

Creative Resistance against Cybernetic Machines in J.G. Ballard's Late Fiction

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Abstract

In "Postscript of Control Societies", Gilles Deleuze traces human societies' transition from Foucauldian disciplinary societies characterized by penal measures of confinement to control societies of constant vigilance and surveillance made possible by information technologies of instant textual and visual communication.

In light of Big Data as an institutional apparatus that structures, monitors and above all, archives our thinking and knowing for marketing and policing purposes, this paper examines the two ways suggested by Deleuze to resist cybernetic machines in digitalized, capitalist political economies sustained by clandestine surveillance systems and limited public access to coded and password-protected information: first, creative resistance in the form of fabulation; second, hijacking speech.

By studying the late fiction of J.G. Ballard (*Cocaine Nights* (1996), *Super-Cannes* (2000), *Millennium People* (2003) and *Kingdom Come* (2006), I seek to answer what it means to aestheticize the relationship of violence, power, technology and psychopathology instigated by omnipresent surveillance in gated urban and virtual communities. I will first discuss how the form and structure of Ballard's novels are comparable to detective stories that seek to reveal and articulate repressed knowledge. Also, I argue these works are audacious interrogations of coveted economic and state censorship that directly attacks democratic knowledge production. Ultimately, I position the work of Ballard as radical literary resistance of "death, slavery, infamy and shame" simultaneously enforced, recorded, manipulated, disseminated, and erased by the seemingly omniscient archival machines of surveillance.

Keywords: J.G. Ballard, Gilles Deleuze, control societies, surveillance, archiving, power and technology, psychopathology