evolving organic complexity as both the real and 'virtual' versions of Hak Nam. On top of the original structure 'things had accumulated...around some armature of original purpose, until a point of crisis had been attained and a new program had emerged' (Virtual Light 60). Gibson's description of the Bridge as an armature supporting shifting secondary structures in a cycle of accretion, crises and re-evolution, echoes the 'New Babylon' project of Constant Nieuwenhuys (Constant), who was affiliated to the Situationists in the 1960's. In New Babylon, a vast network of open-plan sectors was intended to support a ceaselessly evolving environment, both cause and consequence of the way in which its inhabitants use space, reacting with it as they drifted through it, in interaction with the other inhabitants. The 'New Babylonians' would 'freely create (their) surroundings, and then explore them through the very process of creating them' (Constant 157).

Novak sees a parallel between the fluidity of Cyberspace and the spaces imagined by Constant, which would take the form of '(a) netlike pattern…of spaces whose ambience can be varied by…an abundant manipulation of colour, light, sound, climate…' ('Liquid Architectures' 247, see also Constant 157). Whilst Gibson's descriptions of cyberspace are less evocative of Constant than the dynamic accretions of the Bridge, it is worth noting that Constant saw New Babylon as a perfect site for the dérive, the practice of drifting according to the attractions offered by a given terrain. As we have seen in the preceding section, Gibson's description of the modus operandi of individuals in cyberspace echoes the practice of dérive. Also, Constant was part of a wider 'Megastructure' movement, which developed in the 1960's, proposing dynamic and flexible architectures, in opposition to the 'total planning' of, for example, Gropius and Corbusier (Banham 9). The movement always sought precursors to megastructures in structures that had evolved in existing built environments-'found megastructures'. Popham describes the original Hak Nam as such an 'organic megastructure' (75). Thus, Gibson is here returning to the sources of the 'Visionary architects' who anticipated cyberspace.

Like Hak Nam, the Bridge functions not only as a mobile, dynamic space, but also as dreamscape. Replete with obsolescent paraphernalia, it acts as a matrix for the collective unconscious of the previous century, like the Arcades, which, for Benjamin-here close to Aragon's Surrealist sensibility-provided a snapshot of the 'utopian dreams' of the 19th century bourgeoisie in the form of prostitution, gambling and fashion (Buck-Morss 39). The lower

levels of the Bridge are ranged with ad-hoc stalls and makeshift commercial spaces echoing the Arcades, and representing an 'accretion of dreams: tattoo parlors, gaming arcades, dimly-lit stalls stacked with decaying magazines'. The whole is made up of a heterogeneous collection of materials which have the same dreamlike role '(r)ain-silvered plywood, broken marble from the walls of forgotten banks, corrugated plastic, polished brass, sequins, painted canvas, mirrors, chrome gone dull and peeling in the salt air' (Virtual Light 59). Thus the accreted dreams Gibson previously discerned in Virtual Reality are now lurking in 'Real Life'. This concern with marginal 'shadowy' spaces shares the Surrealist distrust of the Corbuserian architectural tradition, which seeks transparency, and the repression of the 'opacity' that a collective unconscious introduces into space (Richardson 87, see also Cohen 77-119).

Cyberspace-Dream or Nightmare?

Cyberpunk can, on the strength of the above remarks, be understood as possessing affinities to an historical tradition which seeks to imagine places which are marked by an organic fluidity and sense of encounter, even-at least through Gibson's work-a sense of collective memory, or 'uncanny'. This formed a spatial counterpoint to the tradition represented by Corbusier, where encounter and the street were erased by a 'geometry of instrumental reason'. Such a tradition was utopian in the sense that it imagined such a desired spatial order as against the dominant spatial reality, and this utopia was, in some cases at least, intended as transformative. The new spatial order was realisable, because it was latent in the present. One such transformative spatial utopia was imagined by the Situationists who sought to create 'situations', in which the potential for another spatiality founded on encounter and on letting oneself be drawn by the attractions of the terrain could briefly emerge within the space of the planners. Such transitory 'micro-worlds' would eventually develop into autonomous zones, the proving-grounds of a new society rooted in a spatial (dis)order of creativity and play (Vaneigem and Kotányi 66). Creating this new kind of space was understood as inseparable from the supersession of capitalist society. Situationist architecture was to be synonymous with a transformed world (Levin 139). Henri Lefebvre, a major influence on the Situationists, provides another example of such a 'transformative utopia'. For Lefebvre, intuitive, lived relationships to space, and the rich skein of encounters through which they are actualised, constantly reassert themselves against the planners' 'instrumental geometry', and form the basis for utopian hopes (Writings On Cities 129). Such practices have an oneiric (dreamt) dimension, insofar as they draw on 'pre-conscious and authentic shards of spatiality that animate people' (Shields 165). Here, Lefebvre shows his origins in Surrealism, for which the traces of repressed collective desires found within shadowy zones would be a vital source for 'the complete reconstruction of society on the basis of the maxim: "to each according to his (sic) desire"' (Rosemont 1). Thus the latent utopian spaces haunting the real are also dreamt spaces.

In terms of my presentation so far, Cyberpunk would appear to represent a reinvention of this 'counter-modern' spatial utopia in the form of cyberspace, where both space and the practice of subjects within it, are dynamic, non-hierarchical and fluid. William Gibson provides a vision of such a space, which, drawing on past 'modernist' utopias, is not only marked by fluidity and encounter but by the dreamlike quality of the 'ghostly landscapes' of the Surrealists. Further, drawing on similar utopian spatial and architectural influences he imagines fluid, dynamic spaces, marked by traces of a 'collective unconscious' in 'real' space, in the guise of the Bridge community. However, whilst the aspiration for a space in which mobile, free-flowing encounters create a mobile, organic complexity in which the dreamt emerges in the real is undoubtedly present in Gibson's Cyberpunk writings, unlike in the work of Lefebvre or the Situationists, it tends to remain at a latent level. Therefore, we need to examine the ways in which Gibson qualifies his own utopian hopes-and indeed does so to a much greater extent than other Cyberpunks such as Bruce Sterling-and why he remains, as I will argue, trapped as it were midway between utopia and dystopia, dream and nightmare.

To return first to the vision of cyberspace contained in Gibson's novels, especially Neuromancer, this differs from that of many cyberspace proponents, who unproblematically celebrate its potential for ushering in an 'ideal and universalised form of association and collectivity' (Robins 146). Gibson is more circumspect, giving his vision a much more ambiguous quality. One example of this ambiguity is represented by Gibson's descriptions of

the 'highspeed drifts' of subjects in cyberspace. Such practices have much in common with the dérive as practised by the Situationists and others. However, Situationist drift always carried within it the idea that it was a microcosm of the new society, a first breach in the reified spaces of the market. In comparison, the movements of the cyber-cowboys have the more restricted feel of what Michel de Certeau terms a 'tactic', which 'insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance'. Tactics do not control a delimited field of operations, but are 'always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing"' (de Certeau 19). Spatial tactics, unlike dérives, do not look beyond the system of discipline; rather they remain preoccupied with slipping through holes in its 'nets'.

In the Cyberpunk future these nets are constituted by gigantic corporations-Zaibatsus, in Gibson's novels. Monumental geometric forms denoting these combines punctuate cyberspace at regular intervals: 'transparent 3D chessboard expanding to infinity…the stepped scarlet pyramid of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority burning beyond the green cubes of Mitsubishi Bank of America, and high and very far away…the spiral arms of military systems' (Neuromancer 69). This description recalls less a fluid, decentralised cyberspace, as announced by Sterling, and more the 'perfect platonic solids' of Corbusierian modernism (Hughes 177). Much of the activity of the cyber outlaws consists of tactical manoeuvres in, through, and against these 'Platonic spaces'. The geometrical lines of corporatised cyberspace restrict their movement through their programmed legibility, their openness to sight 2. Such hyper-rational transparency eliminates the 'shadowy zones' in which dreams and desires thrive. Foucault traced this 'fear of darkened spaces', of the 'fantasy world of…darkness, hideouts and dungeons' represented by the Gothic Novel, to Rousseau and the century of Enlightenment (Foucault 154).

As we have seen above, sites such as Hak Nam do provide 'shadowy zones' as well as embodying the latent potential of the net as organic utopian megastructure. These however are prelapsarian spaces, cleaving to a lost age of innocence. As one of the characters explains in Idoru, 'the people who founded Hak Nam were angry, because the net had been very free, but then the governments and the companies…had different ideas… They went there to get away from the laws, they have no laws, like when the net was new' (221). Roger Burrows claims that cyberspace is 'a digitised parallel world which 'from above' might appear as rationally planned (Le Corbusier's metropolis), but from below reveals itself as a Benjaminesque labyrinth, in which no-one can get the bird's-eye view of the plan' (Burrows 242). Here, the repressive, centralised grid is only a visual illusion-in Gibson's cyberspace at least, it is the dominant, although not the only, reality.

The 'real' world of Gibsonian Cyberpunk-the urban environments in which his characters live-is even more a 'space of the other' than his vision of cyberspace. Cityspace, like the matrix, is corporate space, in which heterodox spatial practices have limited room for manoeuvre. In the acknowledgement to the novel Virtual Light, Gibson refers to the work of Mike Davis on Los Angeles. Davis charts how a combination of public policy, middle class fears and corporate redevelopment has led to 'a proliferation of new repressions in space and movement, undergirded by the ubiquitous "armed response"' (224). As a result, the Corbuserian hatred of the street gains new force as spatial segregation and privatisation 'kills the crowd', seeking to replace it with 'a veritable symphony of swarming, consuming monads' (Davis 257). Corbusier's sense of an ordered space available to the planner's gaze is achieved by electronic tagging, and plans for police satellite surveillance (Davis 253). Davis' observations on LA are echoed by Michael Richardson, writing on the transformation of Paris into a 'city of Culture', involving the reduction of space to a single modality and a transparent field of leisure and consumption. Such a move denies 'the latent unconscious factors which the surrealists were pre-eminent in bringing to the surface' (Richardson 87). In both cases, transparency and visibility erase shadowy zones of dreams and desires.

Such a sense of restricted, corporatised cityspace is pervasive in Gibson's work, conveyed through omnipresent security, gated-access work, residence and consumption spaces, and 'sadistic architecture' aimed at deterring the homeless and the itinerant (Virtual Light 87). In Virtual Light, a portion of the San Francisco docks has been converted into a gigantic freeport, 'the Trap', so named because it is gated-access, accessible only on purchasing a $

500 'credit strip' (135). Thus, the uses of space are reduced to univocality-consumption only is permitted. The architects' diagrams for the Trap (by Ming Fung and Craig Hodgetts), accompanying a short story written as a 'prequel' to Virtual Light, bring out the one-dimensionality of this space. It appears as an abstract grid, presented from the 'bird's-eye view' perspective, which reinforces the sense that it is 'transparent'. Only one meaning attaches to it, and 'shadowy' dreams and desires have been abolished (see Gibson, 'Skinner's Room' 158).

Within and against this policed space is the 'autonomous zone' represented by the Bridge, an 'organic megastructure' promising flexibility, and freedom of movement-both for people, and for the fragments of a repressed urban unconscious-in its 'ghostly landscapes'. However, the Bridge is a transient, insecure site, set apart from regularised, controlled corporate space yet constantly hemmed in by it. As such, it is less a utopia than a 'heterotopia'. As Kevin Hetherington argues, heterotopias are 'places of Otherness, whose Otherness is established through a relationship of difference with other sites'. They are not so much places of resistance, he maintains, but rather sources of alternative forms of social ordering, which can play an important (functional) role in 'the social and spatial ordering of modern societies' (Hetherington 8-9). In Gibson's later novel All Tomorrow's Parties, the Bridge has become an established part of San Francisco, a tourist destination, and PR firms are seeking to assist in its exploitation as a fertile source of 'alternate societal strategies'. Even the ghostly landscape of the unconscious it embodies is to be colonised. In the words of a consultant hired to aid 'normalisation', subcultures have always played a crucial role as the place 'where industrial civilisation went to dream' (174). Even the limited utopian potential of this site is ultimately 'recuperated' by the corporate space it seeks to resist.

As I have documented in the above, whilst Cyberpunk has affiliations to an older 'counter-modern' tradition, which imagines a new libertarian and dreamlike spatiality as against the 'geometry of instrumental reason', in Gibson's reading it differs quite sharply from that tradition in its imagination of the future. Organic, dynamic and free space, bearing traces of unconscious dreams and desires, has not overcome Corbuserian rationality. It remains at the level of latent potential, and this potential is even more marginal and constrained than it was in, for example, the Paris of 1930's Surrealists, or 1960's Situationists. The dérive has become an adaptive tactic with little hope of serving as the basis of an 'alternative space'. Where such spaces do have a fragile existence, they are surrounded by a hostile other, and reduced to the status of mere 'pockets' of resistance, or heterotopias, whose dreams and alternative strategies of movement are turned to the service of the dominant power. The ambiguity of Gibson's future is due to the fact that, unlike in the Situationist utopia, a transformed world beyond capital, space is still occupied by the market, which has become more, not less aggressive. This state of affairs Gibson recognises as problematical for his utopia. This is why the status of Gibson's alternative spatialisations is so limited: they have been rolled back both in cyber and 'real' space. As a result, as we have seen in connection with his use of Davis' analysis of LA, the Corbuserian programme against which the utopian tradition to which Cyberpunk is linked positioned itself, is actually gaining ground. In contrast, the spatial vision of other Cyberpunks may be more straightforwardly utopian since, whilst accepting the continuation of spatial commodification, they celebrate it as the agent of new spatialisations. At the most extreme end lies Nick Land's euphoric depiction of 'viro-finance automatisms' ushering in 'an invasion from the future by an artificial intelligence space' (Land 479).

Conclusion

In Virtual Light, one of Gibson's characters reflects that 'we are come not only past the century's closing…but to the end of something else… Everywhere, the signs of closure. Modernity was ending' (90). However, as we have seen, the Gibsonian spatial order remains locked in capitalist Modernity just as much as Cyberpunk's aspirations to transcend it itself have modern origins. Gibson's work can be frustrating. It does not dismiss the validity of utopian 'desire', defined by Ruth Levitas as 'the desire for a better way of being…involv(ing) the imagining of a state of being in which the problems which confront us are removed or resolved' (Levitas 191). The problems of constricting, crushing urban environments, empty of any expression of human dreams and desires due to their transparency and legible ordering,

are resolved by imagining (real and virtual) landscapes governed by play, freedom and the shadows of dreams and desires. As such, his work retains connections to an older tradition of urban and architectural utopianism. However, Gibson's utopia remains restricted to this desire, it does not progress beyond wishing for a better state of being to a belief that this state of being will come to pass-it is devoid of utopian 'hope'. However, as Levitas argues, we must not limit utopia to the question 'what may I hope?', refusing to allow the question 'what may I dream?' (190).

Thus Gibson constructs dreamscapes, 'shadow zones' in which unconscious desires emerge, and maintains these alternative spatialisations at the level of an ultimately unrealiseable dream. This is why his future, whilst bearing witness to these dreams in the form of isolated 'autonomous zones', is inherently dystopian. Unlike the older utopian traditions he draws upon, Gibson cannot 'hope' that space can be freed from the death grip of the market, which reduces its alternative spatialisations to the level of 'heterotopias' and/or adaptive tactics, and leaves the dreams inscribed in them open to plunder. And yet, a glimmer of desire for a different world stubbornly persists, in the 'dreaming objects' of the Bridge community, or the 'sense of eyes' of the Walled City.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 'Utopia at the Millennium' conference at Nottingham University, in June 2000. I would like to thank Peter Fitting for comments on this earlier draft.
2. That such transparency is not innocent is evident if we consider the case of the Singapore ONE network, a virtual city-state, whose imposition of 'transparency' and 'openness' on its citizens is intended to (re)produce them as self governing 'AI' units obeying not 'fallible' human ideology but 'the code of technique itself' (see 2Less, Thomas. 'Singapore ONE'. CTheory. (November 1998).

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