

An interdisciplinary perspective for reading utopia versus dystopia: “The Ultimate City” by J.G. Ballard

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Abstract

In the context of the interdisciplinary nature of architecture, this study dwells on the fruitful relationship between architectural discourse and the “literary spaces” within texts. The aim of this study is to offer an original methodology to architectural discourse by looking into literature – in particular science fiction literature – for the creation of alternative outlines on the future. In this respect, the study is structured on the reading of literary spaces with regard to knowledge acquired from architectural discourse.

Within this interdisciplinary gaze, the exemplary problem definition relies on the contradiction between the concepts of “utopia” and “dystopia.” In J.G. Ballard’s story from the early part of his career, *The Ultimate City*, this contradiction is displayed through two u(/dis)topias: the abandoned technological metropolis and the pastoral suburban Garden City that represents an agricultural society similar to the utopian Garden City of Ebenezer Howard.

The premise of the study can be understood as conveying the data acquired from the utopian/dystopian worlds within literary spaces in general and Ballard’s literary spaces in particular, providing new perspectives and finally arriving at a general proposal of translation of the idea from literary spaces to architectural discourse.

Keywords

Utopia, Dystopia, Science fiction literature, Garden city, Metropolis, J.G. Ballard.

1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to offer an original methodology to architectural research by looking into science fiction literature for the creation of alternative outlines on the future. The study is structured on the reading of literary spaces with regard to knowledge acquired from architectural discourse. It employs interdisciplinary perspective that offers new ways of seeing by looking into another field.

Interdisciplinary perspective, which encourages methodological and conceptual cross-fertilization (Pavel, 1985) expresses the relationship of modern research methods with several other disciplines without limitation to one. As explained by Eribon, the interdisciplinary perspective is important in the sense that each discipline develops within the framework of an episteme, the totality of which forms a grid of knowledge suggesting a link in part with other sciences contemporary with it (as cited in Mills, 2003). Several discourses from different disciplinary fields share their epistemological field through this interdisciplinary relationship. Mennan (1999) suggests that the self-competence of disciplines melts into interdisciplinary form. In this respect, “interdisciplinary research perspective is where individuals operate at the edge of, and between, disciplines and in so doing question the ways in which they usually work” (Rendell, 2006, p. 135) and interdisciplinary perspective makes sense when a discipline finds its answers in another discipline (Fuller, 2007).

The interdisciplinary perspective in understanding architectural concepts has been accepted as a fruitful way in terms of creating new understandings within the discipline. In Süveydan's terms (1999), travelling into other disciplinary realms has long been the essential prerequisite of architectural theory in terms of opening up the plurality of several prospects. As Nesbitt (1996, pp. 16-17) states, “in the process of associating architecture with other disciplines after the 1960s, there has been much concentration of space as a direct text and/or reading of it through literary texts about the production of knowledge related to space”.

As Stein *et al.* (1990) propose, “to bridge the gap between architectural research as merely a technocratic means to an end and as a reflection of ourselves as progressive social beings, we have to give up the modernistic idea that architectural research must be based purely on the scientific model” (p. 14). This methodology is also justified by Havik (2006) as follows:

“After all, the relationship between humans and their environment, one of architecture's *raison d'être*, is often described with great accuracy and detail in novels and stories. I would argue that literature in fact provides essential information about the way in which space is experienced, about the role of time, about the role of memory and imagination. If existing literature can provide such insights, a literary approach using instruments from literature should also be conceivable within the domain of architectural research” (p. 37).

Within this interdisciplinary gaze, the exemplary problem definition of the study relies on the contradiction between the concepts of “utopia” and “dystopia.” The strong relationship between architectural discourse and the concept of utopia can be set forth through architecture's requirement to define its existence by the help of future scenarios. Although Plato's *Republic* is regarded as the first “utopia” in several sources (Kumar, 1987), the concept of utopia first defined by Thomas More (1993 [1512]) in his book *Utopia* as the combination of no place“(ou)topia” and good place “(eu)topia”. Utopia indicates an inadequacy in the existing situation and includes the constructive critique of the current situation with reference to a hypothetical future, the construction of an ideal social order, the expectation of the future as well as the efforts of configuring a better society (Holquist, 1976; Zaki, 1988).

Utopian imagination that has developed since the eighteenth century with the growing importance of the future (Calinescu, 1987, p. 63) is described by Levitas as “the expression of desire for a better way of being” (as cited in Barlas, 1998, p. 39). Thus, architecture as the practice/art of bettering the physical environment of “being” has inevitable references to the utopian sense. That also partially – if not completely

– explains why historian, philosopher and literary critic Lewis Mumford puts forward the city itself as the first utopia (Mumford, 1971, p. 9). Without the idea of “topos,” utopian thought would simply be “an ethical, metaphysical or political speculation style” (Sorkin, 2011, p. 5), and would not have a persuasive ground.

Supported by Kumar (1987), architecture has been the most utopian among all the arts. It can also be stated that the relationship between architecture and utopia results from architecture’s inclusion of socio-spatial planning aspects that are parallel to the inner concept of utopia. As Coleman (2005) states, architecture and utopia are closely related since “both argue against inadequate existing conditions while drawing upon the past to augur a transformed future envisioned as superior to the present” (p. 48).

The discussion of utopia takes place in several formats within architectural discourse. Especially, the discussion of architecture after industrial revolution cannot be separated from the duality between utopia and dystopia, which is the ironic way to display the dark side of a utopian construct. As promulgated by Toran (1998), dystopia – a representation of the irony of utopia – can be regarded as a reality brought forward by the industrial revolution. In this respect, it can be regarded as the criticism of the modern situation. Dystopia displays how the society described as promising future by “utopia,” is reversed in an ironical way. The perfectionists that wake up from the utopian dream suddenly find themselves in the midst of a terrifying land. Once the utopia is realized, it is transformed into dystopia. However, as Krishan Kumar (1987) states, utopia and dystopia should not be evaluated as two opposite concepts because dystopia is formed by utopia and lives parasitically on it. Dystopia borrows its material from utopia and reconstructs it in the way that denies reassembly and the affirmation of utopia.

As stated by Sorkin (2011), the spatial element both in utopian and dystopian imagination finds its place within the realm of science fictional studies. It is both considered that utopias are

canons of science fiction, and that dystopias signal science fictional literature and form the basis for its construction (Paschalidis, 2000; Ketterer, 1974). As suggested by Saatçioğlu (2002), “[s]cience fiction texts are literary utopias or dystopias that emphasize reader’s role as an active producer of meaning by inviting them to enter into a dialogue with the text and to formulate a meaning that may not be explicit in the text, and may grow out of the interplay between social fact and utopian or dystopian dream” (xvii). Mumford as well views science fiction as the modern form of utopia stating that both utopian literature and science fiction introduces fantasies taken out of contemporary or historical facts into science and both of them depart from new social constructions as well as new inventions (as cited in Zaki, 1988).

Among many ways to display the friction between the two dualities that are utopia and dystopia, this study proposes to trace this relationship within science fiction literature, which generally displays a dystopian characteristic. The work of the British *New Wave* writer J.G. Ballard – an important figure among modern science fiction writers – “whose work helped redefine the genre and open it to a broader audience of readers, both ‘mainstream’ and avant garde” (Latham, 2007, p. 484) can be regarded as a fruitful source in this respect. This study displays how the tension between utopian and dystopian architectural constructs is presented through the effective illustration of Ballard’s literature. In doing this, the study interprets Ballard’s “literary spaces,” which can be regarded as “the spatial environment and the inventory objects created in the reader’s imagination on the basis of incomplete textual cues” (Bolak, 2000, p. 9).

In this sense, Ballard’s work provides a fruitful ground in order to elucidate “the ways in which architecture and literature have defined and articulated the experience of modernity in the twentieth century” (Charley and Edwards, 2012, p. xiii). Ballard’s earliest and longest story, *The Ultimate City* will be examined in terms of constructing new meanings within the epistemological realm of architecture. *The Ultimate*

City can be examined in two respects: firstly, the urban landscapes of the two contradictory built environments of the story can be contrasted. Secondly, abstract elements, such as mechanization, alienation, the phenomenon of crime can be contrasted. Both the representations of the concrete and abstract elements of the two contradictory built environments are supported through other critiques in architectural discourse such as Vincent Scully, Manfredo Tafuri and Sigfried Giedion. This dual examination will display the concepts of utopia and dystopia by selecting a science fiction text as its object, thus finding a different perspective for analysis.

2. The utopian/dystopian components of Ballard's literature and "The Ultimate City"

Choosing Ballard to establish an interdisciplinary bridge between architecture and literature allows displaying "the unspoken tension and psychopathology engendered by such [dystopian] scenarios" (Sellars, 2009, p. 85). It is not unusual to come across utopias in *Ballardian* discourse that are related to spatial theories. In fact, "[Ballardian utopias] are not immediately recognizable as utopian, for the obvious reason that the way thither is almost always dangerous and painful" (Wagar, 1991, p. 70). It is very apparent that Ballard makes use of his architectural knowledge in order to construct the skeleton of his texts.

In the 1978 story, "The Ultimate City," found in *Ballard: The Complete Short Stories* (Fig. 1), Ballard displays the contradiction between two utopias/dystopias by using the name "Garden City" for a utopian settlement that is completely opposite from the "unnamed" Metropolis. The pastoral post-technological Garden City represents an agricultural society similar to the utopian Garden City of Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) (Fig. 2), whereas the more technological – yet older – Metropolis is abandoned. In this way, *The Ultimate City* displays the consequences of the dystopian construct of the Metropolis, from which its dwellers escape searching for a utopian construct – the Garden City.

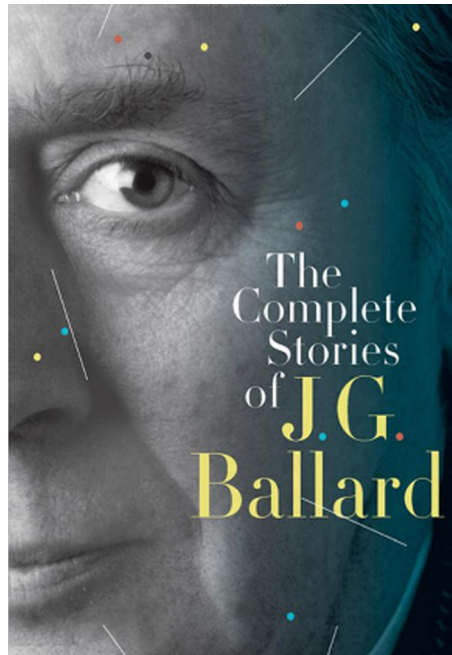


Figure 1. J.G. Ballard on the cover of "The Complete Short Stories of J.G. Ballard", 2010.

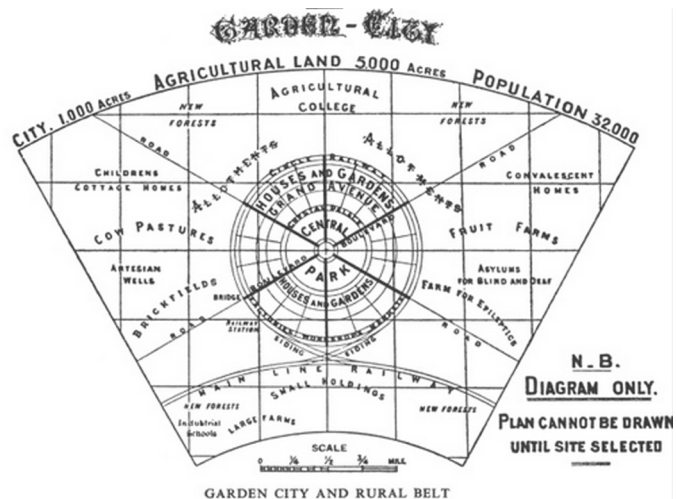


Figure 2. Howard's Garden City scheme (Howard, 1965:52).

While the post-technological Garden City represents a social organization that has established an agricultural society scientifically developed with a "non-competitive ethos," the old metropolis is reminiscent of a former technological age and represents "the lure of the lurid and the fascination of the forbidden" (Stephenson, 1991, p. 107). It is possible to read the contrast between these two settlements in the astonishment of the protagonist, Halloway: the alienation that this character encounters when he first sees the metropolis is due to the fact that no elements related to the *dystopian* urban

life were transported to the Garden City. The story reinforces the contrast between the two settlements through the employment of the river that separates them – called “Sound.” It looks into the consequences of the dystopia from the objective eyes of the protagonist who has been grown up in the *utopian* pastoral garden city and who sees the metropolis as “an abandoned dream waiting to be re-occupied” (Ballard, 1978, p. 13). In the story, the end of the metropolis is dated to the end of the twentieth century “when the world’s reserves of fossil fuels had finally been exhausted, when the last coal silos were empty and the last oil tankers had berthed, the power-stations and railway systems, production lines and steel-works had closed for the last time, and thus post-technological era had begun” (Ballard, 1978, p. 14).

Even though *The Ultimate City* is interpreted by Gasiorrek (2005) as “homage to the vaunting ambition and irreversible energy of metropolitan life, (p. 129)” in the story itself, the criticism of the dystopian metropolis is much more evident. The story starts with Halloway’s journey from the Garden City to the metropolis on a glider. According to Stephenson (1991), this journey also represents a journey to the subconscious of Halloway, who, fascinated by the visual quality of the metropolis, develops projects in order to “re-animate” it (p. 107). At first, Halloway revitalizes urban elements such as streetlights, traffic signs, and pedestrian signs. He re-wires the city with electricity and then places in this new Metropolis the Rescue Team that came from the Garden City to rescue him. However, the story ends with the return of all the new inhabitants of the Metropolis to their pastoral paradise, except for Halloway, who feels more secure within the “the cluster of skyscrapers than the pastoral world of Garden City with its kindly farmers and engineers” (Ballard, 1978, p. 20). The landscape of the Metropolis – including high-rise blocks, a mechanized landscape of automobiles, and the variety of available services are portrayed together with Halloway’s excitement as follows:

“For the next two hours, as the sun drifted across the Sound, Halloway

pressed on down the long avenues that carried him, block after block, into the heart of the metropolis. The office-buildings and apartment-houses grew larger, but the center of the city remained as distant as ever. But Halloway was in no hurry, far more interested in the sights around him. His first feelings of nervousness had gone. Curiosity devouring everything, he ran past the cars that sat on flattened tires in the roadway, skipping from one side of the avenue to the other when something caught his eye. Many of the stores, bars and offices were unlocked... In an empty department-store he lost himself in a maze of furnished rooms, each like a stage-set, decorated in the styles of nearly half a century earlier. The synthetic curtain and carpet fabrics, with their elaborate patterns and lame threads, were totally unlike the simple hand-woven worsteds and woolens of Garden City” (Ballard, 1978, pp. 20-21).

In contrast, the *utopian* Garden City is described with a combination of its pastoral beauty and its distinctive technology, displaying the contrast with regard to the Metropolis:

“By then, twenty-five years earlier, there had been few people left anyway. By some unconscious perception of their own extinction, the huge urban populations of the late twentieth century had dwindled during the previous decades... The small but determined parties of colonists – doctors, chemists, agronomists and engineers – had set out into the rural backwaters determined to build the first scientifically advanced agrarian society. Within a generation they, like countless similar communities around other major cities, had successfully built their pastoral paradise, in a shot-gun marriage of Arcadia and advanced technology. Here each home was equipped with recycling and solar-energy devices, set in its own five acres of intensely cultivated market garden, a self-supporting agricultural paradise linked to its neighbors by a network of canals and conduits, the whole irrigated landscape heated and cooled, powered and propelled by a technology far more sophisticated in every respect than that of the city they had abandoned, but a technology applied to the water-wheel, the tidal pump and the bicycle” (Ballard, 1978, pp. 14-15).

The background of these problems addressed by this movement can be suggested as being similar to the Garden

City movement implemented through several garden cities in Great Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century, but within a different context, because as stated by Batchelor (1969), Ebenezer Howard's garden city proposals did not include an escape from urban life as that of Ballard. In this respect, it is not difficult to propose that Ballard's Garden City can be understood as an allusion to Howard's Garden City utopia, which was rooted in utopian socialism and was a reaction to the industrial metropolis. Howard's "Garden City" is the description of a utopian city, which partially depends on its inhabitants' relationship with nature. As a result of his dissatisfaction with the conditions of the modern industrial city, Howard (1965) offered Garden City settlements that combined town and country idea into new *suburban* settlements with their green belts:

"There are in reality not only, as is so constantly assumed, two alternatives – town life and country life – but a third alternative, in which all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country, may be secured in perfect combination. Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together" (pp. 45-46).

The motivation of the proposals of the Garden City Movement lie in the astronomical growth of Victorian Age industrial cities and the poor living conditions offered by these cities. "A Garden City would have well-designed houses with gardens set in tree lined avenues, clean and healthy work places and a pleasant and healthy environment in which to live, work and follow leisure pursuits" (http://www.gardencitymuseum.org/about_us/history_letchworth_gc/history/ebenezer_howard_founder_letchworth_garden_city, Accessed: April 2010).

The Ballard's literary Garden City shows similarities to Howard's Garden City in terms of its landscape and the healthy, peaceful environment it offers as well as "claiming the garden city as the only valid alternative to metropolitan growth" (Buder, 1990, p. 97). Goodman (2008:42) states that in garden city, "the city and greenbelt become a unified regional area." It can also be stated that Howard's proposed

greenbelt closely resemble the greenbelt references found in "The Ultimate City."

2.1 Representation of the concrete elements of *Dystopian Metropolis/Utopian Garden City*

Ballard's illustration of the dystopian aspect of the Metropolis can be evaluated in two categories. On the one hand, he introduces some representations of metropolitan characteristics; on the other, he displays the reasons for abandoning metropolitan life. These representations can be categorized under the different subtitles of "high-rise block" and "highway landscape."

Within the critique of modernism in architectural discourse, there are several approaches that consider the building type "high-rise" as a destructive element for the urban landscape. Vincent Scully (2003), overlaps high-rise architecture with a modern consciousness, and moreover refers to this "curtain-wall corporate structure" typology as the "dreariest archetype of urban architecture" (p. 158). Manfredo Tafuri shows these buildings are in the exact center of the city, although they are made to appear in the center of a desert through his desert analogy that emphasizes their isolation. According to Tafuri (1979), the "gigantic" machine of the high-rise does not need to establish any relationship with its immediate neighbors, and the city in general, and can therefore be considered "anti-urban" (p. 503).

The high-rise typology in the Metropolis of *The Ultimate City* is also employed as a dystopian element reinforced through the description of the blocks reaching up to a height of a hundred stories with their office function representing the modern capitalism. For Hallowsay, however, high-rises offer more security than the pastoral landscape of Garden City. In order to describe the highway landscape, Ballard makes use of the metaphor of "canyon," which alludes to Le Corbusier's notorious "death of the street" motto describing the modern metropolis:

"But even his surprise at the enormous latent power of these metal beasts paled before his first real sight of the city... The vast office-blocks, many over a hundred storeys high, formed a

silent congregation, more remote and yet closer to him than ever before... Already Halloway could see the canyons opening among the office-blocks of the city, an abandoned dream waiting to be re-occupied. Shadow and sunlight alternated between the buildings, as if flashing some kind of cryptic message to him" (Ballard, 1978, pp. 12-13).

In terms of the highway landscape, Le Corbusier praises the existence of highways in his discourse. His emphasis on suburban development resulting from the principle of functional segregation overlaps with his idea of "the death of the traditional street" in the city center, which had to be replaced with highways:

"The cities will be part of the country: I shall live 30 miles from my office in one direction, under a pine tree: my secretary will live 30 miles away from it too. In the other direction, under another pine tree. We shall both have our own car... We shall use up tires. Wear out road surfaces and gears, consume oil and gasoline. All of which will necessitate a great deal of work... enough for all" (as cited in Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, 2000, p. 3).

Similarly, Ballard's description of the Metropolis depends heavily on the element of a complex highway landscape, which he defines as "serpentine sculptures":

"Above him, on all sides, were the massive structures and heavy technology of the late Twentieth Century – highway interchanges and bridge approaches, sixty-storey hotels and office-blocks. Between them, almost out of sight on the ground level, was a decaying under-stratum of bars and pin-table arcades, nightclubs and clothing stores. The cheap facades and neon signs had long since collapsed into the roads. A maze of narrow side-streets ran off in all directions, but by following only the main avenues he soon lost his bearings. A wide road raised on concrete stilts carried him high into the air, and changed course in a series of giant loops. Plodding around this curving viaduct, a cambered deck eight lanes wide, Halloway wasted nearly an hour in returning to his starting point" (Ballard, 1978, p. 23).

In Ballard's Garden City, there was also a kind of highway structure, but not for daily transportation. It was instead for the annual bicycle rally. Therefore, here in the Garden City the

highway element is negated, as it is not a part of the daily experience. Also, in this respect, the technology of Garden City depended on natural resources rather than resources such as oil or coal:

"Needless to say, there were no cars in Garden City. If there had been, Halloway often thought with a kind of blank bitterness, his mother and father would still be alive. Despite their severe burns, they might still have been saved by the intensive-care unit at the hospital three miles away. The fastest transport available had been the village fire-appliance. Not that there was any taboo against gasoline engines, nor for that matter against oil- or coal-fired steam engines. There was merely a tacit understanding that for two hundred years proto-industrial man had pillaged the earth's natural resources, and these relics were unwelcome reminders of an unhappy history. Beyond this were boredom and indifference – the inhabitants of Garden City were aware that their technology, their advanced horticulture and their casual winning of energy from the sun, the wind and the tides, had progressed far ahead of anything the age of oil and coal had achieved, with its protein-hungry populations, its limitless pollution of air, soil and sea" (Ballard, 1978, pp. 15-16).

2.2 Representation of the abstract elements of *Dystopian Metropolis/Utopian Garden City*

Ballard emphasizes the Metropolis more than the Garden City in order to portray the dystopian rather than the utopian aspect of the story. The dystopian features of the metropolis are enumerated as "a housing crisis, social problems, urban unrest, high crime-rate, pollution, traffic congestion, inadequate municipal services, inflation and deficit public financing, and etc" (Ballard, 1978, p. 67). These are the features that Halloway takes as his guiding principles to re-animate the city. Through a different reading, it is possible to categorize the elements of the dystopia that eased the end of the Metropolis both physically and socially as "mechanization," "alienation," and "high-crime rates".

The issue of mechanization as a modern concept that can be exemplified by Le Corbusier's ambition to reconcile machine and architecture as well

as machine and man, has repeatedly been criticized through architectural discourse. Sigfried Giedion (1967) establishes a parallelism with mechanization and end of the urban civilization as much as Ballard does in the *Ultimate City*:

“The contemporary city is more profoundly menaced in all countries and without exception – not by any outside danger, but from within, by an evil shaping within itself. This is the evil of the machine. Because of the confusion of its different functions, its growing mechanization, the omnipresence and anarchy of the motorcar, the city is at the mercy of industrial machines. If it is to be saved, its structure must change. This change, forced by mechanization just as in other days it was forced by implements of war, is inevitable, whether it comes through insight or through catastrophe. The city must be changed or it will perish, and our civilization with it” (p. 819).

Ballard’s mechanized urban landscape is offered to readers to see the mechanized elements in the “lost spaces” that are not used in the daily life, those that are hidden by modern life and only noticed when completely abandoned. Ballard presents the mechanization of the urban landscape as “garbage” created by the remaining mechanical equipment (Fig. 3). Discarded technological devices in the Metropolis – such as televisions, fax machines, automobiles – are so numerous that they form giant pyramids behind in the abandonment of metropolis:

“... Old tires, industrial waste and abandoned domestic appliances lay about in a rusty moraine. Rising from

its centre was a pyramid of television sets some sixty feet high, constructed with considerable care and an advanced sense of geometry. The thousand or so sets were aligned shoulder to shoulder, their screens facing outwards, the combinations of different models forming decorative patterns on the stepped sides... Little more than half a mile away, in a plaza between two office buildings, Holloway found a second pyramid. From a distance it resembled a funeral pyre of metal scrap built from hundreds of typewriters, telex machines and duplicators taken from the offices around the plaza, a monument to the generations of clerks and typists who had worked there” (Ballard, 1978, p. 24).

In contrast to the mechanization described in the Metropolis, the art and practice of carpentry in Garden City had reached an advanced level (Ballard, 1978). In Ballard’s words (1978), “In Garden City everything was so well made that it lasted forever” (p. 17). In fact, the technology in Garden City had progressed far ahead of the technology in the Metropolis.

With its “power stations and rail yards, foundries and coal depots,” the metropolitan life of the twentieth century represented in *The Ultimate City* prepared its “self-made death.” Despite such a presentation, Holloway is portrayed as impressed by these piles of technological devices, which is likened to a cathedral. This analogy shows how this mechanical structure was worshipped in the heyday of the Metropolis:

“They emerged into an open square, set in the heart of one of the oldest sec-



Figure 3. The artist and photographer Michelle Lord’s project entitled “Future Ruins”, inspired on the story ‘*The Ultimate City*’, 2009 (Sellars, 2009:82,84).

tions of the city, an area of theatres, bars and cheap hotels. Rising from the centre of the square was the largest of the eccentric memorials to Twentieth-Century technology that Halloway had seen so far. At first glance it resembled a gothic cathedral, built entirely from rusting iron, glass and chromium. As they crossed the square, following the tractor, Halloway realized that this structure was built entirely from the bodies of automobiles. Stacked one upon the other, they formed a palisade of towers that rose two hundred feet into the air" (Ballard, 1978, p. 41).

In architectural discourse, the high-rise block is one of the forms that represent alienation in the urban landscape. For example, Manfredo Tafuri puts forward the high-rise block as an "entity that remains aloof from the city, an allegory of estrangement, a pure sign" (as cited in Ockman, 1995, p. 63). The concept of alienation is also explained through the technological expression of architecture as well as the materiality of its components. The transparency of materials can be regarded as one of those tools:

"Transparency, in a literal sense, is supposed to allow visual social penetration of building between the public and private realms, which now seems to leave its place to a prevented interior/exterior relationship by replacing reflection, eliminating the window to prevent exterior/interior relations of the building... This kind of space then does not have an exterior, since the mirrored glass surfaces simply reflect a distorted image of the environment, causing difficulties for inhabitants in reading and interpreting the architectural space... [Mark] Wigley defines this situation in terms of being 'lost in space'... To be lost and feel alienated is the outcome of the misplaced face of the new form of space, where one loses a sense of thing, as it is no longer even clear what a thing is" (as cited in Inan, 2001, p. 89).

As established by architectural discourse, Ballard uses the parallel between alienation and physical aspects of architecture through glass facades in his metropolis. Halloway is startled by his own reflection on the glass facade and thinks that the reflection is someone else by "losing the sense of the thing":

"Directly in front of Halloway there

was a flash of light in the glassy face of a 15-storey office building. Out of this sunburst huge wings moved in the bright air. A powerful aircraft, with a wing-span as large as his own sailplane's, soared straight towards him. In panic, Halloway plunged the glider into a steep turn, cursing himself for entering the air-space of the city, with its empty towers guarded by aerial demons. As the glider banked across the face of the office building his opponent also turned. His long wings, built to the same plan as Halloway's, were raised in a defensive gesture. A hundred feet apart, they soared together along the curtain-wall, the pilot's white face staring at Halloway in obvious alarm. Without warning, this timid intruder vanished as suddenly as he had appeared. Turning back, Halloway circled the streets around the office block, searching for any sign of the rival sailplane. Then, as he passed the office block with its mirror-glass-curtain wall he realized that he had been frightened by nothing more than his own reflection" (Ballard, 1978, p. 18).

While the metropolis is described through its mechanical landscape that results in alienation, the Garden City is presented in sustaining human-compatible environments described through its houses equipped with recycling and solar energy devices and as an agricultural paradise linked to its neighbors by a network of canals, the whole irrigated landscape powered and propelled by a technology that is more sophisticated than the metropolis (Ballard, 1978, p. 14).

The final period of the Metropolis is displayed as one in which the rise of crime rate is one of the main reasons for the abandonment of the metropolis. Ballard establishes an inevitable organic bond between the Metropolis and crime:

"They sat together in armchairs by the embers flaring in the wind, and Stillman talked about the city, of the period he could just remember when it had been filled with more than a million people, the streets packed with traffic and the skies with helicopters, a realm of ceaseless noise and activity, competition and crime. It was here, in fact, as a young student at the school of architecture, that Stillman had first met Buckmaster. Within six months he had killed the industrialist's third wife in a lovers' quarrel" (Ballard, 1978, pp. 50-

1).

Halloway also considers the crime phenomenon as a vital component in refurbishing metropolitan life. He is even pleased when the first crime is committed. Crime here is displayed as “a real sign of his success, a confirmation of all he had dreamed about.” Crime and violence become effective tools for portraying the dystopian character of Ballard’s modern imagery in terms of the psychology of the inhabitants of his architecture.

Despite Ballard’s critique of the dystopian character of the metropolis, he displays the insipidity and “passivity” in the utopian aspect of the Garden City as well. The Garden City and its utopian character is outside the main focus for Ballard, but if he had furthered the text, he could have displayed how the utopian construct would turn into a dystopian one in the Garden City, which he describes as the “elegant but toy-like world of solar sails and flower-filled gardens, the serene windmills and gently nodding reduction gear – of the tidal-power machines – all crying out for a Pearl Harbour” (Ballard, 1978, p. 11). From Ballard’s perspective, the so-called peaceful environment is not parallel to human nature either. Halloway finds his motivation to live in the Metropolis through the boredom offered by Garden City: “Had he really spent his life with these quiet, civilized and anemic people? Amused by them, but already bored by the whole absurd business, he watched them adjust their bicycle clips and tire pressure. Their polite and gentle manners, the timid way in which they gazed down the empty streets, had driven him all the ideas he needed on how to deal with them...” (Ballard, 1978, p. 63).

3. Conclusion

The Ultimate City, being a fictional construct, predicts the results of a future metropolis, which was described at least one decade before the present. In the story, Ballard neither approves of the Metropolis with its dependence on technology displayed as dystopia in the story, nor the peaceful nostalgic Garden City as utopia. In fact, in this way he helps the architectural reader to realize that the relationship between

utopia and dystopia are “asymmetrical,” as suggested by Kumar.

The metropolis idea, being a utopia of the industrial age, is highlighted as a dystopia in the story. It is also proposed that a dystopian metropolitan life can never be transformed into a utopia again. A new utopia – the Garden City – is described to replace it. However, due to the nature of science fiction literature, the hints that are likely to be transformed into a dystopia are also presented to readers through Ballard’s literary spaces. The nomination of dystopia as the opposite of utopia was a result of John Stuart Mill’s (1806-1873) declaration that all utopian visions are at best hopeless, thus dystopian (Coleman, 2005). The concepts of utopia and dystopia intermingle into each other in *The Ultimate City*. Halloway’s Metropolis, borrowing its elements from the Garden City utopia by denying its elements, can be considered a dystopia. However, Ballard puts forward his Garden City utopia also as a dystopia. With a different approach, if we consider the abandoned metropolis as the utopia of the 20th century, the Garden City becomes a dystopia that denies the elements inherent in the Metropolis.

While Ballard uses “spatial dynamics as a way to understand the city as narrative” (Sellars, 2009, p. 86), it is possible to propose Ballardian literature as a way to understand spatial dynamics; in this case, the duality between utopia and dystopia in architectural discourse. The study of the contradiction between utopia and dystopia can be a guiding methodology (Table 1) for any architectural theme researched in an interdisciplinary manner. It is also possible to suggest a variety of other themes. There is a lot to learn from the representations of the built environment in the media that is out of the disciplinary boundaries of architecture. Literature – particularly science fiction literature – can be accepted as one of these fruitful ways of representing and recognizing the built environment.

In conclusion, it can be suggested that a literary approach in novels/stories can be taken into consideration in the formation of the future scenarios of architectural discourse. The premise of the study can be reviewed as the data

Table 1. The steps of the methodology offered and its adaptation to the case of the study

Steps of the methodology		The case in this study
Step I	Deciding the genre	Science Fiction
Step II	Selecting the author	J.G. Ballard
Step III	Limiting the works of author: Either depending on one work or more than one work for a comparative output	The Ultimate City
Step IV	Analysing the work(s) selected in a general overview	The Utopian/Dystopian Components of Ballard's Literature and "The Ultimate City"
Step V	Finding out concrete elements related to utopia/dystopia within the work(s) selected	high-rise block and highway landscape
Step VI	Finding out concrete elements related to utopia/dystopia within the work(s) selected	mechanization, alienation, and high-crime rates
Step VII	Overlapping these findings with those of architectural discourse	Comparing "Garden City" of the story with Howard's Garden City, and the city "Sound" with the metropolis of the 20 th century; overlapping Ballard's critique with that of Vincent Scully, Manfredo Tafuri and Sigfried Giedion

acquired from the utopian/dystopian worlds within science fiction literary spaces can be conveyed to the epistemological realm of architecture, thereby providing new perspectives.

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Distopyaya karşı ütopyayı okumak için disiplinlerarası bir perspektif: J.G. Ballard'ın "The Ultimate City" öyküsü

Bu çalışma, mimarlığın disiplinlerarası doğası bağlamında, mimarlık söylemi ve metinlerdeki "yazınsal mekân"lar arasındaki verimli ilişkiye dayanmaktadır. Mimarlık araştırmaları çerçevesinde disiplinlerarası perspektif, bazı mimari kavramların anlaşılmasında, disiplin içinde yeni kavrayışlar oluşturması açısından verimli bir araç olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu anlamda, çalışmanın amacı, mimarlıkta gelecek senaryolarına alternatif çerçevelerin yaratılması için edebiyatı inceleyerek mimarlık araştırmalarına yeni yöntemler sunmaktır.

Bu disiplinlerarası bakış içinde, örnek problem tanımı, ütopya ve distopya kavramları arasındaki ikileme dayanmaktadır. Mimarlık söylemi ve ütopya kavramı arasındaki güçlü ilişki mimarlığın varlığının gelecek senaryoları yardımıyla tanımlanması gereksiniminden kaynaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca mimarlık ve ütopya arasındaki ilişkinin, ütopyacı kurguların mimarlık disiplinine ait sosyo-mekânsal planlama araçlarını kullanmasına dayandığını da öne sürmek mümkündür.

Bu çalışma, ütopya ve distopya ikilemini sergilemenin çeşitli yolları arasından, daha çok distopyacı karakter sergileyen bilim kurgu edebiyatını seçerek, ütopyacı ve distopyacı mimari kurgular arasındaki gerilimi J.G. Ballard edebiyatı aracılığıyla okuyacaktır. Bu ikili inceleme içinde, bilim kurgu metnini kendine nesne olarak seçerek analiz için farklı bir perspektif elde edecektir. Bu okumaya paralel bir destek vermeleri amacıyla çeşitli mimarlık eleştirilerine de yer verilecektir.

Bilim kurgu edebiyatı Yeni Dalga akımının öncülerinden J. G. Ballard, ilk öykülerinden biri olan *The Ultimate City*'de (Nihaî Kent) iki ütopya/distopya arasındaki çelişkiyi sergilemektedir. Öyküde iki karşıt fiziksel çevre bulunmaktadır: Terkedilmiş teknolojik metropol ve Ebenezer Howard'ın ütopyacı Bahçe Şehri'ne benzer bir tarım toplumunu temsil eden pastoral banliyö Bahçe Şehir (Garden City). Öyküdeki Bahçe Şehir'i Howard'ın ütopyacı sosyalizmden kökenlen ve endüstriyel

metropole bir tepki olan Bahçe Şehir ütopyasına bir gönderme olarak değerlendirmek mümkündür. The Ultimate City distopyası, sakinlerinin ütopyacı Bahçe Şehir'i aramak üzere terk ettikleri distopyacı Metropolis kurgusunun sonuçlarını sergilemektedir. Şimdiki zamandan en az çeyrek asır öncesine tarihlenecek şekilde tanımlanan Metropol peyzajı gökdelenler, otomobillerin ve çeşitli hizmetlerin mekanize peyzajı olarak resmedilmektedir. Öyküde, Ballard ne distopya olarak sergilenen Metropolisi teknolojiye olan bağımlılığıyla ne de ütopya olarak sergilenen barışçıl nostaljik Bahçe Şehir ütopyasını olumlamaktadır.

Öykü, ütopyacı pastoral Bahçe Şehir'de büyümüş olan ve metropolü tekrar ele geçirilmeyi bekleyen terk edilmiş bir rüya olarak gören ana kahraman Halloway'ın nesnel gözlüğünden distopyanın sonuçlarına bakmaktadır. Karşıt olarak, ütopyacı Bahçe Şehir, pastoral güzelliği ve kendine özgü teknolojisinin birleşimiyle tarifenmektedir. Başlangıçta, Halloway, sokak ışıkları, trafik işaretleri gibi kentsel işaretleri hayata geçirir, kenti elektrikle donatır ve kendini kurtarmaya gelmiş olan Kurtarma Ekibi'ni bu yeni metropole yerleştirir. Ancak, öykü, kendini Bahçe Şehir'in pastoral dünyasından çok gökdelen yığının içinde daha güvenli hissedenden Halloway dışında kentin bütün sakinlerinin Bahçe Şehir'e geri dönmeleriyle sonuçlanır.

Öyküdeki çelişen iki çevre hem fizikî elemanlarla hem de mekanizasyon, yabancılaşma ve suç olgusu gibi soyut elemanlarla karşılaştırılacaktır. Ballard, bir yanda, metropoliten karakteristiklerin temsillerini tanıtmaktadır; diğer yandan metropol yaşamını terketmenin nedenlerini sergilemektedir. Bu temsiliyetleri, kentsel peyzaja yabancılaşmayı simgeleyen "çok katlı blok" ve "otoyol peyzajı" şeklinde farklı alt başlıklarda gruplamak mümkündür. Ballard'ın mekanize olmuş peyzajı, okuyuculara, günlük yaşamda kullanılmayan, modern yaşam tarafından gizlenen ve ancak terkedildiklerinde farkedilebilen "kayıp mekanlar"daki mekanize elemanları görmeleri için sunulmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, metropolün terkedilme nedeni olan suç olgusu da, öyküde, metropolün ana

elemanlarından biri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Ballard, öyküde ütopyaçı olandan çok, distopyacı olanı sergileyebilmek adına, metropolü Bahçe Şehir'den daha vurgulu olarak sunmaktadır. Metropol fikri, endüstri çağının ütopyası olarak, öyküde distopya olarak vurgulanmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, distopyacı metropol yaşamının tekrar ütopyaya dönüştürülemeyeceği önerilmektedir. Yeni bir ütopya olan Bahçe Şehir ütopyası onun yerini almak üzere tasvir edilmiştir. Ancak, bilim kurgu edebiyatının doğası gereği, distopyaya dönüşmesi olası ipuçları aynı zamanda Ballard'ın yazınsal mekanları aracılığıyla okuyucuya sunulmaktadır. *The Ultimate City*'de ütopya ve distopya birbirine karışmaktadır. Farklı bir bakış açısıyla, terk edilmiş metropolü 20. yüzyılın ütopyası olarak kabul edecek olursak, Bahçe Şehir de metropoldeki elemanları reddeden bir distopya haline gelmektedir.

Ballard, "kenti anlatı olarak anlama yolu olarak mekânsal dinamikler"-

den yararlanırken, Ballard edebiyatını mekânsal dinamikleri –bu örnekte, mimari söylemdeki ütopya-distopya ikilemini– anlamak için bir yol olarak öne sürmek mümkündür. Bu yöntem, herhangi başka bir mimari tema için de rehber olarak kabul edilebilir. Mimarlığın disipliner sınırları dışındaki alanlardan da yapıyı çevrenin temsiliyeti hakkında öğrenecek çok şey olduğu gerçeğinden hareketle, edebiyat –özellikle bilim kurgu edebiyatı- yapıyı çevreyi temsil etme ve tanıma anlamında en verimli yollardan biri olarak kabul edilebilir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuç önermesi, roman ve öykülerdeki yazınsal yaklaşımının, mimarlık söyleminin gelecekteki senaryolarının oluşturulmasında dikkate alınabileceği üzerinedir. Sonuç olarak, bilim kurgu edebiyatının yazınsal mekânı çerçevesindeki ütopyaçı/distopyacı dünyalardan elde edilebilecek bilgilerin mimarlığın epistemolojik alanına yeni perspektifler sağlayarak aktarılabilceğini ileri sürmek mümkündür.