

POST-PANOPTICON AND ‘RIGHT TO THE CITY’: A STUDY OF SELECTED EUROPEAN GRAPHIC NOVELS

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NOVELS**

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ABSTRACT

Title: Post-Panopticon and ‘Right to the City’: A Study of Selected European Graphic Novels

This research explores surveillance and policing in contemporary literature in English, specifically the graphic novels *Soft City* (2016) by Norwegian artist Hariton Push Wagner and *Paris 2119* (2020) by Zep and Dominique Bertail. This study argues that the surveillance and policing in the urban spaces, in the narratives, create a disciplinary architectural space of post-Panopticon, which compartmentalizes and reterritorializes citizens into controlled and altered spaces, thereby denying the citizens' right to the city and their bodies. The theoretical concepts of post-Panopticon, coded desire, hyper-information, and reterritorialization by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, along with Henri Lefebvre's right to the city, help substantiate the argument. The methodology utilized by the study is the qualitative inquiry of the primary texts to investigate the city spaces reconstructed into post-Panopticon and resulting in the depravity of rights to these spaces. This study utilizes a social semiotic Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen. In both narratives, urban spaces are deterritorialized and reterritorialized by the state-corporate into active sites of production through consumer seduction and information surveillance. In the continuous flow of surveillance, the natural interaction of citizens is brutally interrupted, resulting in the dismissal of human rights. Post-Panopticon is pivotal for the state-corporate in propagating the agenda of control, discipline, and conformity in urban spaces and among the masses. Citizens are reduced to commodities and data nodes.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, who always encouraged and supported me throughout the process of conjuring up ideas and transferring them onto these pages. Their unwavering belief in me inflamed my dedication to take this project through. To my grandparents whose prayers helped me through tough times. I also dedicate my work to my dearest siblings who supported me through moments of doubts and celebrated my moments of triumphs, even little.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

George Orwell's widely read iconic dystopian novel *1984* capsulizes the essence of modern society evolving under the omnipresence of surveillance and control. This notion of being under watch has transcended writings. This novel, likewise, introduced the world to a whole new era of surveillance and control societies. These societies are transformed into open prisons for human beings who searched for privacy but couldn't find any in the world of ubiquitous, shadowy watchers. Fast forward to the 21st century, the world is witnessing surveillance upgrading at an unprecedented rate with the rapid advancements in technology. The boundaries of surveillance have been further pushed than Orwell's imagination could have fathomed. The world now witnesses marvels of sensor-equipped spyware balloons, mini cameras that fit into vape pens and coffee cups, cybernetic AI (Artificial Intelligence), brain scanners that read brain waves to detect lies, YouTube algorithms, live or geo maps, automated drones, data-driven face recognition software, etc. The list is infinite. Even though surveillance practices and devices aid law enforcement in maintaining the safety of the citizens, it has been widely misused as well. Surveillance has been called an invasion of privacy and a weapon for power lust. Billions of dollars are being spent on surveillance. This horror story of power lust, control, and overbearing discipline was unveiled more than 70 years ago by George Orwell in his cult classic *1984*(1949), a tale of an imagined future that is an authoritarian and totalitarian dystopia controlled by the omnipresent Big Brother. Big Brother's party engages in intense surveillance using cameras, hidden microphones, telescreens, and *Thought Police* to eradicate the people who no longer conform to Big Brother's regime. These themes of surveillance, control, power, and discipline are valid in the 21st century and are popularised by dystopian fiction.

Furthermore, the ever-increasing and evolving digital surveillance has been integrated into urban spaces. Through surveillance and consumer conditioning, contemporary cities have been transformed into post-Panoptic control cities in which citizens are controlled through physical discipline but by an embedded system of regulation. Using Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) by Kress and Van Leeuwen, this study explores similar themes in Dystopian comic fiction of the 21st century;

precisely, the two European graphic novels titled *Soft City* (2016) by a Norwegian artist Hariton Push Wagner and *Paris 2119* (2020) by Zep and Dominique Bertail. The present study argues that in these dystopian graphic novels, the state-corporate restructures the urban spaces into post-panoptic spaces, also referred to as altered spaces in the study, which resultantly exploits the citizens' "Right to the City" and their bodies. The denial of right to the city includes denial of right of difference, right to similarity, right to information, right to vocalise their ideas on their space and time, right to access centre or privileged place, right to move away from peripheries, right to security, adventure, right to play, work and use senses how much they want and in any way they want. Moreover, this right also includes the right to citizens' bodies as theorised by Henri Lefebvre, which is denied because of the abuse of political power in urban spaces. The surveillance and policing in the urban spaces, in the primary texts, compartmentalise citizens into strategically altered spaces. In these spaces, the state-corporate bombards the citizens with surveillance through hyper-information, injecting coded desires and re-territorializing them physically and mentally. These weapons of surveillance infringe on citizens' privacy and limit their freedom. Not only does it restrict their liberties, but it also dictates their bodily autonomy.

This study investigates how urban spaces in the graphic novels work as agents and tools of control, reinforcing the state-corporate's agenda through, spatial compartmentalization, surveillance, consumer manipulation, and hyper-information. It examines how both narratives illustrate the city's evolution from traditionally controlled spaces using visible surveillance, and force to control societies indulging in invisible and digital surveillance and self-policing to control ones, as conceptualized by Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, along with Henri Lefebvre. The role of the state-corporate is solely focused on the production of commodities. The cities are restructured into corporations. The state-corporate shapes citizens into passive consumers and data nodes for control. Eventually, the citizens become commodities themselves, symbols of the state-corporate's embedded control.

To substantiate the argument, the primary text selected is *Soft City*, which is a plotless graphic novel on a Soft city where the citizens live by a fixed routine. The citizens living in skyscrapers wake up, take soft pills, drive to work, go to supermarkets, drive back home, take soft pills again, and go to sleep. This routine iterates till the last page of the novel. *Paris 2119* is a graphic novel about futuristic Paris where the

protagonist, Tristian Keys, ventures into a tech-obsessed city. Unlike others, he is one of the few citizens who travel by train rather than teleport through a futuristic device called Transcore. Though there's a difference in the layout and mechanics of life, both cities are controlled through surveillance and over-consumption. Both graphic novels are from a part of the world where modern technology originated and from where dystopian fiction emerged i.e., Europe. It is also one of the leading economies of the world which relies heavily on technology and consumerism. Push Wagner's *Soft City* is a good example of how citizens eventually internalize oppressive regimes of government after massive and prolonged surveillance and overconsumption of propaganda. Push Wagner's monochromatic and repetitive dystopian world in *Soft City* subtly contains the descriptions of post-Panoptic societies created in dystopias. Additionally, multimodal texts provide an intriguing and vibrant view of the themes through dialogues, illustrations, symbols, icons, etc.

Furthermore, Zep and Dominique Bertail engage with the portrayal of the possible dangers of the utilization of technology as a tool to control the citizens of contemporary Paris and how this would turn into an authoritarian future state-corporate. *Paris 2119* (2020) is a dystopian comic fiction where "Blade Runner meets Black Mirror," as advertised by Magnetic Press, creating a totalitarian state-corporate with oppressive and controlling regimes. Whosoever seeks non-conformity is on the list to be eradicated like the protagonist. According to the novel's depiction, *Paris 2119* reflects today's society where people put too much reliance on technology. They constantly engage in capitalistic practices of consumption to satisfy their urges, thus filling in another tick box of contemporary forms of the Panopticon. In this era where smart cities are increasingly replacing conventional urban regulation, biometric tracking is being opted for, and algorithmic governance is on the rise, these graphic novels offer critical insights into the grave consequences of hyper-informational, hyper-controlled, and consumer societies. This transformation has profound implications for human privacy, freedom, and access to urban life. By analyzing *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*, this research expands on how these fictional dystopian cities reflect real-world structures of power.

1.1 Thesis Statement

The surveillance and policing of the urban spaces by the state-corporate in the selected graphic novels *Soft City* (2016) and *Paris 2119* (2020) create a disciplinary

post-Panopticon that compartmentalizes and reterritorializes citizens, thereby denying them the right to the city and their bodies. Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concepts of coded desire, reterritorialization, and hyper-information in conjunction with Henri Lefebvre's idea of the Right to the City substantiate the argument.

1.2 Research Questions

The following are the questions catered by the present study:

1. In what ways do the state-corporate institutions turn the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon in the selected text?
2. How does the state-corporate utilize these post-Panoptic urban spaces to refute the citizens' rights to the city and diminish their bodily autonomy in the selected texts?

These questions will be the parameters for the analysis of both selected texts.

1.3 Delimitation of Study

This study is delimited to the graphic novels *Soft City* (2016) by Hariton Push Wagner and *Paris 2119* (2019) by Zep and Dominique Bertail. Within these novels, the researcher investigates post-Panoptic urban spaces and the consequent violation of citizens' rights to the city and bodies. Rather than exploring broad socio-political and spatial themes, this study delimits itself to the analysis of the spatial layout of the urban spaces and how the character engages with these spaces and navigate them in their regular life. The researcher's inquiry is structured around the questions of how state-corporate use networked surveillance and reconstruct cities as post-Panopticon, how hyper-information, coded desires, and reterritorialization contribute to the functioning of the post-Panopticon and how, conclusively, post-Panopticon negates citizens' right to the city and strip away their rights to their bodies?

At the core of this study is the argument that the state-corporate uses multiple strategies of surveillance to transform urban spaces into a post-Panopticon so that it can serve as a tool to drive the state-corporate's control over the citizens. The study searches for the semiotic resources employed by the author in the novel to display the main idea. For this purpose, it utilizes Van Leeuwen's method of multi-modal discourse analysis. To substantiate the argument, the study draws on the work of Giles Deleuze and Felix

Guattari, specifically control societies, post-Panopticon, hyper-information, coded desire, reterritorialization, and Henri Lefebvre's concept of the Right to the City and the citizen's body to highlight the implications of spatial control.

1.4 Significance of Study

By studying *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*, this research contributes to the extensive interdisciplinary discourse on surveillance, capitalism, and urban, and literary studies. While there is an extensive and ever-growing body of literature on surveillance studies ingrained in the works of Deleuze and Guattari's concept and Henri Lefebvre's, there is limited work on graphic novels, especially on the themes of surveillance in contemporary times. Both novels depict compelling narratives of contemporary urban life in control societies. They offer a multifaceted analysis of urban control through their visual and textural modes.

The findings of the study contribute to the existing database for dystopian graphic novels themed on the effects of surveillance and monitoring on the mundane lives of people. It reveals notable insights into the depiction, perception, and critique of surveillance in popular culture. It contributes to the understanding of dystopian graphic fiction as a genre and its diverse themes. It traces the evolution of surveillance techniques through urbanisation and commodification. It enables the readers to learn about the different modes of spatial politics and control in urban spaces. Moreover, it highlights the over-arching phenomenon of post-Panopticon societies, which encapsulates the policing, controlling, and disciplining acts of the state-corporate by intricately manipulating its way into urban spaces rather than explicitly exercising power as depicted in other dystopian comics.

By studying surveillance in the selected graphic novels, the researcher gets an insight into the public perception of the theme. It reflects the fear and paranoia in public regarding the impact of technology on individual autonomy, power dynamics, and freedom. The visual storytelling technique of the graphic novels allows for the distinctive portrayal of contemporary surveillance practices. Finally, the multimodal mode of communication undoubtedly displays a nuanced understanding of the pervasive monitoring in societies. This study intercepts understandings and constructs in urban discourses by examining representational, compositional, and interpersonal meanings.

Apart from the overall literary contribution, this study offers a critical insight into contemporary Pakistani society and how state-corporate masked as techno-capitalist society deploys a networked surveillance mechanism otherwise termed the post-Panopticon. This mechanism is unveiled through projects like Punjab's Safe City Initiative where 3000+ AI-backed facial recognition surveillance cameras vowed to improve security. However, it exemplifies hyper-informational space eroding citizens' right to the city. Moreover, rapid urban transformation and digitization reveal post-Panoptic mechanisms. This study demystifies the propaganda of Smart cities. These initiatives of smart cities reterritorialize public space into hyper-surveilled enclaves. Meanwhile, hyper-consumption is another key mechanism of the post-Panopticon mirrored in Pakistani society. The citizens have unlimited options to choose from whether it is food, clothing, lifestyle, etc. These brands/corporations rely heavily on marketing both digital and traditional. Citizens' gaze is filled with images of huge billboards spread all across the cities. Digital apps such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube etc. are utilized to manipulate desires by flooding citizens' feeds with hyper-consumerist content. It is employed to seduce citizens and encourage them to buy more. Thus, this research reveals how surveillance is embedded into Pakistani society seamlessly.

1.5 Organization of Study

The thesis includes 5 chapters in total. The study begins with an introduction to the research, followed by a literature review of selected primary texts, the theoretical framework adapted for the study, the research method utilized for analyzing text, analysis, and conclusion along with recommendations for future research. The analysis is divided into two parts, each of which focuses on a different text; the first one discusses *Soft City* and the latter one analyses *Paris 2119*. Works cited in the study are also provided in the end.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Graphic novels serve as a medium for a literary critique on issues at the core of contemporary societies. Both *Soft City* and *Paris 2119* are graphic novels that illustrate and highlight issues concerning 21st-century societies with their urban dystopian settings. Before embarking on the journey of going through the folds of selected graphic novels, it is consequential to review the body of literature dedicated to the novels previous to this thesis. For this purpose, this section is divided into two parts. The first part comprises a general discussion of themes of surveillance in dystopian literature. The latter part reviews previously conducted research work on the selected primary text with a focus on fundamental themes and arguments.

2.1 Dystopian Literature

Surveillance has been one of the recurring themes of dystopian fiction. It serves to explore the intricate relationship of privacy, power, and control in a society. Fictions such as George Orwell's *1984* and Ray Bradbury *Fahrenheit 451* are classic examples of such societies. Since these fictions, plenty of dystopian fictions have been created which has enriched the genre by various degrees. The following section dives deeper into the discussion of dystopias as societies of control.

2.1.1 Surveillance, Societies, and Spaces in Dystopian Fiction

In *The Representation of Surveillance in Dystopian Fiction of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (2019), Jade Louise Hinchliffe chronologically explores themes of surveillance in 20th and 21st-century dystopian fiction using spatial geography, critical post-humanism, and surveillance theory as theoretical mediums. Dystopian fiction primarily focuses on:

2.1.1.1 Collapse of boundaries:

Hinchliffe posits that contemporary surveillance is not a revolutionised version of traditional surveillance; rather, it is an intensified one. She probes into the collapse of boundaries between private and public spaces and the individual and the societal body because of surveillance of these spaces displayed in the fiction. In particular, this study examines the spatial framework of spaces in the city, the home, the workplace,

and the body displayed in the selected dystopian fiction. The researcher categorises the body and the home as “private spaces” while the city and the workplace are identified as “public spaces” (Hinchliffe 9). However, it is noteworthy that this research aims to contradict numerous surveillance theories that claim surveillance in contemporary times to be “fluid, decentralised and participatory” (Hinchliffe 4). The present study aims to delineate fluidity of surveillance and the co-existing of spaces as a consequence.

2.1.1.2 Human Condition:

Hinchliffe maintains that dystopian fiction containing themes of surveillance potentially reflects the real human condition (Hinchliffe 8). To explore and expand on her argument, she utilises concepts of “critical post-humanism, transhumanism, bio power, and spatial geography” (Hinchliffe 11). These concepts, enticed together, elaborate on how surveillance manipulates the spaces and bodies of citizens (Hinchliffe 12). The objectives of this study are synonymous with this study. However, this study narrows down the themes of surveillance to the exploration of spatial politics, power dynamics, and consumerism in the primary texts.

In *Imagining Surveillance: Eutopian and Dystopian Literature and Film* (2015), Peter Marks comprehensively discussed films and fiction pertaining to themes of surveillance. According to the author’s observation, “Orwellian Big Brother “ is still relevant to 21st-century surveillance (Marks 3). It still staunchly depicts how surveillance has undoubtedly “dehumanising effects” on citizens individually as well as in groups (Marks 3). He argues that while surveillance through technology creates “data doubles or doppelgangers” of the individuals, it certainly does not discard the original individuals. He negates Gilles Deleuze’s explanation of the “absence of embodied selfhood” through his term “dividual” (Marks 4).

2.1.1.3 Surveillance as quintessential to urban spaces:

The aforementioned study explores utopian films and novels that represent surveillance innovatively and critically assesses the surveillance in urban spaces throughout these utopian texts. Utopia, throughout this work, is an umbrella term for Eutopian (good), dystopian(bad) places, and a mixture of both (Marks 4). According to Marks, utopian fiction convincingly and efficiently portrays surveillance and its repercussions. It engages with the topic with “creative vitality, social engagement, and historical sweep” (Marks 5).

Moreover, surveillance is prevalent in contemporary life, penetrating every corner and expanding through technological advancements. It, consequently, becomes quintessential for “consumer capitalism” to operate in the century. Additionally, it invades “privacy”. What’s more, affected by its existence is one’s “identity”, “social interaction,” and other “social processes” (Marks 5). In Chapter 5, titled “Spaces, the writer comprehensively foregrounds surveillance within the urban spaces. His study understands urban spaces as dystopian as well as Eutopian spaces within the same text (Marks 105). In these utopian novels, dystopian and Eutopian spaces are seen as separate. However, the current study considers fiction under study as only dystopian.

According to the writer, to control the people, it is essential to control the spaces they live in. It is apparent that the utopian novels quintessentially have “spatial concerns” that exhibit the need for surveillance in these spaces inhabited by the citizens. And to control people, it is incumbent to control the spaces they occupy (Marks 104). Moreover, surveillance is correlated with “metropolitan” (Marks 105). Elaborately, he cites an example from a dystopian novel, *We*. In the novel, the Green Wall is an element of spatial partition built for controlling spaces and people. Structures like “walls and boundaries” are “key spatial indicators” of surveillance. These structures superintend and regulate interactions “within and between” the spaces. Additionally, they determine segregations of “zones”, “superstitions,” and “nations”. Trespassing on these structures carries serious consequences. In *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Percy, Connie Ramos, the protagonist, tries to escape the confinement with the uncertainty of what’s beyond it. In *Code 46*, one of the protagonists who tries to flee ends up getting his memories “wiped” out by the authorities (Marks 106). Boundaries within the spaces are “provocatively uncertain” and the way surveillance is carried out within them is “provocatively unsettled” like in China Mieville’s novel *The City and the City* (Marks 107). What is certain is that “the physical design” of the spaces has its effects in two ways: one, it “promotes” attitudes and behaviours of its inhabitants, and when required, it discourages certain behaviours.

Dystopian fiction is significantly about the effect of authoritarian states using elements such as surveillance, capitalism, and power dynamics to craft societies. In the dystopian worlds, spaces are manipulated to maintain control and segregation of citizens. Hinchliffe and Marks’s ruminations on the themes of surveillance and spaces suggest that under the authoritarian and totalitarian state-corporate, there is no boundary

between public and private spaces. However, boundaries are built to separate certain groups of people for control. Surveillance has dehumanizing effects on them. The present study is another attempt to explore the themes of surveillance in urban spaces. It addresses the psychological and physical segregation of citizens in urban spaces using components of surveillance and consumerism.

Following the discussion on fiction involving societies of control, the next section explores previously recorded research on the selected primary texts.

2.2 Prior Studies on *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*

This section of research provides a review of existing bodies of literature on the graphic novels *Soft City* (2016) and *Paris 2119* (2020). Before critically reviewing previous literature on the primary texts, this section briefly discusses Dystopian fiction as a genre. It gives an overview of the genre of the selected texts and how it contributes to the understanding of post-Panopticon.

2.2.1 The genre of dystopian fiction:

Technically, the genre of these comics is Dystopian. Dystopian fiction, a sub-genre of science fiction, is defined as speculative fiction with futuristic settings whereby there is a technological invasion and citizens lead an oppressive life under the state-corporate. It captures and involves grave issues that are on global level such as “environmental destruction,” “questions of identity,” “looming catastrophe,” and “increased fragility of boundaries between technology and self.” It “warns” and “frightens” the readership of the looming possibility of such issues happening in the future with the increasing utilisation of technology and abuse of it (Basu et al. 1).

One of the themes of Dystopian fiction is the apocalypse that changes the communities into a post-apocalyptic dystopia whereby “fear,” “control” and “secrecy” are the primary elements. The powerful engage in “repression” and “violence” to control the residual structure of society (Basu et al. 3). Another major theme of Dystopian fiction is “sameness” or “conformity.” Such societies have an agenda to eradicate diversity because “diversity breeds conflict” is a fear that lives in the minds of Dystopian inhabitants (Basu et al. 3). Popular examples of such dystopian fiction are George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games* (2008), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), Margret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985),

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921), Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2011), and many more. These Dystopian writings portray a bleak reality of humankind. Humans live in fear and paranoia. Surveillance is pervasive here and life is lived by the state-corporate's mandate.

In the book, *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, Riven Barton, the author of the chapter *Dystopia and Promethean Nightmare*, explains the evolution of dystopian fiction. He states that in the 20th century, modernization, industrialization, and mechanization revolutionized America and Europe. Handmade were replaced by machinery, for instance, communication, manufacturing, production of food and transportation, etc. This post-industrial world was lured by the productivity and efficiency offered by technological advancement. People started to think about the equal sharing of goods and services. Initially, a utopian society emerged, but later, it came out as a horror. Fascism rose in Europe, which led to increased industrialization of war technology. Dystopian literature appeared, mirroring the horrors of reality witnessed in America and Europe in the 20th century (Barton 7). In the modern dystopias (1800-1950), the individual loses his/her identity to co-option. After the modern dystopia, there comes a post-modern dystopia (1965-1995) (Barton 10), which then leads to contemporary dystopias (2000-), which is a post-apocalyptic reality. However, the reason behind this post-apocalypse is hardly unveiled (Barton 13).

One of the unique phenomena that comes out of the dystopian society is panoptic urbanism in forms that are created through multiple aspects.

2.2.2 Panopticon as a central theme to Dystopian fiction

Panopticon, whether it's simply panopticon or any other form like a post-panopticon, which is a fundamental focus in this study, has been explicitly and implicitly explored in dystopian fiction. There's a vast body of literature on post-Panopticon that theorizes and analyses post-panoptic societies and their functioning. In *Theorizing Surveillance in Crime Control* (2011), Kevin Haggerty, Dean Wilson, and Gavin Smith argue that, in a contemporary context, globalisation, advancement in information technology, and ways of governance have resulted in multiple versions of the Panopticon. A few of them are "superpanopticon", "post-Panopticon", "periopticon", "neo-panopticon," and "ban-opticon" (Haggerty 2006). Likewise,

Roman Batko theorizes surveillance beyond Panopticon in his work *Panopticon – Cybercontrol in Liquid Modernity: What Does Control Really Mean in Contemporary Management?* (2019). He examines ways and methods of control and surveillance applied in contemporary times where liquid modernity is at its zenith. He argues that due to “electronic surveillance” control in liquid modernity is called “cyber control”. In this modernity, the Panopticon has been reformed (Batko 2019).

Consequently, the question arises: *how is post-Panopticon related to dystopian literature and dystopias?* The answer is that post-Panopticon is reared in dystopias. Dystopian fiction includes a setting where the inhabitants of a place are subjected to control through surveillance. The result is an authoritarian and totalitarian state whereby the citizens are set to transform into docile inhabitants. They are made to internalise the oppressive regimes applied to them. Hence, the difference is eradicated, and the state-corporate manages to retain its control and power. Panopticon, or post-Panopticon, are spatial structures designed as disciplining mechanisms. Multiple modes of surveillance are pivotal to this discipline. Thus, the post-Panopticon is one of the prominent elements of contemporary dystopias or dystopian fiction. Since this study investigates how the spaces in dystopian graphic novels *Soft City* and *Paris 2119* are transformed into post-Panoptic spaces of control through digital and automated forms of surveillance, it is evident that dystopian settings in these graphic novels have the potential to provide content for the case. In these different yet similar dystopias in *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*, the state-corporate structures and restructures the urban spaces until they turn into a post-Panopticon. This metamorphosis of urban spaces results in the deprivation of the citizen’s right to the city and their bodies.

The following section explores previously done studies and reviews on the selected graphic novels.

2.2.3 *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*: What do the prior studies say?

The Dystopian Graphic Novel *Soft City* by Push Wagner was officially published in English in 2016, and *Paris 2119* by Zep and Dominique Bertail was published in English translation in 2020. Previous studies on both narratives conclude that they illustrate oppressive cities where the citizens have lost their identity. The citizens follow a dehumanized and mechanized life. Moreover, it is also analysed that the citizens engage in over-consumption of commodities. These studies encapsulate the repetitive pattern of the lives of inhabitants of *Soft City* as standardized by the state-corporate

operators through surveillance. The arguments are in affinity to the questions raised by the present research. However, the present study explores questions that were not discussed before. Although the studies talk about the oppressive nature of the state-corporate and the disempowerment of the citizens of the city, they ignore to map out the spatial politics in terms of the overarching disciplinary post-Panopticon created by the state-corporate through different modes of policing in the urban spaces. The existing reviews and studies focus primarily on the state-corporate's oppressive nature and citizens' disempowerment against it. However, they fail to identify how urban spaces play a pivotal role. These spaces work as active agents of control within a post-panoptic framework. Even though the previous analysis acknowledges that urban architecture is oppressive because of its monotonous and repetitive design, they overlook how these urban spaces operate as tools of systemic surveillance and behavioural conditioning. The spatial compartmentalization leads to psychological compartmentalization. The spaces are not sites of organic and personal expression but an extension of the capitalist machine of production, reinforcing Lefebvre's critique of urban spaces as commodified rather than a result of oppression.

This study specifically builds on Lefebvre's theory of space production to argue that intervention of the state-corporate in the physical spaces through compartmentalization, reterritorialization, and policing shape discursive space and eventually alter representational space in the novels. Unlike previous studies, which discuss authoritarianism in dystopian cities, this study links the elements of surveillance and urbanism to a systematic surveillance structure, a post-panoptic urban space where control is decentralized. Furthermore, the existing scholarship remains limited to debates on authoritative governance leading to class-based oppression. This research, however, extends beyond this debate and incorporates Deleuze and Guattari's ruminations on control societies. It includes the concept of hyper-information, coded desire, and reterritorialization, alongside Lefebvre's debate on the denial of the right to the city. By doing so, the study foregrounds how the post-panopticon functions through hyper-information flows, manipulating citizens' consent via over-consumption, and the reterritorialization of urban dwellers into controlled subjects through coded desires. This approach unveils a new and different dimension of the state-corporate urban oppression in the cities as illustrated in the graphic novels where authority is not just dictated but reinforced through spatial and informational mechanisms of control. Thus, the present study repositions surveillance and control in graphic novels by

demonstrating how spatial politics, hyper-information, reterritorialization, and coded desires sustain systemic oppression.

Moreover, this study delineates body and agency as absolute, separate entities. Human bodies and rights are no longer voluntary but are dictated by the spatial conditions systematically organised by the state-corporate. The dystopian cities are not merely oppressive but actively colonize the body of inhabitants themselves, erasing the possibility of any physical autonomy. Again, urban spaces actively discipline bodies of citizens into mechanical compliance by reducing their bodily status to commodities, production-machines, and data nodes. Previously unelaborated, this study expands on the consequences of surveillance and control Eutopian spaces. It elaborates on the erosion of organic bodily functions. Following are the themes highlighted by previous studies:

i. Mass Conformity and Repetition in the Dystopian Urbanism:

One of the prominent themes of the dystopian cities is conformity on a mass level. Citizens either intentionally follow the rules and monotonous life or are forced to comply. In *The Paris Review* (2016), Martin Hebert describes Soft City as a “hopeful dystopia”. He emphasizes that the novel has Orwellian undertones. The city is “a glimpse of dreadful future,” which also represents the current situation. It is a “geometric world of subjugated worker bees” living a mechanized life. Like the bees who tirelessly serve their hive and conform to the job without any autonomy, the citizens also live and work like worker bees. Moreover, the language of the citizens, newspaper, and even the controller is “cut-up” phrases, which refers to the jumbled up and “scrambled” minds of the inhabitants in the authoritarian state-corporate. Similarly, in *The Comics Journal* (2017), Matthias Wivel unveils that the novel Soft City was inspired by William S. Burroughs’s *The Soft Machine*. Wivel draws a comparison between the novel George Orwell’s *1984*, Charles Chaplin’s *Modern Times*, and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*. He says that “synchronicity” and “symmetry” are at the core of this novel. Not only are the movements of the people symmetrical, but the panoramas are spread symmetrically with angles that illustrate oppression.

Further on, in the comic review, *Hard Truth in ‘Soft City’* (2016), John Seven concludes, “Everything is the same”. The mechanical and identical routine of the citizens makes them one “super-organism”. There’s no diversity and difference. The world in the soft city offers nothing else than “repetition and sameness”. Paul Hanna, from the *Harvard Review Online* (2017), describes the graphic novel as an illustration

of a dystopian society which is “a military-industrial complex” running “uniformly”. The city is a large and monotonous dump of buildings where the citizens show “homogeneity” when they “mechanically” perform their daily tasks. Only children express few qualities that are “individualistic”. However, contrary to Martim Herbert from *The Paris Review*, Hanna thinks that this dystopian city is hopeless and without any spirit.

Similarly, Katherine Roeder, an art historian, provides a critical review of the novel Push Wagner’s *Soft City* (2016). She argues that *Soft City* visualizes “late-capitalism” in a metropolis where the citizens move “mechanically” in “unison” (Roeder 142). The repetitive movements of citizens lead to an oppressive image of the city. Moreover, this repetition becomes a “motif” for “symmetry,” which vocalises the “dehumanising regime” of the “controller” of the “programmed” and “controlled world” (Roeder 142). Likewise, in *The Guardian*, Sky Sherwin, the author of the post, comments that the novel illustrates the “identical” and “circular” lives of the inhabitants of a dystopian urban space named *Soft City*. Sherwin concludes that the inhabitant functions in a rhythm where every move is repetitive. Furthermore, he highlights that the mind of inhabitants of *Soft City* is like a “prison” mirroring their “routine lifestyle” and “oppressive” “infinite identical” architecture (Sherwin). The sky does not exist in the *Soft City*, which means no way out from this circular life (Sherwin). To comment on the identity crisis in *Soft City*, Douglas Wolk describes the repetitive life in the city as “horror” and “identity-annihilating”. The citizens are obsessed with “consumption” and are constantly being “watche(d)” by a “powerful boss.” Everything is “soft” in this city, for example, “soft park,” “soft TV,” “Soft meat,” etc. (Wolk).

Further on, this mass conformity, symmetry, and homogeneity refers to the lack of autonomy in an authoritarian oppressive state-corporate. Authors of the conference paper, *Energy Citizenship; Ideals, Ideology, and Ideal Types in the Energy Transition* (2020), argue that *Soft City* displays “passive Energy Citizenship (ENCI)” where the citizens are examples of “disempowerment”, “disinterest,” and “disillusionment”. The citizens are at the lower step of “Arnstein’s participation ladder.” This study substantiates its argument through “A Theory of Citizenship” by Dobson (2003) and Bryan Turner (1990) (Pel et al. 9).

In conclusion, it is agreed by the prior reviews and studies that there is a symmetry and monotony in the movement and routines of the citizens, more specifically in *Soft City*. It is examined how the citizens’ as synchronized figures have

repetitive routines reinforcing passive obedience, and how uniformity reflects citizen whose individuality is erased by repetition and mechanical life. However, as argued by the existing study, the cities present a reterritorialized urban dystopia where the citizens are not merely alienated and oppressively synchronized individuals but also fragmented nodes that exist in a controlled urban grid. The study is not primarily focused on forced mass conformity but rather on a modulated one. It also suggests that the people represent isolated data points observed and managed by the state-corporate in the structured post-panopticon. The data further refine the systemic control. In this post-panopticon, there is a liquid reterritorialization, and the space deforms and reforms itself. The spaces are not distinct spaces belonging to separate institutions. Rather, they are one continuous space coexisting and converging towards the corporation, which is the controller. The spaces such as apartments, markets, kindergartens, and corporate buildings/offices are deformed as distinct and reformed as one big post-Panoptic space. The control in these spaces is rapidly occurring and of short duration, unlike the panoptic spaces. This research pinpoints how spatial compartmentalization progresses beyond mass conformity and leads to data and desire-driven obedience.

Thus, through compartmentalization leading to reterritorialization and reterritorialization, urban spaces allow spatial reinforcement and ensure that the citizens present mental and bodily compliance with the existing urban rhythm. There is a profound shift from conventional mass-conformed societies to systemic algorithmic post-Panoptic control societies.

ii. Over-consumption:

Nick Dunn, Dr Paul Cureton, and Serena Pollastri in *Future of Cities: A Visual History of the Future* (2014) argue that Push Wagner's *Soft City* illustrates "rampant societal consumption". The citizens have a "standardised," "Orwellian," "dystopian city" life. Additionally, the city portrays an "organised city" with "urban organisation" (Cureton et al. 41). The research substantiates its argument by adapting Paolo Soleri's philosophies on transport infrastructure and urban organisation. According to the *New York Review Books*, the novel *Soft City* is an illustration of the "commodification of leisure, the depersonalization of capitalism", and "the numbing of ever-increasing consumption". It is further argued that consumption in the *Soft City* is not explicit but is "atomized" in the form of different products or "commodities" that are simplistic and follow a similar repetitive pattern.

Further on, themes of over-consumption are also apparent in the other primary

text, *Paris 2119*. For instance, *Magnetic Press* summarises *Paris 2119* (2020) as a cyberpunk romance where people find technology as a “mandatory” element of their routine life and social issues such as “transhumanism”, “over-consumption”, “social media”, “climate change” and “identity theft” are visible in a recurring manner. S.D. McKinley, one of the members of *Net Galley*, comments on *Paris 2119*. He points out the main themes of the graphic novel, which are “over-consumption” leading to Transcore, a teleportation pod, “Climate change” leading up to continuous rain, “identity theft” and “Transhumanism”. Another review of the graphic novel by Amy Walker on *Trans-cribe* highlighted that the story sheds light on “current social trends such as over-consumption”. The citizens get “instant entertainment” (Walker 1).

In conclusion, over-consumption and consumerism are the key elements of these dystopian urban spaces, as mentioned by the existing scholarship. The consumption is rampant, depersonalized, numbing, and ever-increasing. Goods and services that are provided to the citizens are mechanized and impersonal. They lack any emotional and social interaction. Rather, citizens are reduced to numbers and functions. Even though the present study builds its debate on the theme of over-consumption, unlike the previous arguments, it extends its discussion to Deleuze’s concept of coded desires. It suggests that consumerism in the urban spaces manipulates humans into desiring their subjugation. The system of commodification manufactures their consent through their coded desires. They don’t resist their monotonous existence since their desires have been preconditioned by the urban system. Contrary to previous studies, this research claims that urban spaces are not merely commodified; capitalism works at the micro-level, such as in the ways citizens interact and negotiate their regular life within the urban framework. Micro-level capitalism becomes one of the ways of spatial appropriation. As a result, citizens end up being commodities themselves. Apart from being the data nodes, they are commodities.

While scholars analysed traditional hyper-consumption, this study researches how over-consumption is utilised by the state-corporate to manipulate citizens. There is a shift from passive consumption to data-driven consumer surveillance. Moreover, Marketing is at the core of such hyper-capitalist spaces. It is the soul of the corporation and a tool of social control. This process is one of the elements of post-panoptic surveillance, where citizens are controlled as well as reterritorialized through their desires. This approach makes this study separate from the aforementioned scholarship.

iii. Transhumanism and the Intervention of Technology:

McKinley from *Net Galley* describes Transhumanism in terms of digital clones of humans, privacy invasions, and erasable identity. He calls “the height of technology” the antagonist in the story, which is being protected from the protagonist’s attack, Tristian Keys. In conclusion, according to him, this story is about “deception” and how it “trickles down” (McKinley). Likewise, Libros H, another member, argues that *Paris 2119* is about technology ruling over every aspect of life, such as “cooking”, “reading”, “travelling,” or “having children”. Life in *Paris 2119* is entirely governed, “controlled”, “planned”, “authorised”, and “processed by machines”. Libros H. adds that the protagonist wonders if the citizens are not content and safe with technology and omnipresent drones. As mentioned earlier, *Magnetic Press* also identifies Transhumanism as a theme of the graphic novel. Further on, Amy from *Trans-cribe*, too, terms transhumanism as one of the themes of the novel.

Magnetic Press quotes Zep and Dominique’s interview with *Comicbookresources.com*. Zep and Dominique reveal that the agenda was to create a city that is “ultra-technologically evolved” and whereby citizens have completely entrusted their lives to technology. The city is illustrated as a “deserted city.” Teleportation has made travel unnecessarily comfortable, which has “isolated” people. The previous debates identify the cities as utilizing technology for monitoring people. However, this study brings in Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of hyper-information and data-driven digital surveillance to highlight that the city in *Soft City* and *Paris 2119* is hyper-informational space, one of the features of systematic post-panopticon. It suggests that the information saturates the spaces and re-organizes them. Within these altered but reterritorialized spaces, the individuals are reduced to fragmented nodes and mere data-driven entities. Digital capitalism is involved, and the spaces are controlled by the saturated information conditioning the individuals in an invisible and embedded manner. Unlike previous studies that link humans with technology, this approach challenges the traditional understanding of surveillance through technology in the city and highlights a data-driven surveillance that renders human bodies as extensions of digitized urban control, a notion that is proto-Deleuzian. The digital control is seamlessly planted within the body through pills and micro-chips. This study delineates the shift from reactive to proactive control using the technology. The technological mechanism is not just the backdrop but actively dissolves boundaries between the city

and the body. It suggests that it is an extension of post-Panoptic control.

Furthermore, previous scholarship does not include a debate of right to the urban spaces concerning the state-corporate's urban control. This denial of the right to the city includes the denial right of difference, the right to similarity, the right to information, the right to vocalise their ideas on their space and time, the right to access centre or privileged place, the right to move away from peripheries, right to security, adventure, right to play, work and use senses how much they want and in any way they want. Moreover, this right also includes the right to citizens' bodies, which is denied because of abuse of political power in urban spaces. The present study, however, comprehensively debates this right to the city as discussed by Henri Lefebvre. Despite extensive scholarship on the themes of surveillance and hyper-consumption in primary texts, there remains a notable gap in understanding what role physical spaces play in crafting a control society and how the fabric of socio-political societies in these urban spaces impact the lived experience of human beings. This research seeks to explore the gap by analysing the symbiotic relationship between urban spaces and surveillance.

Thus, contrary to the previous scholarship, this research aims to build a link between surveillance, consumerism, and informational systems to over-arching post-Panoptic systemic control. This study delineates surveillance as decentralized and defying urban boundaries. Hence, the spaces co-exist as one, assisting the state-corporate's control. In these newly created urban layouts, because of compartmentalization, reterritorialization, consumer seduction, and hyper-informational dynamics, urban spaces function as a tool for control rather than a passively existing byproduct. Capitalism does not merely commodify the urban spaces, it commodifies citizens' bodies as well. It functions at the micro-level within the post-Panopticon. This embedded surveillance allows authorities to manipulate citizens and get their consent over the invasion of privacy and dismissal of rights to city spaces. The post-Panoptic urban spaces dictate bodily agency. In conclusion, the cities are sites of hyper-production, and the state is synonymous with a corporate in the control society.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the thesis thoroughly discusses the theoretical framework for the present study. It discusses the theoretical concepts used and adapted for the analysis of primary texts for the study. The discussion of surveillance is carried out through Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of "hyper-information," "coded desire" and "reterritorialization" alongside Henri Lefebvre's concept of "Right to the City" and bodies. Since the foundation of the post-Panopticon is rooted in Foucault's interpretation of the Panopticon, it will be discussed contrastively with the other concepts. After the discussion of theoretical concepts, details related to the research method selected for the particular study are provided.

3.1 Dystopias, Surveillance, and Post-Panopticon

Firstly, the discussion begins with a primary question, i.e., what is a post-Panopticon? The answer lies in the relationship between urban spaces and tools of surveillance. The post-panopticon can be defined as a contemporary Panopticon, popularised after Michel Foucault's Panopticism, with advanced features of surveillance and control. Like the Panopticon, the post-Panopticon is an architectural and spatial construction whereby the subjects are constantly put through surveillance to practice control and discipline. Unlike Panopticon, surveillance in the post-Panopticon is not fixed, centralised, and confined to places like schools, hospitals, prisons, etc. It flows through subjects and spaces (Basturk 2). Post-Panopticon also practices capitalistic power through consumerism (Basturk 2). This study is focused on the post-Panopticon and its elements of control illustrated in the selected graphic novels.

To discuss the relationship of dystopias and Panopticon since the selected texts are of dystopian genre, Claire Worbel in *Dystopia, Surveillance, and the Spaces of Control in Jenni Fagan's The Panopticon (2012)*, explains how utopias and dystopias carry a "long-standing relationship" with surveillance. Worbel explains that the debate has been going on for "almost two centuries" on whether the Panopticon is a utopian or dystopian phenomenon. She argues that dystopian settings often result in the

Panopticon rendering societies vulnerable. She quotes Tom Moylan, who said that dystopian fiction was a result of 20th-century surveillance or police states (Worbel 1). She adds that Michel Foucault interprets Bentham's Panopticon as a dystopian element. According to him, the Panopticon symbolizes a disciplinary society. This society relies on surveillance, which extends beyond the walls of prison (Foucault qtd. in Worbel 10). Thus, she concludes that Panopticon or, in this case, post-Panopticon, are a significant element of Dystopian fiction. It is pivotal to hereby establish that the term post-Panopticon is central to this study for its theoretical ability to describe decentralized, networked consumerist surveillance, integrating Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari with Henri Lefebvre, in both primary texts. Moreover, it efficiently captures 21st-century dystopias as control societies with embedded surveillance. It highlights the research gap of the study by illustrating the synergy of the surveillance tools such as architecture, consumerism, and surveillance.

After concluding that the Panopticon is reared in dystopias, it is crucial to understand and pinpoint the status of the Panopticon in contemporary theory and practice. Fundamentally, Michel Foucault's "Panopticism" is a social theory based on Jeremy Bentham's architectural design of the "Panopticon" from the late 18th century (Boyne 288). Foucault's theory of Panopticism was a revolutionary discovery in the area of exercising power and sustaining it. However, the technological developments through the years and the reconfiguration of surveillance render the traditional Panopticon unsuitable for labelling contemporary practices of control. After being declared defunct by the critics, the concept of the Panopticon has now been renamed as a "post-Panopticon". For instance, Worbel expresses that Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon is the "biggest metaphor" for surveillance studies. However, according to her, the inclusion of surveillance capitalism and dataveillance has changed the nature of contemporary surveillance, even if "culturally," the significance of the Panopticon remains intact (Worbel 1). Furthermore, in *post-Panopticism* (2010), Roy Boyne critically maps out how Foucault's Panopticon is a "defunct" concept in the 21st century and post-Panopticism is a relevant "contemporary social theory". Boyne presents five theoretical concepts to substantiate his argument, namely "displacement", "redundancy", "reduction", "failure", and "supplementation" (Boyne 285). Deleuze and Guattari also document this reconfiguration in their works. Physical and mental "Reterritorialization", "hyper-information", and "coded desire" are the key elements to

the post-Panopticon, which were absent in the Panopticon. Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of post-panoptic surveillance can be discussed in relation to key points of Boyne's discussion.

To pinpoint the theoretical inclinations of this research, the section progresses to a discussion of the shift from panopticon to post-Panopticon.

3.2 From Panoptic Surveillance to Post-Panoptic Surveillance

Originally, Michel Foucault contextualised Panopticism in his widely acknowledged work *Discipline and Punish* (1975). He analysed that Panopticon is an "architectural figure" which is instituted on the principle that at the centre is a tower that has "wide windows" on all sides and at the periphery is "an annular building." A supervisor is placed in the centre tower and the individuals are put under the supervisor's eye-view in the annular building which is divided into cells. Through illumination from the backside, the supervisor is not visible to the individuals in the cells. Moreover, the individuals in the cells "do not see" but are seen by the supervisor. Furthermore, the individual cannot see or communicate with his/her "companions" because of the walls preventing him from seeing sideways. The arrangement of cells opposite to the central tower puts the individual cells on "axial visibility" but obstructs "lateral invisibility" (Foucault 200). This type of Panopticon is linear and readily dependent on human capacity.

Whereas in contemporary surveillance practices, this architectural system can no longer be deemed accurate. Instead, surveillance reaches above and beyond the designated buildings and fixed positions of subjects. For instance, Boyne quotes Zygmunt Bauman, who argues that the Panopticon was an accurate mechanism for "clockwork societies" whereby the citizens had "fixed places, functions, and appetites". However, in contemporary Western societies, which are ultra-modern and cutting edge, the inhabitants are not fixed in a certain place (Bauman qtd. in Boyne 286). Additionally, Boyne argues that the "Panoptical gaze," which was fixed in "the middle," has now moved to "the edges" (Boyne 287).

Likewise, post-structuralist theorist Gilles Deleuze, collaborating with Felix Guattari, scrutinises the status of the Panopticon as an ideal type for control in a technologically advanced world. Deleuze and Guattari repudiate hierarchical and linear

organisation in a Panopticon. Both identify a shift from Panopticon to post-Panopticon. Since the main argument of this study is to unfold manifestations of post-Panoptic surveillance in the primary texts, this section establishes the theoretical foregrounding of the works of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. For the purpose, Efe Basturk explicates this shift, as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Brief Analysis on Post Panoptic Surveillance: Deleuze & Guattarian Approach* (2017). According to them, it is understood that the Panopticon requires an enclosed space to practice power relations. The subjects or inmates are controlled by the “Panoptic eye” (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 1). However, the post-Panopticon does not need an enclosed and confined space to process. It means that surveillance in Panopticism does not require a certain “ground to settle” on. Instead, it operates like “flows” (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 2). It is a rhizomatic system of interconnected nodes of power assertion that makes surveillance non-hierarchical and decentralized.

Basturk explains that Gilles Deleuze debates in *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992) that rather than Foucauldian techniques of governance in confined space, the power is “flowing” through “spaces and subject.” In the Panopticon, power was asserted in a sequence on the inmates one by one because not all subjects are processed in the “confinement” spaces at the same time. Unlike Foucault, Deleuze sees the post-Panopticon as a mechanism operating beyond one confined space (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 2). He explains that, unlike the Panopticon, the post-Panopticon can access subjects outside a particular space. Surveillance in the new mechanism can be conducted anywhere and everywhere (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 5). Hyper-information implemented through technology is the element that aids in this flowing surveillance in the post-Panopticon, which is unbounded by geography.

Moreover, surveillance through a controller or overseer is no longer required in contemporary practice. It has been replaced by “consumer seduction” (Boyne 287). According to Bauman, the Panopticon as a model of societal control and order is “inappropriate” in societies that are controlled through “consumption and enjoyment imperatives” (Bauman qtd. in Boyne 286). Boyne calls this replacement “displacement” (Boyne 285). “Policing” is not principally a focus in this new Panopticon, but “market share” and “consumer seduction” are (Boyne 287). Moreover, surveillance is “interlaced” with seduction. The expected outcome of such surveillance is “shopping” and “active consumers” (Boyne 287). This means that seduction through consumeristic

products is one of the “panoptical principles” (Boyne 297). Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari also identify capitalism and consumer culture as elements of the post-Panopticon in terms of coded desire and reterritorialization. Succinctly put, it can be understood that the post-Panopticon is not merely for surveillance but for shaping subjectivities to create docile subjects.

According to Basturk, a shift from the Panopticon cannot be achieved without conferring about the Guattarian perspective of “reterritorialization,” which is synonymous with Boyne’s discussion on consumerism in Western societies. Basturk unveils the link between Deleuze’s control society and Guattari’s reterritorialization to understand the transformation of the surveillance mechanism. He discusses their idea of reterritorialization in capitalist society to present the mechanism of the post-Panopticon. Reterritorialization means deterritorializing the body of the subject from its contents and then reterritorializing it with a coded desire. This coded desire is a form of capitalist power that controls the desire of the individuals or subjects of observation (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 9). This coded desire is what Boyne terms consumer seduction. This kind of power is beyond spatial control in which an individual’s position is fixed (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 10).

While discussing the societies of control, Deleuze points out that the “machine” used to control societies is upgraded with the technological evolution, which is “a mutation of capitalism” concentrated on “higher-order” production. Capitalism is a controlling force behind these societies, which is the owner of all spaces like schools, homes, offices, etc. Under the transformation, the urban spaces aren’t distinct “analogical spaces” anymore, but rather, “coded figures” of a corporation that are “deformable and transformable” (Deleuze 6). In the Capitalist consumer society, policing is coated with consumer seduction, which turns the citizens into active consumers. Now, the state only has to regulate the consumer’s thirst for commodities to control them without solely injecting surveillance and policing (Boyne 287). This consumer seduction is a coded desire that displaces the citizens physically and mentally. In the control society, “marketing” is depicted as the “soul” of the corporation that is involved in “higher-order production”. The goal of the corporation is to seize control by manipulating the costs and “exchange rate” (Deleuze 6). One of the four of Boyne’s arguments is that, unlike Panopticon, in post-Panopticon, “few are watching the many” “as much as” “many are watching the few”. When many watch the few, managing the

subject's information is efficient and convenient. Additionally, in this "viewer society", the subjects aspire to "consume or and be consumed by the product". Boyne relates this feature of the Panopticon to the Synopticon and calls it Synoptic/Panoptic duality (Boyne 301). Thus, control in the 21st century is about controlling production.

Likewise, the other marker of the post-Panopticon outlined by Deleuze and Guattari is hyper-information. It can be discussed as an extension of Boyne's argument of monitoring of few inhabitants by many observers. To watch a few efficiently, technology is utilised. Hyper-information is one of the examples of many watching a few through technology. This aspect was absent in Bentham's Panopticon. This concept suggests that because of digital monitoring and computer-based technological usage for surveillance, an accumulation of information is processed, which leads to the efficiency of observing individuals at a time (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 5). Moreover, it allows the state-corporate to collect surplus amounts of information for future reference as well. Furthermore, Deleuze elaborates on the study of Guattari's imagined city. In this city or the control society, the "socio-technological" "mechanism of control" is the use of "electronic cards" for the "dividual" that works for barriers between spaces. When the individual leaves their apartment, street, or neighbourhood, they can be "easily rejected" anytime. Their "position" is tracked through electronic cards linked to computers. This practice can be "licit" or illicit". Likewise, the prisoners in the "prison system" are controlled by "electronic collars". In the "hospital system", medicine targets the dividual's coded numerical body to be controlled. Similarly, the corporate system found new ways of domination (Deleuze 7).

Thus, surveillance in the post-Panopticon becomes a technique to control "contingency" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 6). Another limitation of the Panopticon is its "failure" to produce "docile subjects" after periods of surveillance (Boyne 302). Similarly, for Deleuze and Guattari, as concluded by Basturk, the post-Panopticon agenda is not merely producing "docile" bodies but following their path of coded desire to control them in certain spaces, although in a "flow" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in Basturk 10).

Finally, in the *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992), Deleuze concludes that Foucauldian "disciplinary societies" of the 18th and 19th centuries have transitioned into "the societies of control" through "ultrarapid forms of free-floating control"

(Deleuze 4). He describes “control”, a term proposed by William Burroughs, as a new title for the administration who is in charge. In societies of control, surveillance never halts. No one gets finished with “anything”. All institutions “coexist” to become “a universal system of deformation”. Further on, in such societies, “the man of control” is not confined to one location. Unlike “the disciplinary man”, he is “undulatory”. He is in a “continuous network” or “orbit” (Deleuze 6).

Thus, the concept of the Panopticon must be revised in 21st-century technoculture societies. Further on, the present study anchors its discussion of rights denied to the citizens because of the post-Panopticon in Henri Lefebvre’s *Theory of Space Production*. When the spaces are structured into post-Panopticon through the principles of surveillance, reterritorialization, coded desire, and hyper-information, the phenomenon has its prominent effects on the inhabitants of these urban spaces. To understand this proportional relationship, Henri Lefebvre’s works play a pivotal role. Henri Lefebvre’s book *Production of Space* (1991) is seminal work theorizing space, power, and body. According to Lefebvre, space is produced when social, mental, and material fields of human beings come into contact. “Space” is not a natural but a socially constructed phenomenon that happens through social activity. Space as an abstract entity has “three levels of analysis”. The first one is “physical space,” including architecture, which is linked to “discursive space,” which is the citizen’s perception of the space. Finally, these spaces are in a triad with “representational space,” which concludes the lived experience of citizens within the social space. Social activity carries itself within hierarchies and structures of societies resulting from the urban revolution. This urban revolution developed continually under capitalism (Lefebvre 91). Capitalist communities entail the commercialization of “urban spaces.” This commodification and commercialization create homogeneity, which eradicates all differences. Lefebvre defines this space as “a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles” (Lefebvre 118). Thus, urban spaces, i.e., cities that heavily practice commercialization/commodification, push citizens to create a homogenous community where differences are eradicated through policing. These policed spaces then become a form of post-Panopticon and make right to the urban space inaccessible.

Furthermore, Lefebvre explains a global strategy in a consumer society. He unfolds that this strategy is planning a unitary and total system and putting it into practice by building commercial centres. This practice will ensure citizens’ satisfaction

through consumption (Lefebvre 140). He notes that the right to the city is “the right to meetings and gatherings and the need for social life and a centre, the need and the function of play, the symbolic functions of space” contrary to commercialization. It is the right to be more inclusive in producing space, i.e., reacting to the outer material environment with their mentality and social abilities. Moreover, Lefebvre examines that in the times of globalisation and technologically advanced communication, the Right to the City is a citizen’s right to “difference” “information.” This right should be modified and “concertized” to make the rights of citizens more “practical” as “urban dwellers.” Resultantly, it is the right of the citizens “to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area.” It also includes citizens’ right to “the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’)” (Lefebvre 34).

Furthermore, Lefebvre explains that apart from structures, functions, and forms of the city, there are “social needs” intrinsic to an “urban society.” These social needs comprise of need for “security and opening,” “certainty and adventure,” “work and play,” “predictable and the unpredictable,” “similarity and difference,” “isolation and encounter,” “exchange and investments,” “independence (even solitude) and communication” either immediate or long-term planning. It is a need for urban dwellers to “accumulate energies” and then spend them or waste them as they want. It is a need of human beings “to see, to touch, to hear, to taste and to gather” such “perceptions in a world.” Lefebvre emphasises that these needs are exploited and manipulated in the “so-called society of consumption” (Lefebvre 147). Boyne also discusses the rights of human beings subjected to surveillance through instances from daily life scenarios like factories, offices, hospitals, and prisons. He differentiates between “plague” protocols and the Panopticon to foreground the inhumane and abusive nature of the Panopticon (Boyne 293).

Further on, Lefebvre also theorises the relation of power, surveillance, and the body. His works on the right to the city, lived experience, and the production of space provides a framework for assessing bodily autonomy in urban spaces, resisting against surveillance and consumerism. His work proves to be a challenge for the commodification of urban space. He emphasizes how urbanization, so reliant on capitalism, restricts citizens’ bodily freedom and agency. According to Lefebvre, since

urban space is a social product, it is created through social interactions. This suggests that the space should reflect the desires and needs of all inhabitants rather than just the elite or stakeholders. Additionally, he talks about the intricate relationship between urban spaces and the body. The body of an urban dweller is intricately intertwined with the urban configuration of the city. The body rhythms are in harmony with the urban environment. The body creates a space that caters to its sensory experiences and needs. However, surveillance and capitalism have altered and manipulated this experience. Since the surveillance in the post-Panopticon is decentralized, its omnipresence diminishes the spontaneous and organic interactions of the dweller. Urban dwellers or citizens are deterred from expressing themselves freely because of the restricted and heavily monitored urban environment, leading to a sense of alienation and suppressed bodily rhythms. The daily bodily rhythms are manipulated for control through rules and training (Lefebvre 31). Capitalism not only creates class differences within the urban spaces; it also devalues natural bodily rhythms. These rhythms are composed of mental and sensory gestures. All organs of the body, like ears, eyes, and hands, are not “passive components of the body” but individual entities. Under capitalism, rather than creating natural rhythms, the body becomes a producer and destroyer (Lefebvre 32).

To understand the relation of the body with the urban spaces, it is crucial to understand the triad of three spatial “moments,” namely, spatial practice, representation of space, and representational space. An urban dweller or “subject’s” body has a reciprocal relationship with the space. The social practice involves the use of bodily organs such as the “use of hands, members and sensory organs, and the gestures” to activate the perceived realm. Now, for the representation of the body, it interacts with its surroundings and nature or in other terms “milieu”. The “bodily lived experience” is impacted by the milieu, including the culture and traditions. “Localization” of the body is crucial. According to the body’s lived experiences, it can also be called a “body without organs” or “a body chastised” (Lefebvre 40). Lefebvre further points out that one’s awareness of their body comes by investing power in their body. But one’s body struggles against political ideology emerging such as abortions, etc. (Lefebvre 110). Bodily autonomy is dependent on the state-corporate operators or the elite. Surveillance and policing through post-Panopticon evaporate freedom within the spaces and the right to citizens’ bodies, whether it is the right related to mental or physical freedom.

In conclusion, the post-Panopticon is a disciplining technique linked to the rights to urban spaces. Disciplining through surveillance and consumer culture restricts citizens' freedom to access this urban space on their terms, and thus, they lose their right to the city. This study is eager to explore the relationship of post-Panopticon and rights associated with the spaces with the aid of primary texts.

3.3 Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative inquiry of the primary texts, *Soft City (2016)* and *Paris 2119 (2020)* which investigates how the city spaces turn into post-Panopticon and eventually result in the depravity of rights to these spaces. This qualitative investigation explores the visual, textual, spatial, and narrative evidence from the text. A close reading of the text and images through the lenses of the aforementioned theoretical framework will unveil how surveillance and monitoring of the urban spaces are portrayed graphically, what narrative techniques are used for the purpose and how visual symbols and motifs serve to enhance the textual storytelling.

3.3.1 Research Method

To conduct this qualitative investigation, this study utilises a social semiotic Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen. In a chapter titled *Multimodal Discourse Analysis* from the book *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis Multimodal* (2011), Kress explains this method of analysis. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) is technically a method to analyse a multimodal text. This multimodal text is a “multimodal semiotic entity” such as written text, images, gestures, colours, etc., which are multiple modes of communication to convey meaning (Kress 36). MMDA decodes the meaning behind such texts. Broadly, MMDA provides tools that let the researchers look at what is “the relation of meanings of a community and its semiotic manifestations” (Kress 37). Multimodality, together with social semiotics, investigates the text for questions about “meaning” and “meaning making” (Kress 38).

The rationale for selecting this method of analysis is that modes of communication in the primary texts are multimodal, including verbal, non-verbal, visual, gestural, and spatial descriptions. To create meaning, graphic novels utilise the combination of text, narrative, images, and layout. Multimodal discourse analysis dissects these elements

and answers how they work together to display urban spaces in a post-panoptic society under the omnipresence of surveillance. Moreover, this method is appropriate because multimodality and semiotic work in the text will provide a “description of the space and of the resources that enter into meaning” (Kress 38). This method also describes the spatial organization across the page since it is crucial for dissecting urban spaces in graphic novels. It is important to keep in mind that the scaling and positioning of urban features, such as public and private spaces, skyscrapers, etc., represent power dynamics.

Further, Kress identifies that social semiotics will tell the researcher “What is shared communicatively” and in different modes such as “intensity, framing, foregrounding, highlighting, coherence, cohesions and forms of the genre”. It will also identify the social, cultural, political, technological, and economic underlining of meaning-making (Kress 47). This interdisciplinary approach will guide in identifying the manipulation of chronotopes (time and space) within the novel and how it is reflected in the oppression of citizens.

Thus, this method will provide accurate steps of analysis. This study will utilise this method to identify the three meta-functions of the images, illustrations, and symbols, along with the analysis of the text given. The analysis of these different semiotic modes and lexical choices in the texts will help analyse the surveillance of urban spaces, over-consumption, and denial of citizens’ right to the city and their bodies within these spaces. The specific focus would be on the description of spaces, characters’ engagement with urban spaces, and the interconnectivity of these spaces and the interactions of characters with the technology in combination with multimodal features in the graphic novels *Soft City* (2016) and *Paris 2119* (2020). The analysis of the undertaken comic fiction will be carried out under the light of key tenets of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of post-panopticon, hyper-information, coded-desire and reterritorialization, and Henri Lefebvre’s concept of right to the city.

Finally, Kress and Van Leeuwen, in their work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996), provide a framework to analyse visual text through three meta functions. These metafunctions are the Representational meta-function, Interpersonal meta-function, and Compositional meta-function (Harrison 50). The designed framework for the analysis of selected graphic novels includes the following steps, which will be utilised thoroughly:

3. Selecting illustrations or panels in the selected graphic novels through a systematic approach. This approach ensures that the chosen data aligns with the research objectives and theoretical framework.
4. Identifying the modes of the graphic novel. The captions, dialogues, or any text in combination with illustrations, drawings, setting, colours, gestures/body language, and layout, including the organization of the panels.
5. After identifying the modes, the next step is analysing the *Representational meaning*, one of the meta-functions. This step includes identifying how the story is narrated through visuals, the sequence of events, and the representation of action across the panels of novels.
6. The third step is to examine the *Interpersonal meaning*. This step includes analysing how the frames and their sizes, such as close-ups, long shots, medium shots, and panoramas, are utilized to engage with the reader. Apart from frames, angles and characters' gaze identifies the interpersonal meaning of the story.
7. Next, analyzing and identifying *compositional meaning* is one of the meta-functions of the multimodal text. It includes considering if the elements are placed on top/bottom, centre/margin, or left/right. Additionally, the meaning these elements convey and the readers' perception is crucial to this step of analysis.
8. Keeping in mind the three meta-functions of multimodal text, analyse how texts and images intercommunicate throughout the panels. Further, these steps included examining if the meaning is directly aligned with the illustration or is contrastive. It also considers the sequential flow of events and how the reader is guided through these events.

3.3.1.1 Criteria for the selection of illustrations and characters

To select illustrations/panels for the analysis of selected graphic novels, a systematic approach has been taken. This approach is guided by the research objectives and theoretical concepts central to the study. Panels that are pivotal for the narrative and thematic development are selected. Additionally, panels that have multimodal richness, recurring symbols or motifs, and display intricate interplay of textual, visual, and spatial modes in the novels are critical to the argument. Moreover, the panels that exhibit representational and ideological relevance to the theoretical framework, for instance, reterritorialized space, hyper-informational space, coded desire, and illustrations displaying the right to the city and its negation, are included to substantiate

the argument. Likewise, the characters in both novels are included and excluded based on their alignment with the objective and theoretical framework. Characters that embody post-Panoptic control are included in the research since they directly engage with post-Panoptic spaces and systematic surveillance mechanisms. Furthermore, characters who reflect spatial struggle through textual or visual cues. The characters that lack thematic or narrative significance, exist outside the adapted theoretical scope, or replicate redundant narratives are excluded from the analysis.

Overall, this effective methodical approach uncovers meanings and narratives embedded in multimodal elements of the text.

CHAPTER 4

MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF *Soft City* AND *Paris 2119*

This section of the thesis comprehensively evaluates the contents of the selected primary texts, *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*, to corroborate the thesis statement. Both narratives portray dystopian urban societies. The architecture of the cities is intentionally organised and regulated agglomeration. This organisation is not merely limited to the physical spaces; the inhabitants are living a regimented, regular life, too. Consistent with its titular indication, *Soft City* and *Paris 2119* are cities where consumer products are abundantly available for their inhabitants. The cities are bustling metropolitan areas where the regular activities of citizens are synchronised and observed consistently. To facilitate this consistent surveillance, the urban layout is systematically arranged so that physical spaces are methodically spread out to optimise the movement of the inhabitants throughout the urban landscape. These spaces are transformed into active agents of control. Besides the design of these physical spaces, in both narratives, modern tactics are used by the state-corporate, such as consumer seduction and addiction, that confirm acquiescence from the people. They become what Deleuze and Guattari labelled as desiring-machines. These desiring machines are deterritorialized and reterritorialized. The arrangement of physical spaces, along with Draconian measures for surveillance, creates what is termed as post-Panopticon. This post-Panopticon is indubitably a rigid structure resulting in the deprivation of rights and oppression of the inhabitants. The setting, along with the coded desires of the citizens, makes them deterritorialized and reterritorialized as per the agenda of the state-corporate, creating perpetual consequences for the citizens. Their rights to the urban spaces and their bodies get revoked within the stringent urban layout.

To expand on the main arguments of the study, this analysis will be an investigation of the text evaluating and evincing two critical questions: *In what ways do the state-corporate institutions turn the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon? And how do these post-panoptic urban spaces created by the state-corporate refute the citizens' rights to the city and their bodies?* Further questions to be integrally explored in this study: *How do urban spaces act as active agents of control? How are capitalism and technology being used to collect information on citizens? What happens*

with this information? How is marketing utilised to enforce deterritorialization and reterritorialization? How are bodily autonomy and other rights of citizens dictated by the new spatial conditions? And how do both narratives portray control societies? To answer, the theoretical notions of Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Henri Lefebvre, as discussed in the theoretical framework of the study, will be utilised. Furthermore, each graphic novel is analysed using three key aspects of multimodal discourse analysis: representational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and compositional meaning. Representational meaning is described through what is shown. How do text, images, and symbols illustrate urban control, consumerism, denial of city rights, and bodily autonomy? For interpersonal meaning, it will be investigated how relationships are constructed within the post-panoptic urban spaces. The characters' interaction with the city, technology, and each other, and the emotions they display as a result, are analysed. Additionally, the power dynamics presented convey the meaning. Finally, the compositional meaning is conveyed when it is investigated how meaning is structured, how elements are arranged on the page or page layout, colour, and perspective to illustrate and reinforce the theme.

While both narratives engage in similar themes of spatial politics, consumer capitalism, and dismissal of rights, this study looks into each separately to explore how the ideas are illustrated and constructed within each narrative and graphical framework. The first section focuses entirely on *Soft City*, and the second section examines *Paris 2119*. Both depict control societies where the surveillance and policing of the urban spaces by the state-corporate create a disciplinary post-Panopticon that compartmentalises and reterritorializes citizens, thereby denying them the right to the city and their bodies, as stated in the thesis statement. Finally, the first part focuses on *Soft City*, while the second subsection discusses *Paris 2119*.

4.1. Exploring Post-Panopticon Urban Spaces in *Soft City* and Their Impact on Citizens' Right to the City and Body

4.1.1 Representational Meaning: Physical Spaces as Post-Panoptic Spaces

This subsection of analysis examines images, text, and symbols that depict how *Soft City* is a post-Panoptic control society. Firstly, the design of the physical spaces of the city is not merely an architectural coincidence or the city's architectural marvel. They are intentionally designed to fit the state-corporate's scheme of absolute control.

The city is a big and multifaceted urban centre. It is strategically compartmentalised into residential areas for labourers separated from Mr Soft, the boss's residence, corporation, kindergarten, supermarket, and industrial area. The exclusion and spatial segregation are central to post-panoptic societies because this urban layout transforms the spaces from passive entities to active tools for surveillance and control. For instance, citizens are segregated based on socio-economic divisions such as affluent groups and low-income groups. Such compartmentalization limits and regulates the mobility of selected groups. The compartmentalization is not limited to the spaces but extends to social and psychological aspect too. The spatial arrangement in the city facilitates surveillance and enforces the state-corporate's mandate of controlling citizens so that production is amplified. Therefore, post-Panopticon urban spaces are created to exert power within the urban layout through the segregation of physical spaces. Soft City is an exemplary model. The design of physical spaces in the Soft City favours the authority's objective of regulated mass production. The habitat of the citizens consists of identical skyscrapers spread across the entire strip (Figure 1.1). In the introduction to the novel, Chris Ware calls these buildings "computer punch cards" (Ware 5). The walls, windows, doors, and interiors are perfectly synchronised in all these buildings. Even the placement of the furniture inside the living room is identical. It is interesting to note that the city's name is Soft Inc. as if it's a corporate sector rather than a city inhabited by human beings.

Firstly, the novel begins with "the sun" rising over the Soft Inc. residential apartments. Slowly, the panel zooms into the apartments (Push Wagner 14). The first look of the apartments is an endless stretch of concrete building with endless small squares for windows of the apartments. In a grid of undifferentiated concrete towers, these windows look eerily similar to pixels (Figure 1.1). The minimal and monotonous design lacks individuality and personal expression (Push Wagner 13). This uniformity adds to the sterility of the urban layout. Additionally, the grid-like small structure of the buildings works as a metaphor for state-corporate mandated prison-like physical space.

Additionally, the sun acts as a metaphor. The sun looks nothing like a regular star, which is electrically charged, super-hot, and a source of energy for Earth-ians. It looks identical to a human eye within a semi-circle emerging from behind the Soft residential apartments (Figure 1.2). The sun's rays are like strands of delicate wires

spreading across the horizon until they cover the skyline above the apartments (Push Wagner 14). The sun is seen once again from Bingo's view. Bingo is an infant who is one of the main characters of the story. The reader sees through his eyes. When he wakes up, his crib is facing the window. The sun can be seen from the window. It looks identical to what was described earlier (Push Wagner 17). It implies that someone is watching over everything happening in the city. Thus, Bingo is also being watched by the supposed sun. Thus, the surveillance is that of a control society, and it suggests that it is embedded into the urban layout.

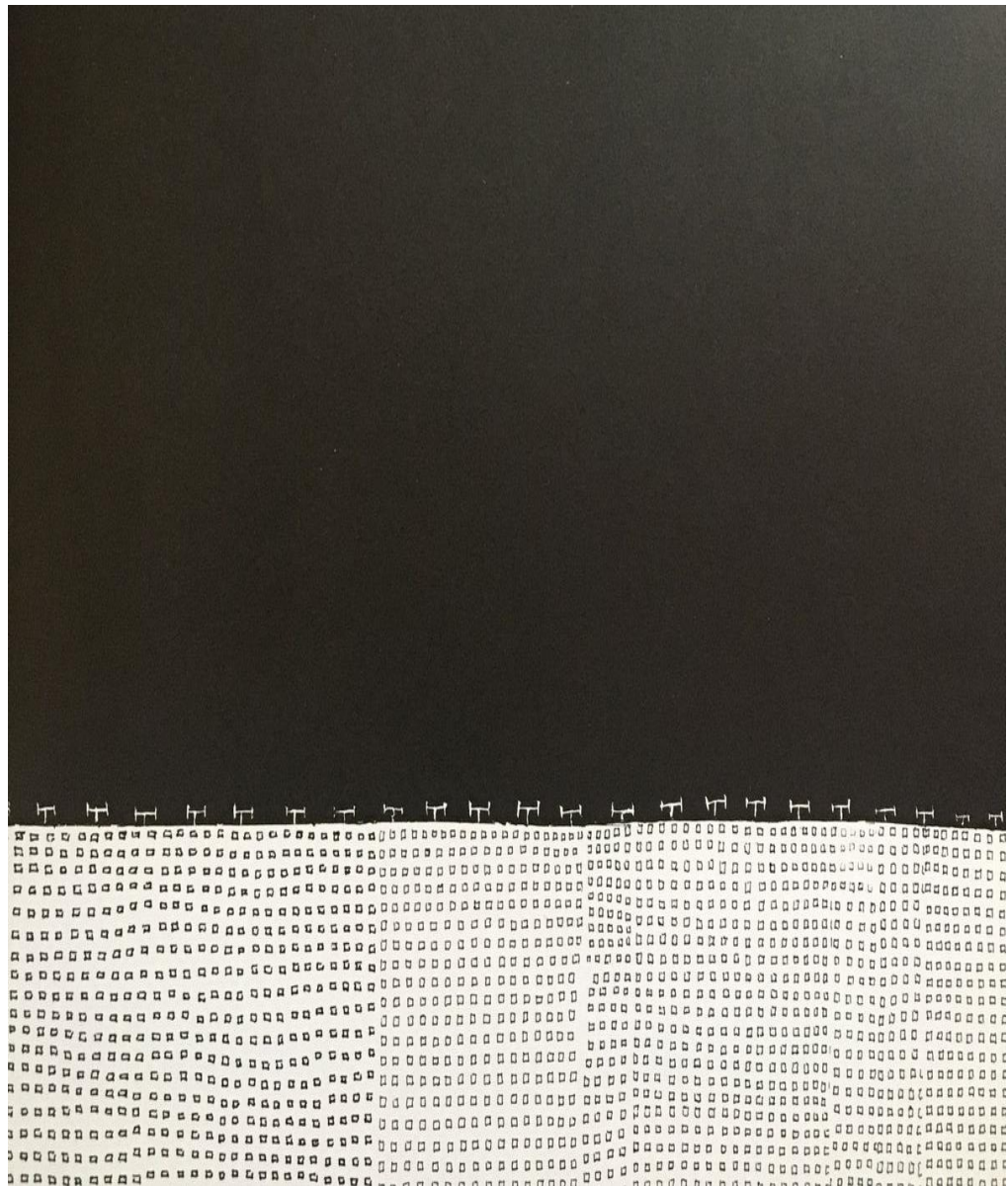


Figure 1.1

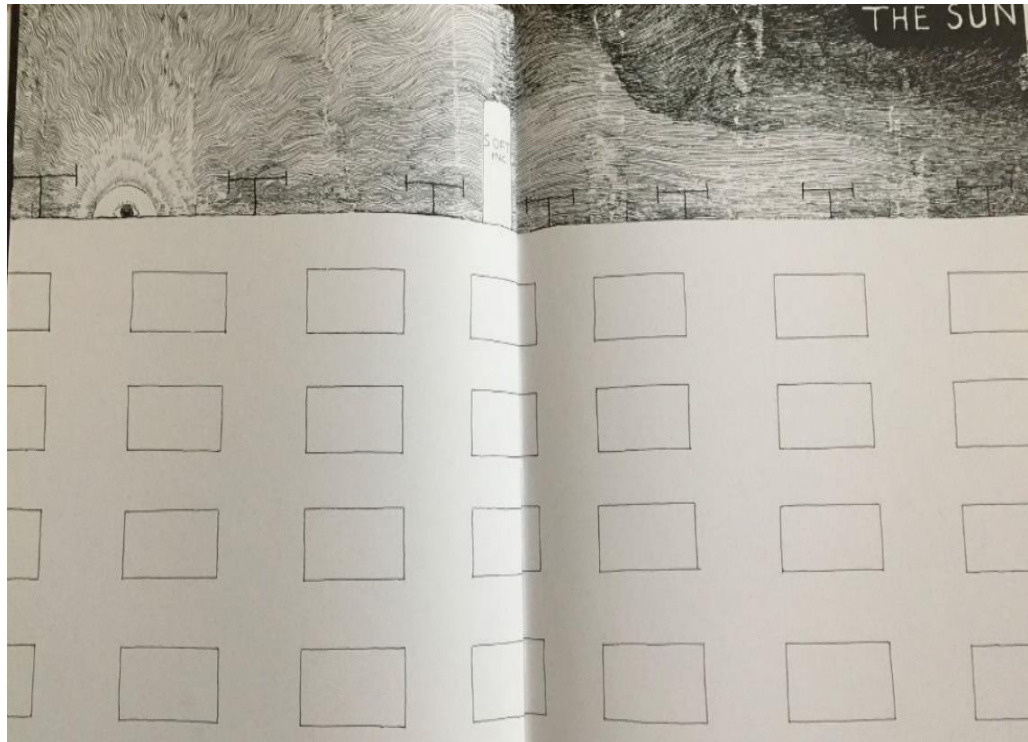


Figure 1.2

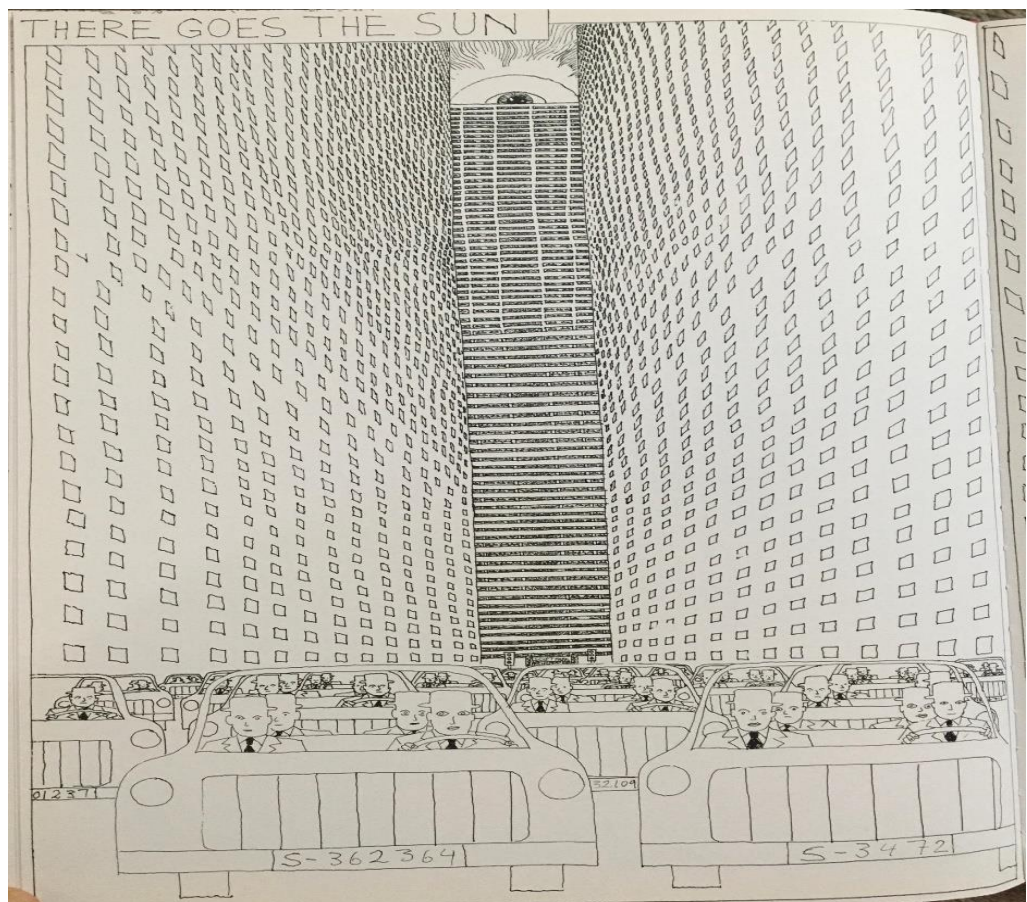


Figure 1.3

The sun is seen once again in the sky when the employees of Soft Inc. set off to their homes at the end of the day (Figure 1.3). This suggests the embedded and omnipresent surveillance of the city. The monitoring looks like seamless observance in the automated corporate-driven life of citizens. It is diffused within the digital networks. As delineated by Lefebvre, the urban spaces cease to exist as participatory and instead become an active agent of control, dictating the movement of citizens. Urban spaces are no longer passive backdrops.

Further on, the interior of these endless apartments is unusually identical and repetitive. Each apartment is a clone of the adjacent apartment, and apartments are stacked on top of one another. The walls, doors, floors, and furniture mirror the state-corporate mandated non-consensual monotonous life of Soft city dwellers. For instance, when Bingo stands against the window in the morning, he views the apartments. It is striking that each unit follows a uniform pattern for the placement of the interior items. Within these apartments, the arrangement of chairs, tables, paintings, and lamps is meticulously identical (Push Wagner 24,25) (Figure 1.4). The monotonous apartments and homogenous interior design mirror the social control exercised by the state-corporate. It reflects that the state-corporate enforces a uniform lifestyle to eliminate difference and individuality because these apartments are devoid of any personal expression one can have normally.

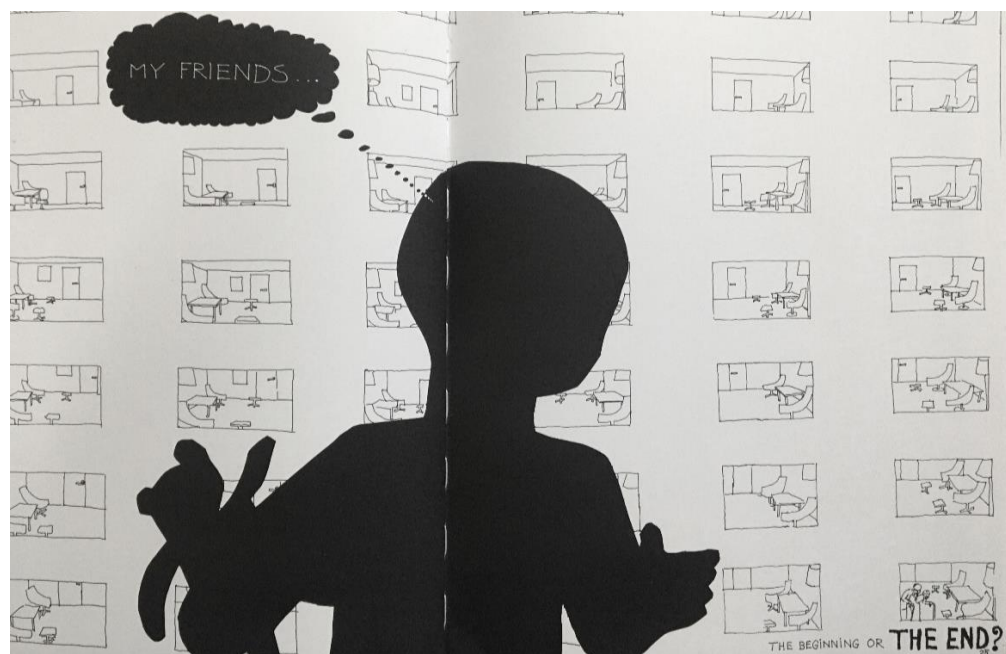


Figure 1.4

The urban spaces are deterritorialized. The old structures of the city are erased. With reterritorialization, new structures are imposed, such as compartmentalized cityscapes, towering buildings, monotonous apartments, uniform interiors, etc. Both transitions suggest the transformation of identity and space within the urban spaces. The soft city has lost its original function of organic spatial interaction. Now, the citizens are a part of a production complex where their only interaction is to produce commodities and weapons for Mr Soft. Reterritorialization here imposes a new order and claims control over the city. As discussed, contrary to previous scholarship, spaces in the control city have become proactive. Earlier it was observed as a form of oppression. However, in Soft City, the uniform organization of apartments mirrors the uniformness of citizens' appearance and movement. The repetitive urban spaces reinforce that their role in the city is that of production. The spaces limit the thoughts, expressions, and behaviours of the inhabitants and redirect them to their mandate. Eventually, collective identity and behaviour are exerted on the inhabitants. This homogeneity enforced by the state-corporate can be understood through Henri Lefebvre's concept of "production of space". This concept posits that space is crucial for power dynamics. It is not passive but an active participation in creating and maintaining social relations. The uniformity in the layout of apartments manifests the hegemony of power relations for the state-corporate within these regular and personal spaces. Obviously, with an upper hand, the state-corporate manoeuvres its hegemony over the daily life of citizens through these physical spaces.

Furthermore, the "state-corporate" in Soft City is not a merely governing body but an undistinguishable and imperceptible system of control that prescribes every aspect of citizens' lives through surveillance, spatial compartmentalization, and consumer seduction. Unlike the traditional authoritarian figure, in the post-Panoptic urban layout, they exert decentralized and continuous enforcement within daily life. The state-corporate is, in fact, a corporation that solely focuses on production and consumption. It conditions the citizens' minds through a systemic post-Panopticon. In *Soft City*, Mr Soft is the authoritative figure who owns Soft City. He is the big boss who represents the state-corporate. He secretly observes and monitors everyone and everything in the Soft City through a private room (Push Wagner 84,85). He is the "controller" who watches over the subjects in a post-Panopticon. He is also what Deleuze termed as the new controller of the control society. He resides in the

monumental space where he carries out his projects of mass-production of consumer products and programs for social order. He has uninterrupted and absolute access to resources and areas that are off limits to the labours of Soft Inc.

Further on, when the reader comes across his residence portrayed in the novel, it reminds him/her of the segregation central to a post-Panopticon (Figure 1.6). The compartmentalization and reterritorialization are more evident. In contrast, Mr. Soft lives in a diverse mansion, probably in an affluent neighbourhood that exudes opulence and exclusiveness. It is designed artfully. The mansion is surrounded by luscious highlands. In front of the house, there is a decorated pathway leading to the manicured garden with a private pool and a fountain. One side of the garden is filled with lush flowers. Unlike the dull sky behind the residential apartments, the sky above the mansion is alive. The sun is in its natural form, shining brightly against the sky. A bird can be seen flying in the sky. Multiple servants can be seen working for the lady. The panorama radiates tranquillity and lively energy (Push Wagner 87). Again, the stark contrast in physical spaces is evidence of spatial compartmentalization. The regular citizens are segregated from the elite of society (Figure 1.5). Mr Soft's mansion is a classic example of how the elites of society remain insulated from the chilling reality of victims of a capitalistic society. For them, capitalism is a source of luxury. In Soft City, the employees of Soft Inc. are segregated by monotonous walls of apartments and offices. They are constantly targeted by the eyes of surveillance cameras and conditioned to work for the boss.

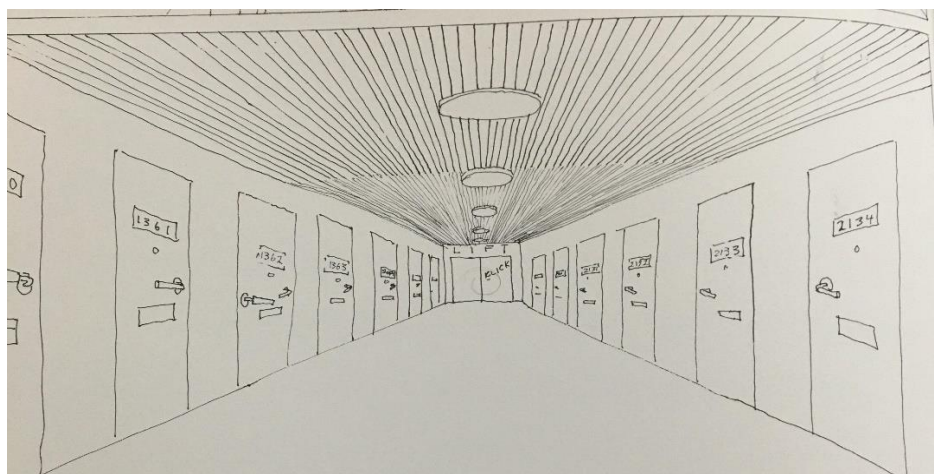


Figure 1.5

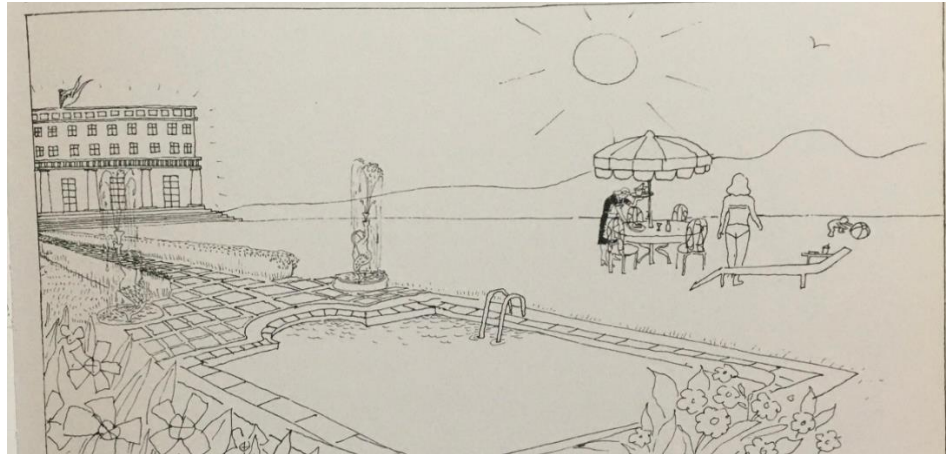


Figure 1.6

Moreover, what's strikingly shocking is that Mr Soft carries out a virtual conversation with his wife and infant through a big screen implanted in the garden (Figure 1.7). While he is sitting in his control room, he can get in touch with his family with just one click. This communication is a two-way communication, unlike other citizens who are silently monitored. The Mr Soft's wife can also see him and his room through the screen (Push Wagner 88). She has a cheerful expression on her face without any robotic or mechanical undertones. Her smile's bright and wide. She seems detached from the misery of Soft Inc. employees. She's carrying the baby in her arms in order to greet Mr Soft. On the contrary, the regular women of the Soft City. On numerous occasions in the novel, the point of view zooms into the citizens' faces. Their expressions are monotonous almost robotic (Figure 1.8). Their eyes are devoid of any emotion as if they are carrying a void within them. The citizens are only programmed to behave in a certain way.

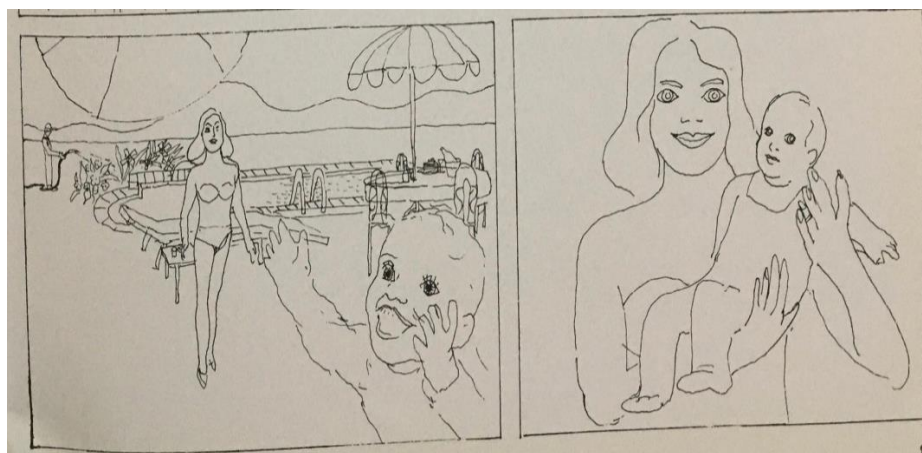


Figure 1.7

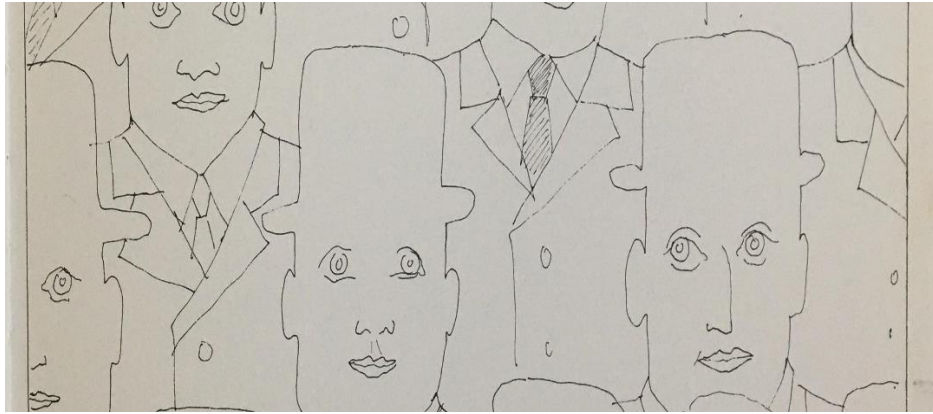


Figure 1.8

For instance, in the evening, the citizens come home after their work shift. The wives and babies wait for them by the windows. Bingo and his mother appear in the spotlight with all other mothers and their babies in the background. The scene is bizarre and unsettling. Every mother carrying a baby in their arms standing near the window in each apartment looks like a reflection of one image. Each figure and item in the panel is repetitively scattered across the space. Bingo and his mother's face look expressionless. The eyes are clear circles fixated on one thing. Her lips are almost sealed, while Bingo's lips are closed. There aren't any giggles or laughs (Push Wagner 132). The contrast suggests that in a capitalistic consumeristic society like *Soft City*, there is segregation which either has positive or negative impacts on the lives. Since face carries a lot of human emotion and inner feelings, faces in *Soft City* say a lot about the lives of citizens. It suggests the spatial as well as social compartmentalization of citizens, as elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari.

The state-corporate controls the influx of information as it controls the urban layout. This is evident from the fact that *Soft City* has its own newspaper and media channels. The newspaper "SOFT TIMES" is distributed in the residential apartment early in the morning. One particular morning, the headlines read, "NON-STOP SOFT-KILL" and 'SUPER-DE-LUX-ATOM SPRAY-PEACE IN KLEENEX-ETERNITY' (Push Wagner 27). Some of the other news include "DREAM HAMBURGER MACHT ARBEIT. CLEAN BOMB THE HAPPY WAY" and "DEAD MEN KILL. SWEEP MIND CLEAN THE EASY WAY." (Push Wagner 38,39) (figure 1.10). Like the dialogues of characters, the newspaper headlines are a collection of words put together. These words are carefully put together in the newspaper. The phrase "NON-STOP SOFT KILL" has a satirical undertone and refers to the brutality and absurdity of

consumer culture. The dehumanizing political message in the headline is blended with marketing strategy. The language suggests superficial comfort in a world of violence. It is a paradoxical blend whereby non-stop killing is termed as soft and gentle. The headlines can be interpreted as exaggerated advertisements. The use of words such as “SUPER-DE-LUX-ATOM SPRAY” and “KLEENEX” in the headlines suggests that these products can bring peace to the world which doesn’t make sense. A similar blend of gentleness and lethality is visible in the other headlines. The next headline, as quoted earlier, can be understood as a message to the citizens. It says that dreaming of hamburgers creates work. The term “MACHT ARBEIT” is a German phrase that roughly translates to “creates work”. It refers to the Nazi slogan “work sets you free” used in the concentration camps. Thus, the headline suggests that working for the corporate will provide freedom to the citizens since labour is conflated with freedom and comfort.

In the evening news, the headlines read “...HILTON HOT DOG DESIGN” and “DREAM HAMBURGER WONDERFUL TOMATO-JUICE PANORAMA CRAZY SMORBROD HAPPY TO GRILL AUF WIENER SCHNITZEL”. The later news is followed by an image of an African woman holding a starved, near-death child in her arms (Push Wagner 60). These headlines use commercial jargon and dark imagery to mock the commercialization of everyday life. It highlights the dehumanization of people around the world. The image of a starved mother and son of Africa is in stark contrast with the description of hamburgers, tomato juice, Smorbrod, a Scandinavian sandwich, and Wiener Schnitzel which is an Austrian dish. The headlines provide a stimulus for the citizens. The news provided to them is wrapped in the desires and temptations of consumer society. The absurdity of news headlines points out the manipulation of truth. The citizens are overwhelmed by a stream of options for consumption. The citizens are disconnected from reality since they are bombarded by the surreal language used in the advertisements. Advertisement is a classic tool for desensitizing citizens used by capitalist promoters. Deleuze elaborates on the use of marketing as a tool for control. It can be depicted as a way of reterritorializing the minds of the citizens. Deleuze points out that marketing is a crucial tool to reinforce the agenda. As illustrated in the novel, the news is controlled and advertised and serves as a seamless modulator of citizens’ behaviour. It targets their discursive space by feeding controlled information along with the reterritorialization of physical spaces. As a result,

it will be reflected in the representational space. Advertisements of products direct people's attention to desires. It encodes their desires to predefined consumer patterns.

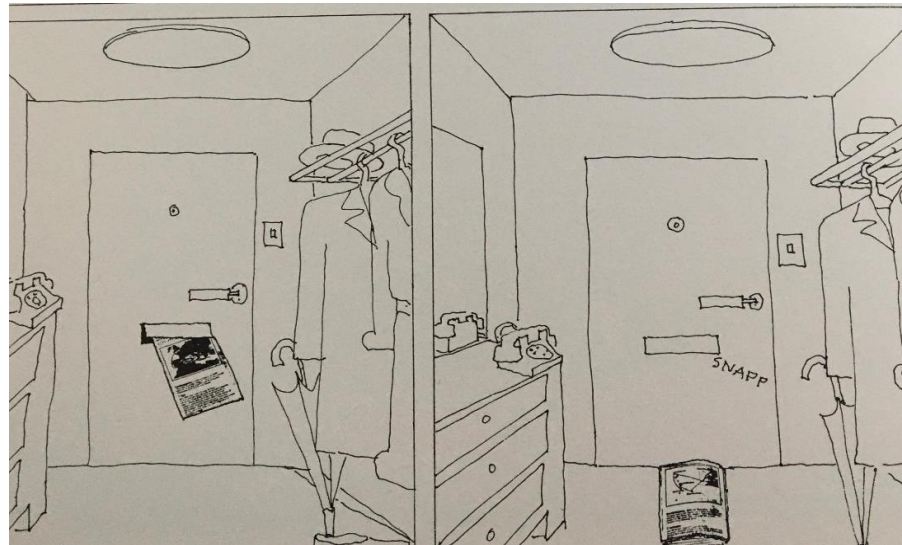


Figure 1.9

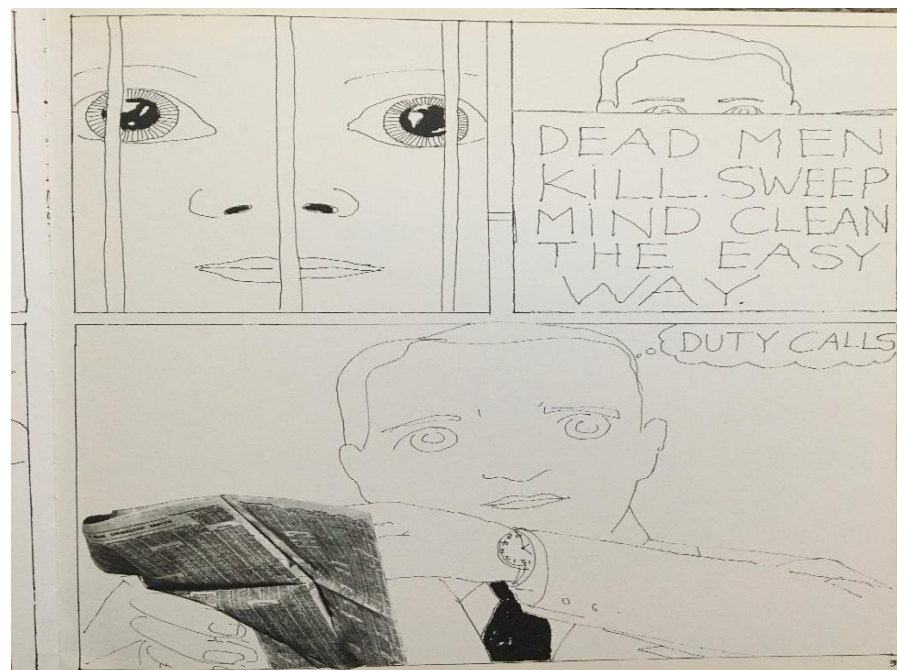


Figure 1.10

Another key tool of post-Panoptic urban spaces is hyper-information. Soft City is predominantly hyper-informational Space Technologically integrated surveillance is a new effective apparatus that effectively configures post-Panopticon within a well-planned urban layout. Since the Soft City has strategically planned physical spaces limited to profit-making and maximizing labour, constantly monitoring them through

surveillance cameras is easy and achievable. The uninterrupted access and display of soft citizens' private and work lives is a form of hyper-information sustained through the surveillance cameras in this case (Figure 1.11). It is a powerful tool for surveillance, social dynamics, profound control, and monitoring consumption behaviour. The boss, Mr Soft, at Soft Inc. has a spacious private room with a huge setup of monitors that display data from the surveillance cameras. It is a control room. One wall is lined with monitor screens. In front of the screen, there is a big row of buttons that allows him to access any camera just at the distance of one click. He lounges in front of a big screen, secretly watching real-time surveillance camera footage (Push Wagner 91). Mr. Soft, at the centre of his high-technology control room, is an authoritative figure, meticulously tapping into citizens' personal lives. He is the Big Brother of Soft City. The room also has a world map hanging on the wall indicating that Mr Soft has all the world under his radar.

Further on, he also has a poster of "SOFT GIGATON 4T. ROCKET" hung on the other side of the wall (Push Wagner 84). It is like a trophy of his successful creation displayed to cherish his achievements in the capitalistic society. After that in one of the panels, the readers get to see rockets once again. From his comfortable office, he observes his employees manufacturing huge rockets in a good number. In a huge manufacturing compartment of the soft military industry, clocks hang from the ceiling reminding the workers of the importance of time in business. There are endless platforms on which "SOFT GIGATON" moves and the employees assemble the parts by their hands. Mr Soft compliments by saying "EXPORT ORDERS WELCOME" (Push Wagner 91). It indicates how capitalism is involved in terror and destruction. It allows mass production of arms which is also displayed later in the novel. A reader can look at the bigger picture here which is the repercussions of capitalism in combination with armaments. Destruction in exchange for capital (Push Wagner 90-93). It also adds to the previous argument that Mr Soft has created a controlled society through consistent observation and surveillance. Every act is screened in front of him.

Further on, after his arrival in the office and settling in, he begins monitoring his subjects. He pushes a button on the keyboard, and with the sound of a click, an image appears on the screen. The image is from the Soft. Inc. workstation. As previously discussed, the "EXECUTIVES" of the corporation are working persistently. Their facial expressions are unchanged. Their arms are resting on the desks with hands

pushing buttons in an identical manner. Mr Soft's immediate thoughts are "THEY ARE ASLEEP" (Push Wagner 85). The comment metaphorically means that the workers are mentally asleep even though they are busy working with their eyes wide open. This also refers to the mental displacement of the citizens, causing the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of their mental and physical boundaries. The workers are now programmed to produce the utmost results for Mr Soft. Their minds and bodies are conditioned to work efficiently in the corporate sector to maintain the somewhat luxurious and easy life provided by Soft Inc. Also, not only does Mr. Soft monitor the workers, but he also communicates with them. For instance, in the second panel, through the big screen in the workstation, he says, "120! UNDERSTAND? ORACLE FILTER". An executive responds, "MESSAGE UNDERSTOOD" (Push Wagner 85) (Figure 1.12). This means that he monitors the work process as well and if needed he commands them to work properly. To achieve the level of satisfaction in this consumer society, the workers are working absentminded like robots. And this smooth flow of events is ensured by Mr Soft by hyper-collection of data on individuals through high-tech surveillance devices.

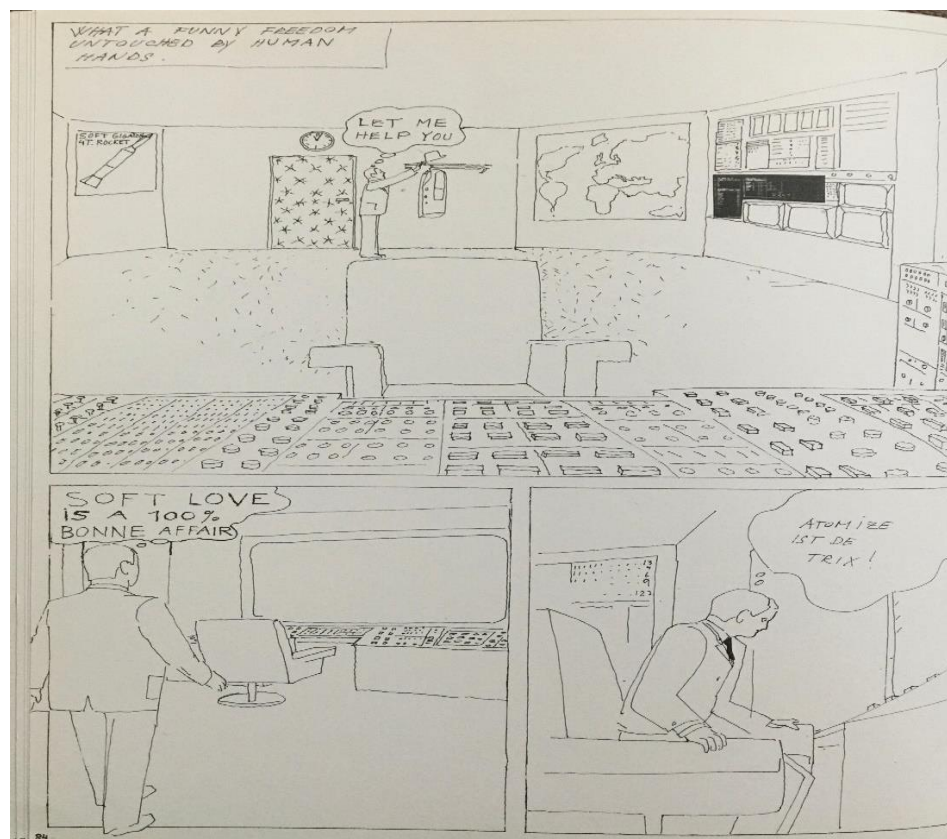


Figure 1.11

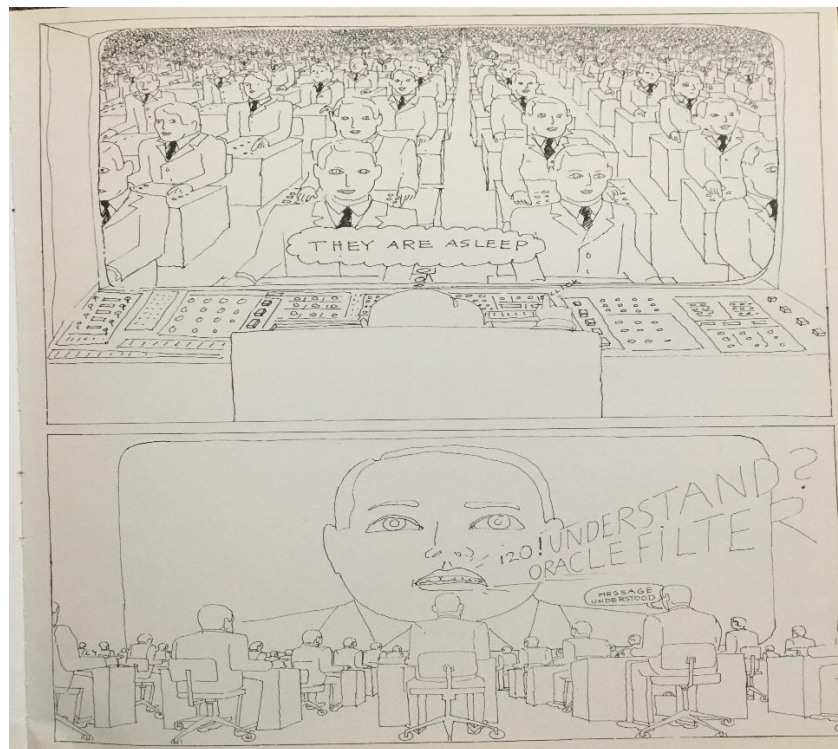


Figure 1.12

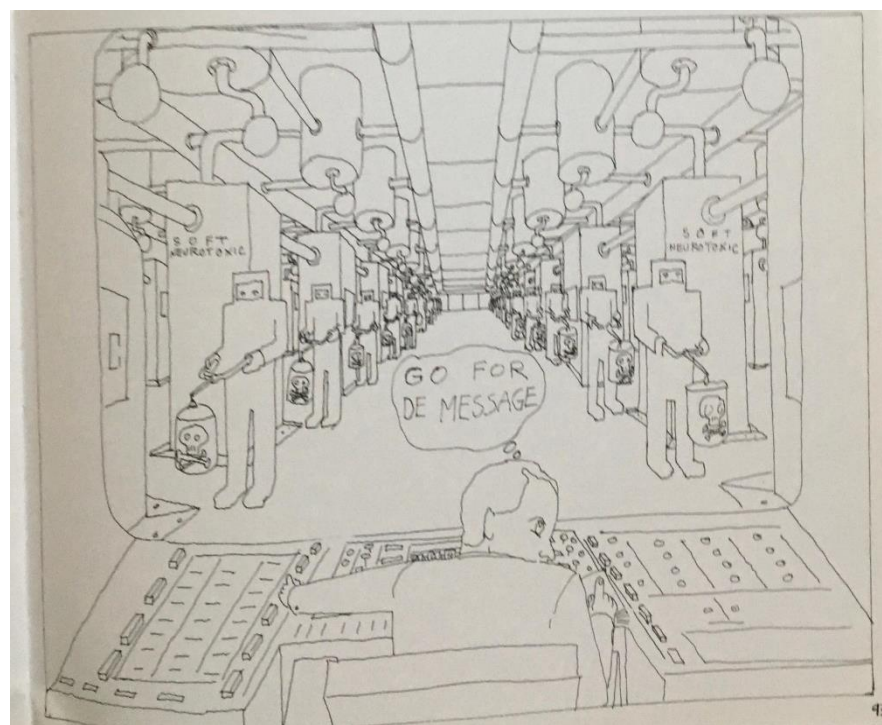


Figure 1.13

Furthermore, the women and men at the “SUPERMARKET” are also observed vigorously (Figure 1.14). Multiple images of customers from different angles appear on Mr Soft’s monitors. These images include shoppers marching in a massive identical

crowd, browsing the aisles, picking up the “SOFT MEAT”, and putting them into shopping carts and baskets. The images are zoom-ins and zoom-outs of customers, their carts, and the products stocked on shelves. Some image angles are questionable, exploiting the personal space of customers. For instance, one image displays images from a surveillance camera fixated on women shoppers’ legs which definitely doesn’t portray their buying pattern. It displays invasive unsettling behaviour of the eyes behind the cameras which in this case is Mr Soft. In Henri Lefebvre’s terms, it’s the exploitation of one’s right to their body. The unconsented images of citizens’ bodies are intrusions into their private space. It suggests that all physical spaces co-exist under the gaze of Mr Soft. The surveillance becomes decentralized and omnipresent because of the use of technology.



Figure 1.14

In dystopian cities like Soft City, one of the effective tools used by the state-corporate is capitalism-driven consumer seduction. Urbanization and modernization create consumerism in abundance. With the purpose of comfort, the citizens indulge in a splurge. The state-corporate moulds this addiction to its advantage or rather infiltrates the spaces with consumer seduction. Deleuze and Guattari present a critical framework

consisting of consumer seduction, coded desire, and reterritorialization to describe power dynamics in urban spaces. What makes the post-panoptic urban spaces advanced from panoptic ones is seduction. Inhabitants in post-panoptic urban spaces are seduced into a treacherous cycle of consumption. It works by creating a desire for people, manipulating them psychologically and socially, and providing them with an illusion of how they are free to choose in a contemporary capitalistic city.

Further on, coded desire is key to making consumer seduction work. For instance, the desires of consumer products are coded, structured, modulated, channelled, and normalised by the state-corporate. Coded desire aids in the reterritorialization of the inhabitants by disintegrating the social structures and boundaries and creating new ones. These new territories are state-corporate desired economic systems, culture, and spatial organisation. These concepts of consumerism align with Henri Lefebvre's ruminations on capitalism. As discussed in the theoretical framework, he postulates that capitalism commodifies the spaces that create power imbalances within these commodified spaces. The addiction to consumer products displaces and marginalises inhabitants with lower incomes. Wagner's Soft City is no exception. People are observed consuming a variety of products by the hegemonic Soft Inc. whether it be food items like meat, electronics, or cigarettes (Figure 1.15, 1.16 & 1.17). These products seamlessly bring the citizens into a vicious cycle of consumption and production. The coded desire works to keep this cycle alive to promote state-corporate's agendas.



Figure 1.15

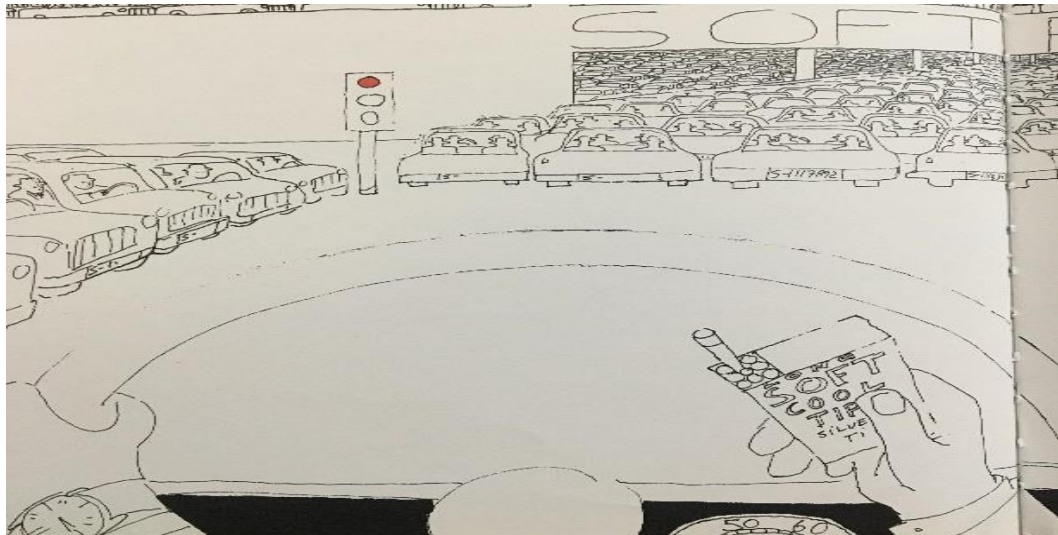


Figure 1.16

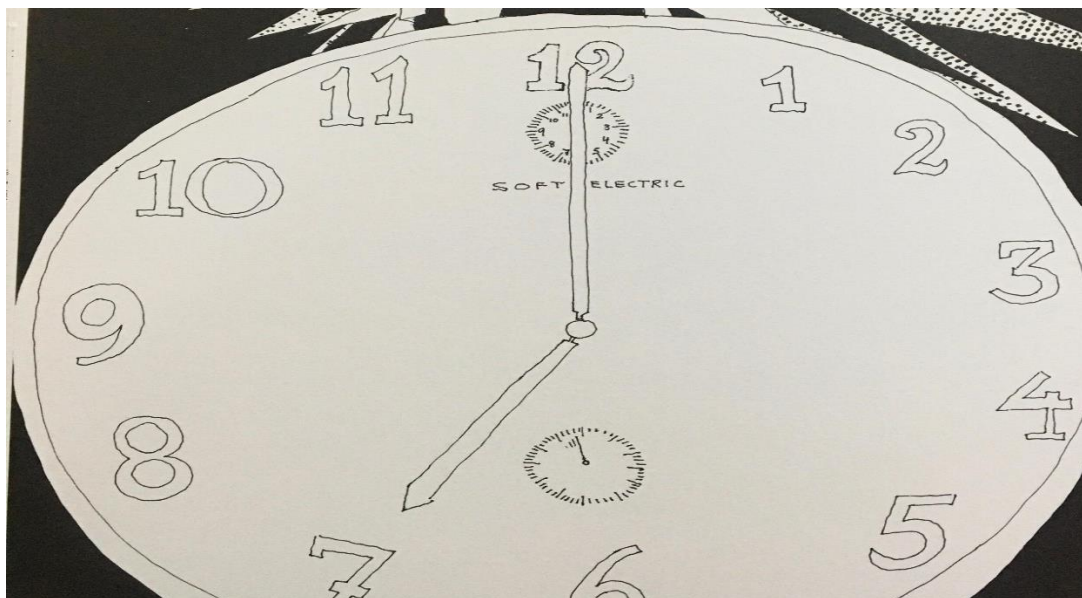


Figure 1.17

Firstly, a significant part of the novel is dedicated to commercial spaces displaying the commodification of spaces. In this contemporary capitalistic city called Soft City, urban spaces are dominated by commercial and economic activities. The high-rise buildings are not limited to the residences of citizens, but the corporate and commercial buildings reach the skyline as well, which indicates how significant capitalism is to their lives (Push Wagner 70,71). The communal spaces such as grocery centres, marketplaces, or malls are huge retail areas that cater to the needs of the “Soft consumers” (Push Wagner 98,99). The grocery store is divided into sections accordingly as per consumption needs of the citizens. Each product is labelled “Soft”

since everything is produced by “Soft Inc.” such as “Soft meat” (Push Wagner 101) the newspaper “Soft-Times” (Push Wagner 139), the alarm clock “Soft Electric”(Push Wagner 28), “Soft pills” for the morning (Push Wagner 29) and evening dose (Push Wagner 172), shaving machine as “Soft shave”, “Soft” towels (Push Wagner 35), “Soft egg, Coffee, bacon”, automobiles or cars owned by Soft Inc., cigarettes, Supermarket advertising ‘Soft consume’ (Push Wagner 98) Soft arms such as “Soft Megaton 4T. Rocket” (Push Wagner 94), and Nuclear arms such as “Soft Neurotoxic” (Push Wagner 93). Soft Inc. undoubtedly claims hegemonic power in the city. Soft Inc. is dominating every sector of citizens’ lives, whether it's household items or armaments.

Further on, under their mechanical routine, the citizens wake up, get ready, and head to their workspace in the cars. When the men and women exit the residential apartments, a huge assemblage of cars is seen such that they entirely cover the passageway (Push Wagner 46,47). The enormous lines of cars against the sky-touching buildings display a new and controlled organization of the city. The massive concrete buildings loom over the streets. The entire view is covered by cars choking the streets. The sidewalks are covered by determined citizens with suitcases branded with “Soft Inc.” rushing to their cars, pushing through the throngs, and getting into them (Push Wagner 52,53). The sky is not visible among the endless stretch of buildings. Once again, the design of physical spaces in sight is an equally distanced stretch of squares devoid of any charm, character, or expression. This organization of the physical space is shaped by the obsessive desire of a capitalistic society. To ensure the fulfilment of the state-corporate’s goal of maximum production, the number is proportional to production. According to Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of consumer seduction and coded desire, the citizens are seduced and manipulated by their desire for success and prosperity. Their rushing to work in huge numbers indicates that their desires are coded. This desire is to achieve materialism as offered by Soft Inc. It seems subtle, but it is a pervasive mode of seduction in the consumer culture.

The cars are moving mechanically, flooding the roads and cheating an impenetrable wave on the streets until they reach “Soft Park”, a parking space for Soft Inc. (Push Wagner 66,67). The rear-view mirrors are filled with indistinguishable profiles driving identical automobiles (Push Wagner 71). The parking space is unlimited, but it appears congested, allowing narrow space to navigate (Push Wagner 69). One can imagine the number of car honks and roar of car engines emitted from this

number of cars. The cityscape created is horrifying yet not out of the ordinary for such times and places. Furthermore, when the subjects arrive at the megalithic corporate, they have to initially time stamp their cards through the punch card clock before starting working hours (Push Wagner 77) (Figure 1.18) and after ending the work (Push Wagner 106) (Figure 1.19). This workplace practice ensures that the employee has duly made an appearance at work. Eventually, everyone is at their desk in a huge room with unlimited space for workers.

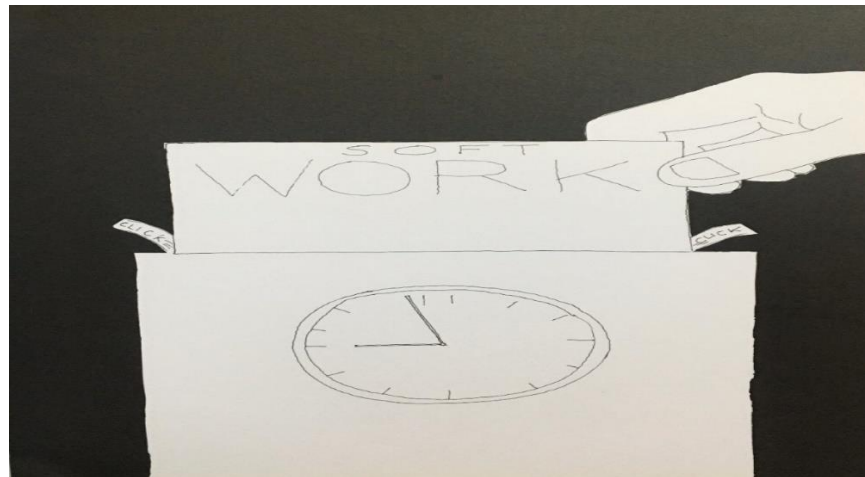


Figure 1.18

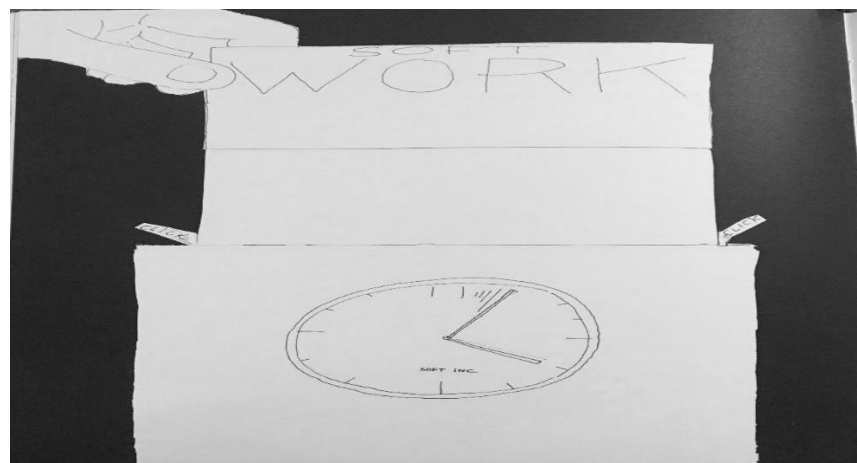


Figure 1.19

They are instructed by a female on a huge screen to start working. And they follow diligently (Push Wagner 81). It will be appropriate to term the tone of this instruction as commanding. From 9 in the morning till 4 in the evening, the employees work effectively without pauses. At 4 pm, they are told by the same figure on the screen that the tasks are completed for the day and it's "TIME TO GO HOME" (Push Wagner

102). They are finally allowed to leave the office for home. The workers get up from their workstations in a mechanical motion as if they are desire-driven robots rather than humans. They take their suitcases, coats, and hats and punch their work cards. Then, they head to their cars in a perfectly synchronized motion (Push Wagner 103-107). While the spouses are busy at work, the morning routine of all the housewives is rather peculiar. They take their toddlers to a mega daycare school normally called “Kinder Garten” (Push Wagner 96) (Figure 1.20). They march out of the apartment building in a uniform, mechanical motion. All of them are in precise and unerring queues. Their attires are identical, blending each individual into a huge homogenous mass. Even their hair-does and facial expressions are eerily the same, devoid of any emotions. They undoubtedly look like clones of one another. Their movements are matched with their arms and legs moving in harmony with one another (Push Wagner 97). Once again, this image alludes to the idea that the inhabitants are living as robots in human flesh.

Moreover, each of them is holding one end of a strap attached to the babies walking beside them (Push Wagner 96). One can assume that the taut straps are for the safety of the children as it allows them to remain by the sides of their mothers. But it is more than that. This trivial practice mirrors the big picture. It’s an example of control manifested in the relationship between mother and child. The leash is a device of control that reflects the pervasive monitoring and surveillance of society. The straps restrict their movement. Additionally, the babies are dressed in identical clothes. But it is to be noted that their movements are not harmonised with one another. Unlike mothers, their faces display human emotions. Some of them show faces with intrigue. Some of them are laughing. They are moving their heads, looking in different directions curiously (Push Wagner 96). This contrast highlights the fact that babies are innocent creatures yet immune to worldly corruption and desire. Thus, they are free in their movements.

Further on, when the mothers arrive at the daycare “Kinder Garten”, the sight is yet another example of the manipulative and oppressive lifestyle. The workers at the daycare are wearing a head covering labelled as “NANNY”. The babies are handed over to the nannies in an identical manner such that the movements are analogous. The day-care centre is an expressionless concrete room (Push Wagner 97). It adds further to the monotony of life in Soft City. The contemporary childcare centre is another physical space created as a modern need under the booming capitalist market. It convinces mothers that they need this service to run errands without having distractions.

But in the novel, it appears as if the mothers have an obligation to drop their children at the daycare centre. This niche of the capitalistic economy evinces that care is also commodified and is taken as a commodity for the citizens. Parents are manipulated into thinking that these centres are a necessity for them, and in return, they become a part of profit-making in the service industry. It is, however, exploitation of children's right to well-being, emotional support, and appropriate nurturing since in these childcare centres, care is mostly compromised. Profits are prioritised. After dropping off the children, the mothers rush to the soft supermarket to buy daily groceries.

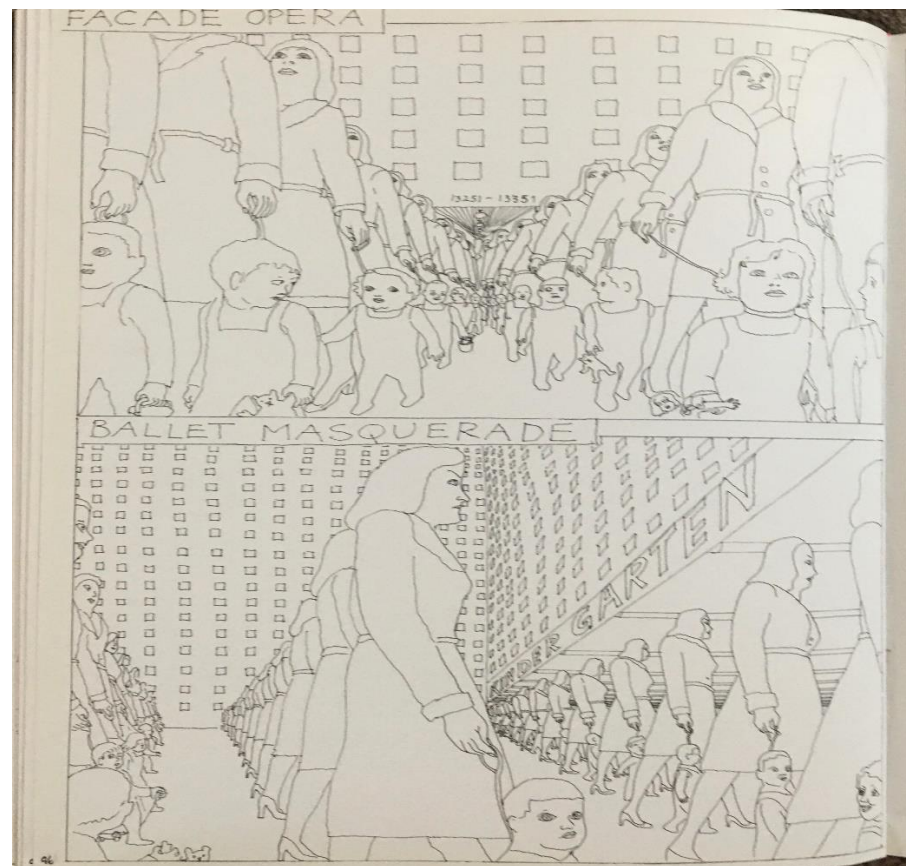


Figure 1.20

Shopping centres, malls, supermarkets, and retail stores are classic examples of the commodification of desires. These spaces turn the needs and desires of citizens into products. The state-corporate creates desires to amplify consumption in the cityscapes. These desires lead to the manipulation of citizens into continuously and religiously buying products, which is termed consumer seduction by Deleuze and Guattari. In the *Soft City*, the mothers head to the “supermarket” in huge neat queues, proceeding mechanically through the aisles. With blank, expressionless faces, the women enter a

huge supermarket stocked with unlimited consumer products advertised as “Soft Consume” (Figure 1.21). The market is organized and meticulously arranged into a variety of sections. In each section, there are endless aisles lined with plenty of shelves crowded with a variety of consumer products in different shapes and sizes, ranging from vegetables to meat and other products. It is to make sure there are plenty of products for everyone so no one leaves empty-handed. The shelves reach up to the ceiling of the market. Their size is designed to impress and overwhelm the customers. The choices seem limitless, which creates an illusion for the customers that their needs are being catered to. Each consumer is holding a big shopping cart in front of them (Push Wagner 98,99). Once again, their movements are synchronized as if scripted. With absolutely similar motions, they push their carts, navigating them through a vast spread of shelves, eventually selecting with a casual glance and putting the products robotically into their carts. The consumers wear a void expression on their faces. They seem devoid of any excitement and curiosity while grabbing the goods. Their identical movement creates an eerie panorama of mindless shoppers in a supermarket.

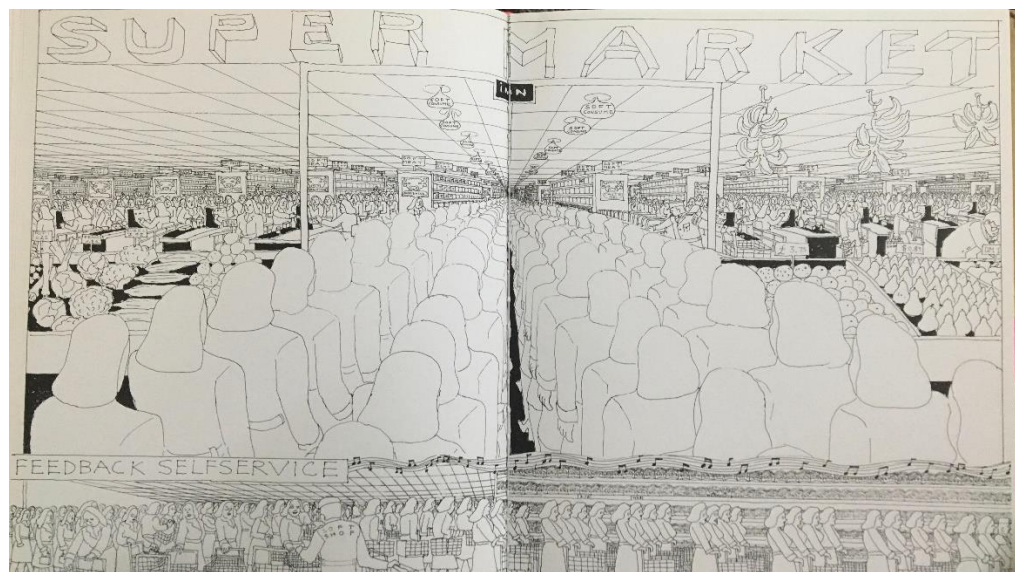


Figure 1.21

Remarkably, music is also a big component in these supermarkets. While the citizens are stocking up on their favourite “Soft meat”, the soft hum of music can be seen playing in the background. The music enhances the shopping experience of consumers. But most importantly, it stimulates their desires (Push Wagner 98,99). It creates such ambiance in the shopping market that makes the consumers enjoy spending time at the supermarket. The longer the stay, the bigger the buying receipt. With the

soft hum of music in the air, the customers look hypnotised by it into buying and more buying. Additionally, in the same panels, it is obvious that the consumer products are well-marketed and advertised in the market. Small advertisements can be seen hanging from the ceiling throughout the market. These advertisements contain slogans such as “SOFT CONSUME” and “SOFT MEAT” (Push Wagner 101). The placement of these banners is important. The customers are continuously bombarded by these small yet numerous advertisements. The product which is the central attraction at this supermarket is the “SOFT MEAT”. The shelves are stocked with big cans of meat. This product is abundantly advertised as “DELICIOUS”, “NURISHING”, “TASTE ME,” and “NAM NAM” (Push Wagner 98,99). Such one-word banners are strategically designed to emphasize the potential benefits products can provide. Repetition of advertisements ensures that the customers are exposed enough to the product. It also instils the need to buy the product into their minds. Advertisements are like positive affirmations targeting one’s subconscious that led the consumer to the product. They are resultantly seduced to buy that product. The advertisements and banners also prompt impulse buying. Additionally, when the consumers approach the cash counter, the author calls it “THE HAPPY WAY,” implying that buying products is what makes citizens happy (Push Wagner 101). Happiness is rendered directly proportional to buying.

A suggestive undertone to the novel is that everything is “Soft” in this modern capitalistic city with a regular consumer culture. The city is called “Soft City”. The supermarket’s “SOFT SHOP” offers “SOFT CONSUME” such as “SOFT MEAT” and in return one has to pay “SOFT TOTAL” (Push Wagner 101). It is because the city is owned and governed by “SOFT INC.” Everything is labelled Soft. The word “Soft” and its pervasive use are deceptive and contrastive to the brutality of the capitalistic system in the lives of citizens and its underlying consequences. The system relentlessly puts the citizens through deterritorialization and reterritorialization, incessantly reshaping their identities to comply with the demands of the consumer culture. Further on, the term “Soft” insinuates ease, comfort, pleasantness, gentleness, and tenderness. But it creates the illusion of an easy lifestyle and nurturing surroundings. The language used is a powerful tool for control. It is employed in consumer seduction, whereby the products and services are carefully designed in a way that it appears appealing to everyone. The word “Soft” creates that effect on people. They think it is a product that

will create ease and pleasure in their life. Without buying products, their life feels empty. This is the goal of consumer seduction. It promises pleasure as a result of consumption. The harsh reality of consumer culture, social inequality created by a capitalistic society, psychological and emotional exploitation, and environmental degradation are disguised as softness. This form of control makes it harder for citizens to identify oppression and resist it.

Thus, in Soft City, urban spaces have become post-Panoptic zones of control. The spaces are not lived and participatory rather than commodified and controlled layouts. The spatial compartmentalization and reterritorialization using digital and consumerist surveillance, urban arrangement, and advertising dominate the city.

4.1.2 Interpersonal Meaning: Surveillance, and Citizens' Rights

This subsection highlights how citizens react to post-Panoptic spaces, the omnipresent surveillance, and reterritorialized identities. In Soft City, citizens accept the post-Panoptic control even at the expense of their rights. To elaborate on the state-corporate and citizen relationship and bodily control in urban spaces, Lefebvre emphasizes that there must be bodily autonomy, self-expression, spontaneous interaction, and free movement within the spaces. The citizens must be active participants rather than passive consumers. However, under the post-Panoptic gaze, the state-corporate denies citizens' right and the city and bodily autonomy uniformity, and coded desires.

Firstly, the reterritorialized and compartmentalized urban spaces have significant social and psychological ramifications. It renders feelings of entrapment, alienation, despair, and dehumanisation within the inhabitants. These feelings are evidence of a lack of personal agency. Bingo's view is a constant reminder of the residents' subjugation and conformity to the state-corporate's mandate. It reminds the citizens that in this dystopian city, individuality, variety, and uniqueness are futile. The monotonous apartments with uniform designs exemplify the state-corporate's control and oppression, denying citizens their right to autonomy and personal expression. Uniformity curbs the rawness and individuality of what a human life should have. It suppresses the emotions of soft citizens. This suppression impacts the production and representation of space. Interactions are limited. Furthermore, the consequences of consumer seduction do not conclude here. Once established, spaces and identities are

disrupted, causing deterritorialization. Products mass-produced by Soft. Inc. are standardized in the city. As demonstrated in the novel, consulting soft products is regular for every soft citizen. The spread of consumer culture and branding eventually erases local cultures and establishes identities within urban spaces. It replaces them with a homogeneous culture, one for all. The cultural homogenization adds to the monotony of life mandated by the state-corporate. It is also pivotal in maintaining control in the city since homogeneity eradicates any uniqueness, individuality, difference, and most importantly, any autonomy citizens might have otherwise.



Figure 1.22

This cultural homogeneity comes at the cost of previously established identities and spaces. Whatever identities citizens were demolished to give them the identity of an active consumer. When their autonomy is taken away, they are displaced mentally and physically. The mental displacement is evident in their irrational behaviour at the supermarket. Moreover, the spaces created by the citizens are demolished. Whatever doesn't comply with the objective of the governing body gets removed. After being deterritorialized, the citizens are reterritorialized immediately. New identities are given to the citizens. New spaces are created that are aligned with capitalistic economy. As discussed before, the citizens are manipulated to abandon their previous identity to

adopt a new one. Under the predominance of consumer culture, the citizens adopt a new lifestyle of actively buying products to elevate their lifestyle as promised. When they practise such a lifestyle in daily life, for instance, the citizens rush to the supermarkets in masses and prioritise stocking soft meat, etc., they are reterritorialized. They are highly encouraged to primarily adopt identity of a new consumer. Their self-worth and identity are bound to their ability as a consumer. Furthermore, the spaces re-created in the city are in alignment with the state-corporate's capitalistic goals. The gigantic supermarket, kindergarten, corporation, armament industry, and nuclear plant are all examples of such spaces that facilitate mass consumption and maximise production. These places are designed to minimize any resistance to the state-corporate's mandate. Any alternative ways of life are unacceptable in the city. Thus, the reconfiguration of individuals and spaces ensures smooth control through consumer seduction as a tool for surveillance. Such a system is also termed as surveillance capitalism.

Further on, apart from the denial of citizens' right to the city, post-Panoptic control denies bodily autonomy within control societies. In *Soft City*, citizen's bodies are forced to comply with the uniformity of the city. They are conditioned to take pills. When the protagonist and his wife wake up, they immediately take the morning soft pill named "life" (Push Wagner 30,31) (figure 1.23). Later when they are about to sleep, they take a "sleep" pill (Push Wagner 172) (Figure 1.24).

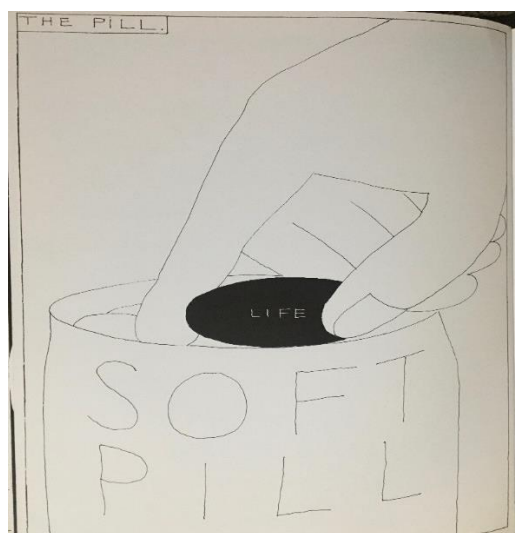


Figure 1.23



Figure 1.24

The fundamental biological functions and natural cycles of citizens such as wakefulness and sleep are regulated. There is a complete loss of organic bodily

rhythms. By removing these natural cycles, the state-corporate ensures complete control in the control society where authority is not imposed explicitly but through embedded daily practices. Apart from pharmaceutical intervention, the citizens are also conditioned to consume Soft Inc. goods. The Soft City is monopolized by Soft Inc. It dictates what people eat. An example would be the “SOFT MEAT” (figure 1.25) consumed by the protagonist and his family (Push Wagner 158). It is a form of bodily control. By limiting the inputs of citizens to Soft Inc. products, the state-corporate shapes not just the citizens’ desires but also their nutrition.



Figure 1.25

Moreover, due to social compartmentalization, there isn't any organic conversation or interaction between the characters throughout the novel. The citizens come across each other in the corridors, offices, supermarkets, open streets, etc. but they don't engage in any interaction. The feeling of fear is also stripped away from them. Once a man was beaten at an intersection, but the employees of Soft Inc. didn't even move an inch (Figure 1.26). This indicates how natural bodily interactions are missing. Soft citizens don't express their emotions freely.

Again, natural bodily rhythms are lacking. The removal of fear and joy suggests there isn't a fundamental survival mechanism in the post-Panoptic society. Citizens are

reduced to programmed entities. These entities are reterritorialized seamlessly altering the organic phenomenon of space production.

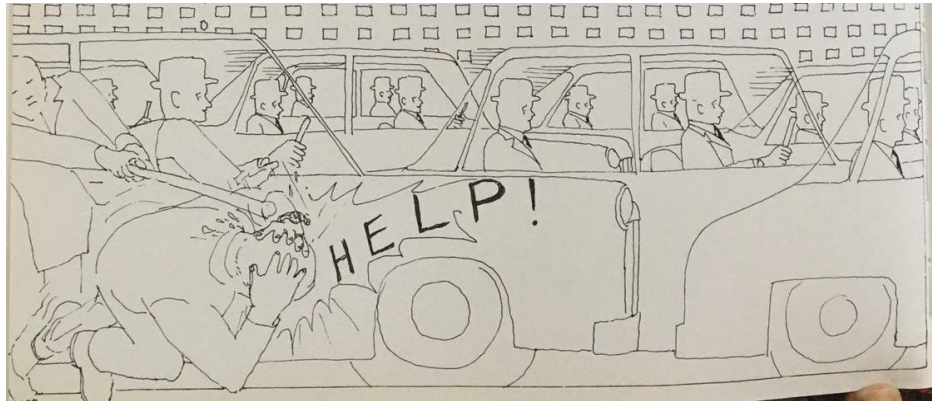


Figure 1.26

4.1.3 Compositional Meaning: How is state-corporate control reinforced through visual elements?

This section of analysis explores Kress and Leeuwen's third level of multimodality that illuminates the intended layers of meaning present in the novel through graphics. The following discussion highlights how textual, verbal, visual, and spatial components work together to engage the readers with the themes of post-Panoptic urban spaces, characters, and their lives under surveillance and control.

i. Textual and Visual Synergy:

A visual narrative, *Soft City* uses repetitive imagery throughout the novel. There is a stark contrast between the urban environment of the citizens, better known as the employees of Soft Inc. and Mr Soft. The visual elements in the panels, such as residential buildings, corporate offices, supermarkets, industrial complexes, and a kindergarten, reinforce the monotonous life of the citizens. The design of the physical spaces is uniform throughout the novel. The design is box-like and plain, with belt-like roads flooded with identical cars and passengers. The buildings are huge and spread all across the panels similarly. Such identicalness is apparent in the graphic novel. The daily life patterns, the citizens, and their habits are eerily identical. Whenever the citizens move, their movement is synchronized from head to toe. Their appearance is similar in a bizarre way. In the following figure, it is shown that the citizens are leaving for Soft Inc. On their way out a strange image appears. The men are dressed in identical

hats and long coats with briefcases in their hands. The facial build is identical and expressionless. Their eyes are hollow circles fixated in one direction. They are even holding the door knob in an identical way (Figure 1.27). The way the panel is drawn is interesting. The citizens are standing opposite each other. If we look at the whole panel comprising two pages, we can see that one page is a mirror image of the other one. This hints at the bizarre identicalness of everything.

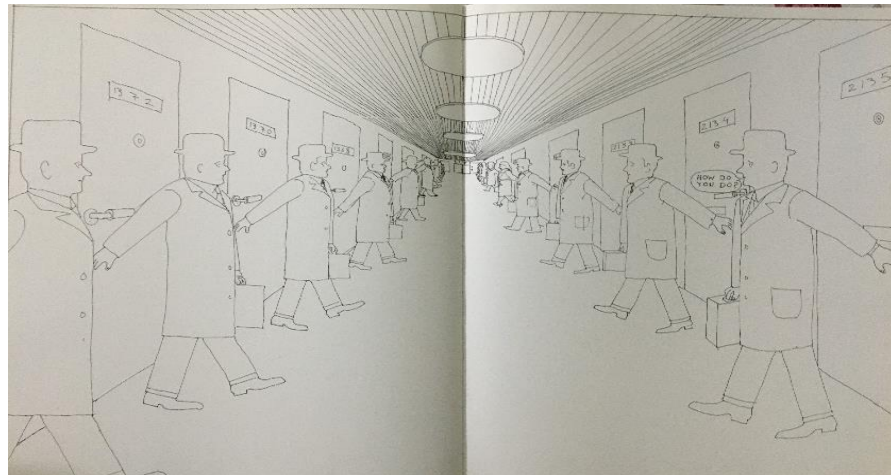


Figure 1.27

The mechanical movement of the inhabitants and their uniform attire is in alignment with their mechanical life. Moreover, the synchronized strides of the citizens make the image a deep shadow of one character. The following panel from the novel shows, that Bingo is staring out of the apartment window. His view sums up the uniformity in the design of physical spaces. Windows are equal spaces. The interior is identical, including the placement of the lampstand. This is the beginning of the novel.

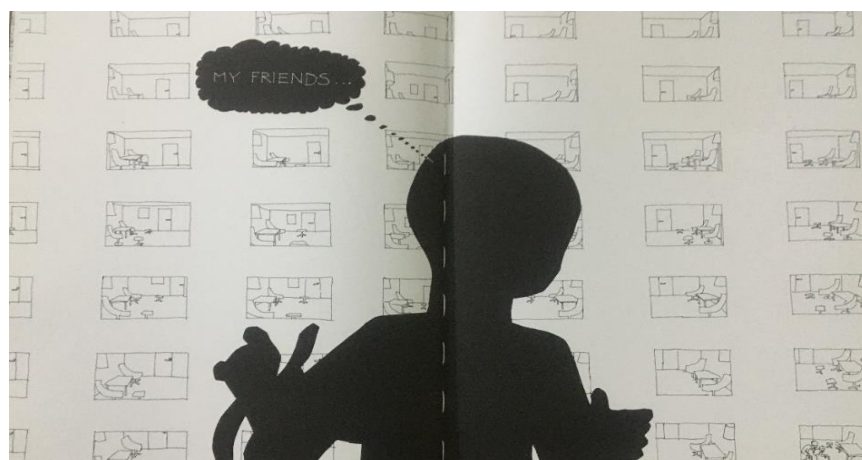


Figure 1.28

When compared to the ending of the novel, identical life is once again symbolized. In the following figure, it is nighttime. Men and women in the residential complex are having tea and watching television. It might not seem bizarre at the moment but what's strikingly strange is that in every apartment people are doing the same. Even the pacing of the citizen's movement is the same. Whether they are standing, serving food, closing, or opening doors (Figure 1.29)

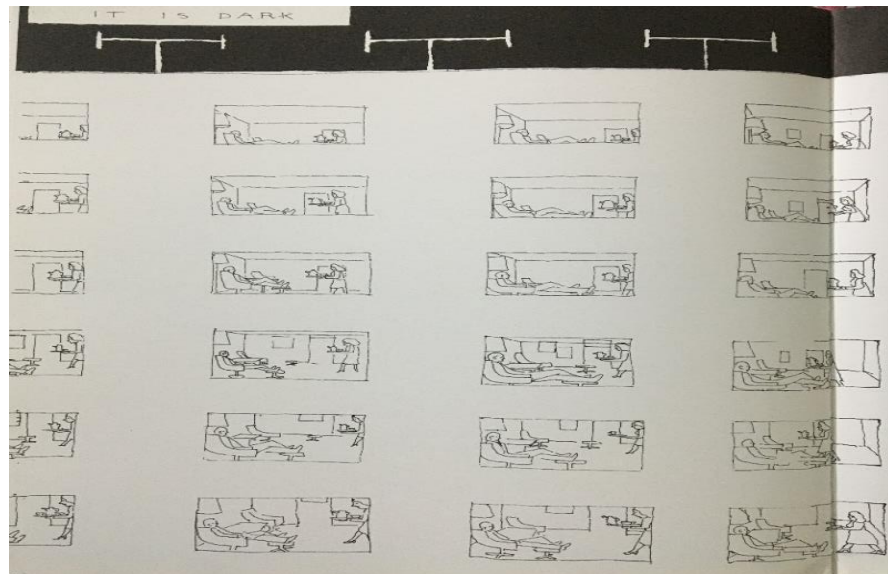


Figure 1.29

The text of the novel, in terms of the dialogues or thoughts, is minimal and fragments. The text is monotonously in upper case. It can be understood that the thoughts of the citizens in uppercase letters reflect their internalized obedience to the Mr Soft and the state-corporate's regime. In these regulated spaces all across the panels, the interplay of text with monotonous visual cues creates a dystopian, precisely post-Panoptic narrative.

ii. Spatial organization across panels:

To analyse the multimodal nature of the novel, it is crucial to understand the organization and utilization of space, which reinforces the monotony of life, lack of autonomy, and power dynamics reflected in the novel. Almost every panel of the novel occupies more than one page of the novel. The author frequently utilises the whole space to make the images wide and expansive. These wide panels showcase a monotonous and homogenous urban layout, sprawling, booming capitalistic imagery, and its dominance over the miniature citizens against it. The spatial arrangement of the

aforementioned elements happens to be in a rigid grid and repetitive pattern. The wideness of space in contrast with the rigidity of the cityscapes depicts surveillance capitalism in the Soft City. In the figure provided below, it can be easily seen that there is one big panel. The space is covered by huge high-rise apartments which look like a punch card image. Every vehicle looks like a copy of others.

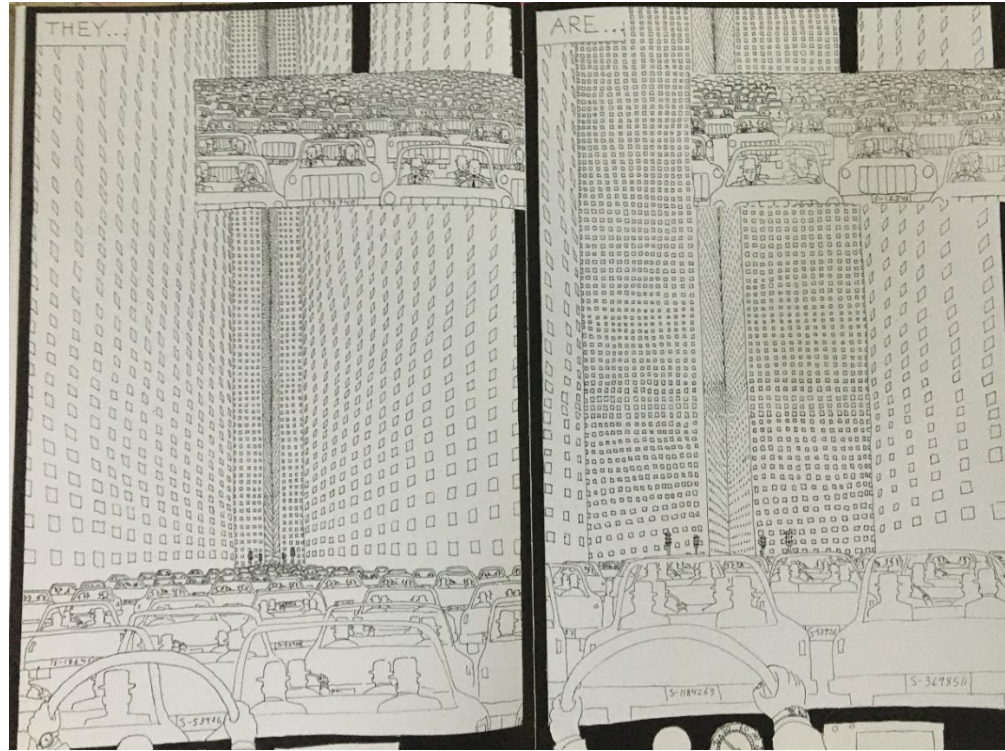


Figure 1.30

iii. Choice of Colour:

The use of colour palette, or the lack thereof reflects the bleakness and monotony of life in the apparently bustling Soft city. The whole novel is drawn uses hues of grey, black, and white colour throughout the hand-drawn panels. The wide panels become evidently wide through the use of such colours. The deliberate use of a particular colour range reflects the visual monotony and repetitive nature of life in the city. The neutral colours indicate urban spaces devoid of spontaneity and excitement. Each panel blends into the next like the life of citizens.

Contrastively, colours other than these can be seen in few panels. While the citizens are rushing towards the Soft Inc. as a part of their daily work routine, at the junction, traffic lights can be seen once yellow, green, and red (Push Wagner 58-68). Supposedly, these lights regulate the sea of cars flooding the streets of the city but if

linked to the narrative built in the novel, these colours indicate the significance of regulation in the lives of Soft citizens. It draws attention to the traffic tools. The sea of cars and their riders conform to the “yes”, “no”, and “waiting” signals given the traffic light poles. This minor incident works as a metaphor for the plot. The state-corporate, through Mr Soft, has created a capitalistic society where the citizens are obligated to follow the routine. These citizens even have their own individual thoughts but to no avail. They are perfectly synchronized with the signals. The following image provides a visual representation of the above-mentioned argument.

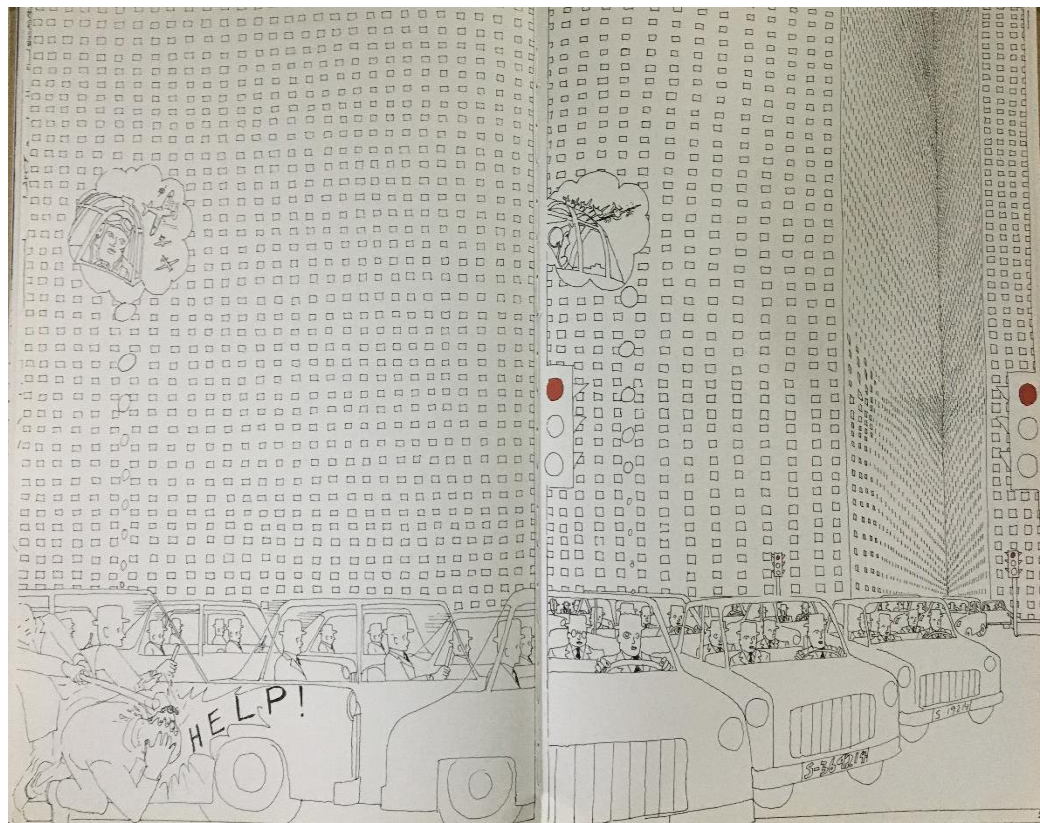


Figure 1.31

4.1.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, control and conformity are textually, visually, and spatially explored in Push Wagner’s compelling graphic novel. In this bleak post-Panopticon society, citizens are seen living in a hustling and bustling Soft city. They are bound by their mechanical routine and stripped of freedom of individual expression. The rigid spatial arrangement is carefully and diligently observed by the omnipresent observer, Mr Soft, who in fact is monitored by an unknown observer. The oppressive vision of life is thoroughly internalized by the citizens who have become clones of each other.

Even the physical spaces mirror the monotonous vision of life. The black and white colour palette and the repetitive images across the panels indicate visually bleak and soulless life in the urban layout. One of the dehumanizing effects of the state-corporate's regime is over-consumption embedded into the minds of citizens. Their coded desires lead them to supermarkets and corporate offices which indicate the reterritorialization imparted to them through surveillance capitalism. The multimodal analysis scrutinizes the semiotic elements foregrounded controlled society and power imbalance in the novel. It invites that invite readers to comprehend the pervasive nature of technological surveillance, loss of autonomy, freedom, and privacy.

4.2. Visualizing Post-Panopticon Urban Spaces in *Paris 2119* And Their Impact on Citizens' Right to The City

4.2.1 Representational Meaning: Physical Spaces as Post-Panoptic Spaces:

Like *Soft City*, in *Paris 2119*, the physical spaces are pivotal for laying the foundation of a post-Panoptic society where control is exercised and maintained through spatial segregation. *Paris 2119* is a city with compartmentalized urban spaces. The compartmentalization is to segregate elite neighbourhoods from impoverished ones. The citizens belonging to the neglected areas have limited or no mobility throughout the city. Paris is a heavily monitored and regulated city. It is a predominantly hyper-informational city. Citizens are indulged in consumerism so much that they are commodified along with the spaces. The segregation can be seen through the studies of Deleuze and Guattari. Their concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the citizens and spaces is pivotal to the discussion of spatial segregation and consumer seduction. As a result of hyper-consumption through coded desires, hyper-information, reterritorialized citizenship, and urban spaces, these spaces coexist as post-Panoptic urbanism. The post-Panoptic spaces function as a weapon for control, creating monitored pathways for citizens' movements. Consequently, such a structure of urban layout strips away bodily agency, rendering bodies as mere data nodes and commodities. This allows the state-corporate to impose its control and enforce conformity. Paris in 2119 is a "control society" whose sole purpose is production.

Similar to the previous section the study evaluates two critical questions: *In what ways do the state-corporate turn the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon?* And

how do these post-panoptic urban spaces created by the state-corporate refute the citizens' rights to the city and their bodies? Further questions to be integrally explored in this study: *How do urban spaces act as active agents of control? How are capitalism and technology being used to collect information on citizens? What happens with this information? How is marketing utilised to enforce deterritorialization and reterritorialization? How are bodily autonomy and other rights of citizens dictated by the new spatial conditions? And how do both narratives portray control societies?* To answer, the theoretical notions of Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Henri Lefebvre, as discussed in the theoretical framework of the study, will be utilised. Furthermore, each graphic novel is analysed using three key aspects of multimodal discourse analysis: representational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and compositional meaning. Representational meaning is described through what is shown. How do text, images, and symbols illustrate urban control, consumerism, denial of city rights, and bodily autonomy? For interpersonal meaning, it will be investigated how relationships are constructed within the post-panoptic urban spaces. The characters' interaction with the city, technology, and each other, and the emotions they display as a result, are analysed. Additionally, the power dynamics presented convey the meaning. Finally, the compositional meaning is conveyed when it is investigated how meaning is structured, how elements are arranged on the page or page layout, colour, and perspective to illustrate and reinforce the theme.

Firstly, the city is carefully divided into physical spaces and digital spaces yet these spaces coexist as one. Firstly, Paris in 2119, as portrayed in the novel, is an ultramodern city with contemporary architecture. The original architecture of the buildings is juxtaposed with the trailblazing, up-to-the-minute, and innovative structures that symbolize the futuristic settings of the city. These structures seem like parametric structures carefully designed with a purpose. The original buildings are colourful dome-like structures against the metallic sharp-edged abstract structures that represent progressive innovations. The original buildings, such as the Eiffel Tower and "Dome des Invalides," are wrapped in transparent bubbles or pyramid-like structures that seem like high-tech projections (Zep & Bertail 4). Within these domes or structures, there is evidence of temporal disjunction. For instance, in one panoramic view of the city, within multiple physical spaces, there isn't a linear progression of time. Day and night exist together (Zep & Bertail 50). This anomaly is not just limited to time but

encompasses weather as well. Since the weather is controlled by the state-corporate operators. The layout of the entire city is mosaic-like, where the physical spaces consisting of the parametric structures appear incongruous. It disrupts the cohesive layout and aesthetic of the city. It can be safely said that the city is a juxtaposition of past & present, wet & dry, day & night like its inhabitants. (Figure 2.1)

Again, the question is how the state-corporate turns the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon. The state-corporate has segregated the city into multiple zones to monitor the inhabitants efficiently. These zones reflect the political, social, and economic division of the masses. This segregation is to separate people into different classes and strictly regulates access to resources. One part of the city is a misty and dark space comprising ruined survivalist architecture. This zone is synonymous with shantytowns and slums. The people of this zone are poorest residents who are disenfranchised and destitute. They have constructed makeshift shelters using scavenged materials everywhere in that part of the city (Zep & Bertail 20, 46,49) (Figure 2.2). The underground settlements or subways are living spaces that are subterranean shelters for the abandoned. These ragged zones are damp and shadowy and lack basic sanitation and resources. The inhabitants are marginalised communities neglected by the state-corporate as compared to the other zones.

Contrastively, the well-maintained and highly-secured enclaves are zones for the elitist or better class of the people. The state-corporate takes advanced security measures to maintain peace in this zone. The physical spaces in this zone comprise high-tech structures accompanied by Parisian architecture and sculptures. As explained earlier, these structures are encapsulated into 3D projections that foreground them against adjacent architecture. These zones have exclusive facilities like Transcore which is also a representation of extreme compartmentalization. Additionally, the homes in this zone have automated futuristic systems that are integrated into corporate buildings, hospitals, homes, etc. (Zep & Dominique) For instance, Chloe, Tristan's partner, orders breakfast for him using an apparent culinary replicator. This food synthesizer worked on her command and provided them with real edible food (Zep & Dominique). In another instance, when Tristan rescues a stranger from Transcore malfunction, he brings her to a hospital. The hospital is no ordinary hospital but a state-of-the-art medical facility where doctors are assisted by high-tech monitoring drones.

These drones display patients' real-time data on 3D screens (Zep & Dominique Bertail 33).

Besides the securidrones, the physical spaces and individuals are observed and monitored by “militiamen” who are either disguised in full black suits covering their bodies and faces or they are covering their mouths only showing their eyes and forehead. This disguise indicates that these observers are watching citizens but the citizens cannot watch them back like they are being watched. It means that surveillance is a one-way business around the city. Usually, the state-corporate begins by making compartments and segregating people into social, spatial, and psychological segments to enforce its control. It is a fundamental mechanism of transforming spaces into agents of reinforcement and behavioural conditioning. These pre-determined zones in Paris limit citizens' movement within the spaces.

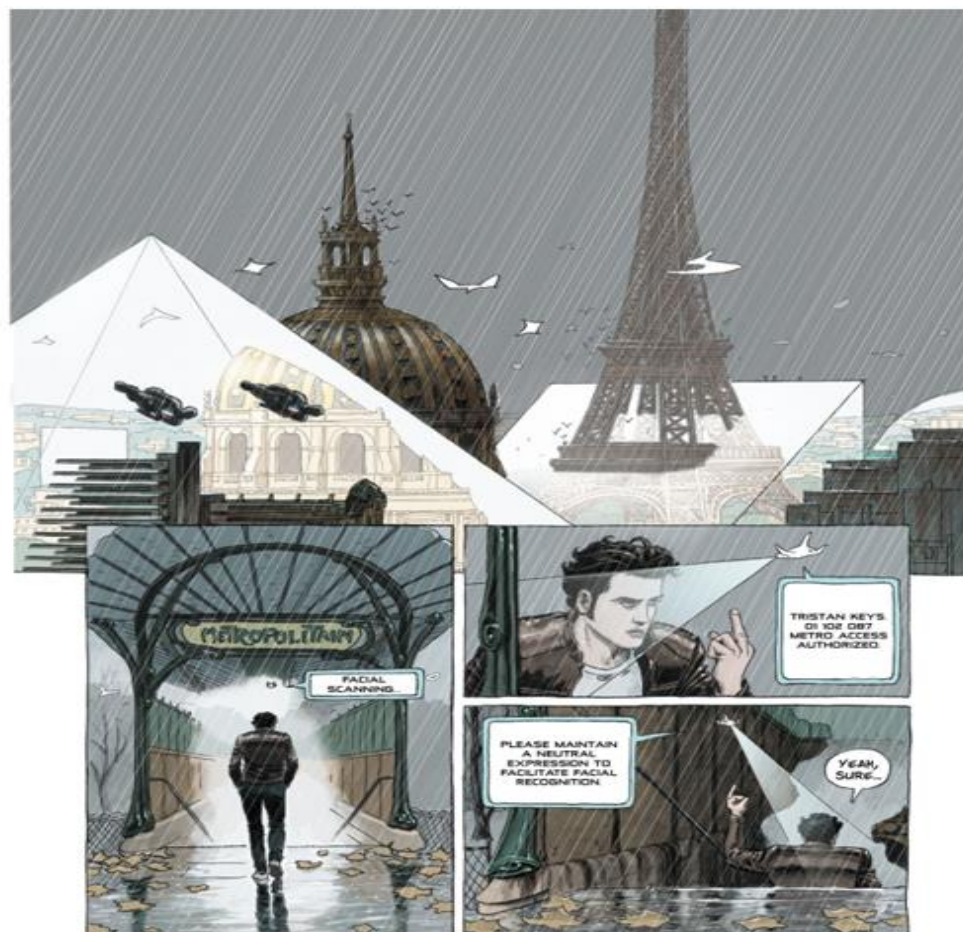


Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2

Additionally, all of the ultra-modern and futuristic ways of life are impacting citizens' ability to spatial interaction within the urban spaces. Unlike in a Panopticon, they are under constant observation through decentralized and networked surveillance. There isn't a central surveillance watchtower in the city. It is embedded into every public and private aspect of life in the city. Instead of regular surveillance, monitoring in Paris is embedded and functions at a micro-level. For instance, Paris is surveyed by sleek "securidrones" which are automated high-tech objects that hover motionlessly in the air to monitor the city continuously with precision. A ceaseless hum fills the air of the city in the backdrop of daily life. These "securidrones" are compact flying objects, mechanically buzzing silently through the city's skyline (figure 2.3- 2.6). Their miniature body structure and aerodynamic frame allow them to reach anywhere and everywhere in a few seconds. Despite their small appearance, they are equipped with ultra-modern cutting-edge technology, allowing them to execute a multitude of surveillance tasks throughout the urban landscape. Each drone has built-in high-resolution cameras and scanners enhanced by facial recognition software that makes it capable of identifying individuals even in crowds, with absolute accuracy. These drones are linked to a vast database containing information on every citizen. These features enable them to scan and extract information from the database. Additionally, they notify relevant authorities immediately when it comes to a person of interest.

In the novel, these securidrones are flying around the city, resembling a flock of pigeons. These drones of irregular shape are key tools for surveillance and management in the urban layout. In the first panel of the novel, a securidrone scans Tristan, the protagonist, and projects "FACIAL SCANNING. TRISTAN KEYS. 01 102

087. METRO ACCESS AUTHORIZED. PLEASE MAINTAIN NEUTRAL EXPRESSION TO FACILITATE FACIAL EXPRESSION.” (Zep & Bertail 5) (Figure 2.3). Eventually, when Tristan arrives at Kloe’s residence, the securidrone scans him once again projecting “TRISTAN KEYS. STATUS GUEST. AUTHORIZED TO ENTER. CLICK.” (Zep & Bertail 9) robotically and coldly. Tristan visibly despises this system. Even he ruminates that the “securidrones watch over” him (Zep & Bertail 20). Describing Tristan’s identity in numbers “01 102 087” is an act of dehumanisation. It reduces human beings to numbers and faces. Identity numbers exemplify Deleuze’s concept of hyper-information. (Figure 2.4)

As delineated in the theoretical framework, in a post-Panoptic society, human beings exist as data nodes. The citizens of Paris are no longer disciplined predominantly by the physical force but through data collection. Constant biometric tracking and facial recognition through securidrones monitors manipulate, and predict the behaviour of citizens. It is another form of compartmentalization and reterritorialization of citizens. The entire city operates like a data-driven ecosystem. As a result, surveillance operates in a flow blurring the boundary between public and private spaces. This automated free-flow and omnipresent surveillance create post-Panoptic urban spaces. Now, these spaces become active agents of control which regulates Tristan’s movement.



Figure 2.3



Figure 2.4



Figure 2.5



Figure 2.6

The extract from the graphic novel illustrates how control has become decentralised using the miniature drones. The spatial compartmentalization is highlighted in enclosed-structured environments, a classic example of a post-Panoptic society.

Further into the novel, the implicit tool of monitoring, known as surveillance capitalism, is propagated by the state-corporate to maintain control. For instance, the citizens are provided with a high-tech life, which makes their lives easier. However, underneath the masquerade of comfort and convenience, the state-corporate manifests its control. It ensures pervasive surveillance of the citizens' consumption patterns. The state-corporate creates desire, codes it, and promotes it through marketing. This too is called consumer seduction, which is central to control in contemporary societies such as Paris. One of the prime examples is "Transcore" cabins spread all over the city. The citizens primarily from affluent neighbourhoods are provided with the desire to travel smoothly, swiftly, and safely through high-tech devices, i.e., Transcore cabins. This desire is embedded into the minds of individuals through appealing narratives. Through this psycho-social manipulation, they are provided with the illusion of freedom, free

choice, and ease. Now, sign systems such as codes are used to channel this desire. These codes are persistent advertisements of Transcore throughout the city. Capitalistic societies often normalise consumption behaviours by coding desires.

Later in the novel, the protagonist, Tristian Keys, visits his girlfriend. He travels through the city to reach his destination. He uses the subway system, which has become obsolete for numerous citizens. Instead, they use “Transcore cabin”, a teleportation device that sends the citizens to “three million places” anytime in “one second” (Zep & Dominique 56) (figure 2.8 & 2.12). Tristan’s partner, Khloe, prefers Transcore and insists on traveling through it. However, he distrusts this means of transportation. Transcore is readily available throughout the elitist part of the city (Zep & Dominique 8) since inhabitants of the other zone of the city do not rely on teleportation. In the disguise of ease and quickness, Transcore secretly collects information about the user, imitates their physical characteristics, and creates a clone, which is noticed by Tristian (Zep & Dominique 39). The citizens are unaware of this. The graphic novel displays multiple characters as such to foreground the brutalities of the state-corporate. They are seduced to satisfy themselves with luxuries, but in return, they are losing their identities and bodily integrity.



Figure 2.8

Apart from being a coded desire, Transcore is also a tool for transforming people into data nodes. For instance, at the beginning of the story, Tristan witnesses a gripping scene. He encounters a victim of the teleportation cabin. He was traveling by the metro when a woman, Madam Kruger, entered the train cabin. She was convulsing,

and her pupils were turned upwards, disoriented and dazed. She seemed to be malfunctioning while making inaudible and strange sounds such as “ghhh” (Zep & Bertail 7) (figure 2.8 & 2.9).

The next day, when he goes to meet her to verify his suspicion, he is astonished and in utter shock when she appears perfectly fine in front of him as if nothing happened. She has no recollection of yesterday's incident Tristian witnessed. Tristian couldn't believe it, so he thought it might be “drugs” (Zep & Bertail 18). But on the same day, Tristan witnesses Madam Kruger again. She exhibits similar symptoms. However, this time, the “Militiamen” pretended to rescue her but ended up electrocuting her. Her electrocution is witnessed by Tristian, who is sceptical enough to follow them (Zep & Bertail 23). The next morning, when he visits Kruger's office to validate if yesterday's event was his perceived hallucination or reality, he connects with her on the line. Once again, she was in optimal health. It is crucial to recall Lefebvre's discussion on organic body rhythms which translate into bodily autonomy of the Parisians. It is dependent on the state-corporate or the elite. Surveillance and policing through post-Panopticon evaporate freedom within the spaces and the right to citizens' bodies, whether it is the right related to mental or physical freedom.



Figure 2.9



Figure 2.10

The next victim is Miss Sandek who dies after utilising the teleportation cabin (Figure 2.11). Once again Tristian comes across a Transcore cabin. He hears a distressed sound which sounds like someone is in pain. A faint groan was escaping someone's lips. He hurried over and opened the door of the cabin with all his might. He found a young woman, Miss Sandek, slumped against the teleportation seat. There was blood coming out of her mouth. She was dazed and couldn't walk properly but she managed to walk away from the cabin (Zep & Bertail 30). At that moment, the militiamen came and asked about the victim. However, Tristian misinformed them about her whereabouts (Zep & Bertail 31). He follows Sandek and finds her barely conscious and coughing up blood. A few splashes of blood were present on her shirt. He helps her up and takes her to the hospital where she eventually dies (Zep & Bertail 34). The same militiamen came to collect her corpse (Zep & Bertail 36). After the incident, Tristian tries to connect with Kea Sandek and astoundingly he gets connected with Sandek which implies that it was her clone. Similar to Kruger, Sandek exhibited no memory of the incident (Zep & Bertail 35). Moreover, his girlfriend, Khloe, connects with him to ask him about his whereabouts. Once again, he realizes that she is a "digital clone" trying to get information out of him (Zep & Bertail 39). The citizens suffer from consumer indoctrination that they cannot see beyond the comfort of life provided by the state-corporate. Their very essence of existence is snatched away from them, and in return, they get a tragic end. The Transcore cabin provides an alternate solution to the prevalent urban congestion in exchange for their identities. These cabins are devices for covert surveillance and a process of disintegration. The state-corporate seamlessly creates obedient clones of the people. On a mass level, it will help in creating a perfect control society.



Figure 2.11

The impacts of surveillance, policing, and monitoring resulting in a post-Panoptic city are not limited to social order, power dynamics, and personal and private spaces but have grave repercussions for citizens' bodies. When Lefebvre elaborated on the Rights to the City, he included the Right to the Body in the discussion as well. Through pervasive monitoring and constant data collection by the securidrones and Transcore for profiling whether it is audio, video, or an image, the privacy and autonomy of citizens over their lives and bodies is erased. The data collected by the surveillance cameras and securidrones is rigorously shared, which is obviously and explicitly unconsented. It might capture the private moments of the citizens; therefore, it is an exploitation of citizens' bodies' integrity. For instance, Tristan's face is non-consensually scanned at the beginning of the novel (Zep & Bertail). He is also followed by the securidrones collecting biometric data about his whereabouts. This data is shared with the authorities, through which he is eventually declared a fugitive. As initially illustrated, his partner, Khloe, is also involved in luring him into a trap when he discovers the truth about Transcore cabins. Most probably it was a replica of her used by the state-corporate to entrap him.

One of the key tools of control in post-Panoptic spaces is "marketing", as explained by Deleuze in *Postscript to the Societies of Control*. Marketing of commodities is utilized rigorously to enforce state-corporate agenda. To normalize the use of Transcore, the authorities in Paris exaggerate the need for Transcore through advertisement. The desire to travel to millions of destinations in one second is coded. In the consumer culture of Paris, Transcore is a code associated with comfort, luxury, and success. Repeated exposure to rewards of using Transcore conditions the characters

to rely on the teleportation device. A good example is Kloe who trusts Transcore but is wary of the subway system.



Figure 2.12



Figure 2.14

Besides their visual capabilities, these high-tech objects are outfitted with advanced sensors enabling them to intercept and disseminate information, warnings, and messages seamlessly. These drones possibly have an integrated artificial intelligence system that enables them to navigate autonomously within the complex urban layout. Their presence is evidence of the state-corporate's pervasive and omnipresent gaze over the inhabitants. Again, unconsented mass-collection of data through the securidrones is a classic example of hyper-information which is another underlining tool of post-Panoptic spaces. The behaviour of citizens is continuously analysed, reported, and adjusted according to the state-corporate's mandate. It normalizes surveillance as well. Since the citizens' visions are blurred by the securidrones roaming around the city, the omnipresence of data collection makes the citizens accept being under someone's watch.

Further, the surveillance of citizens carried out by securidrones has an emotional and sensory impact on them. It is a form of the state-corporate's visual oppression. The constant sight of these drones buzzing around in all authority instils an image of unease and fear in the minds of citizens. They are huge in number and are highlighted in the sky like a flock of birds. Their constant presence in the sky blurs one's vision of the natural sky. Other than their presence, these drones carry out incessant monitoring of every passerby. Faces and bodies of citizens are irradiated non-consensually in a bright white light by the securidrones, and then their data is projected in front of them. This

display of data isn't just the state-corporate act of control but a declaration of its prowess and authority. It declares that the state-corporate has an absolute reach within the citizens' personal lives, which is implicitly an invasion of their personal space.

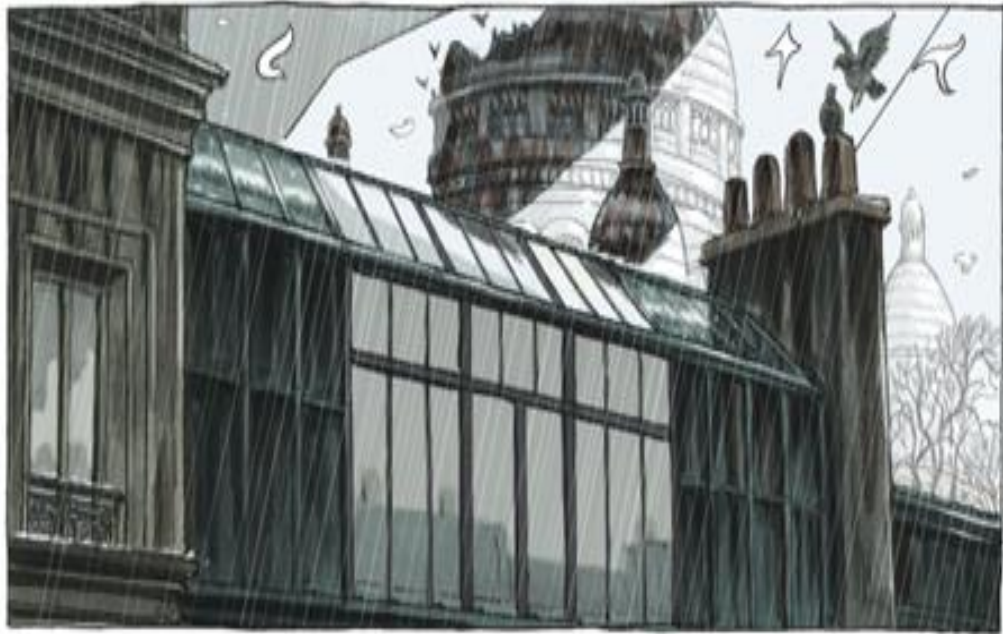


Figure 2.15

The body of the Parisian is intricately intertwined with the urban configuration of the city. The body rhythms are in harmony with the urban environment. Their body creates a space that caters to their sensory experiences and needs. However, omnipresent surveillance and over-powering capitalism have altered and manipulated this experience. Since the surveillance in the post-Panopticon is decentralized, its omnipresence diminishes the spontaneous and organic interactions of the dweller. The citizens are deterred from expressing themselves freely because of the restricted and heavily monitored urban environment, leading to a sense of suppressed bodily rhythms. Under capitalism, rather than creating natural rhythms, the body becomes a producer and destroyer for the sake of the state-corporate. Lefebvre further points out that one's awareness of their body comes by investing power in their body. With Transcore and securidrones, the citizens aren't able to use their body organs naturally, and hence their bodily autonomy is eradicated. In the following figure 2.16, the professor reveals to Tristian that Transcore erases the original human being rather than teleporting them. This is an example of the erasure of bodily autonomy.

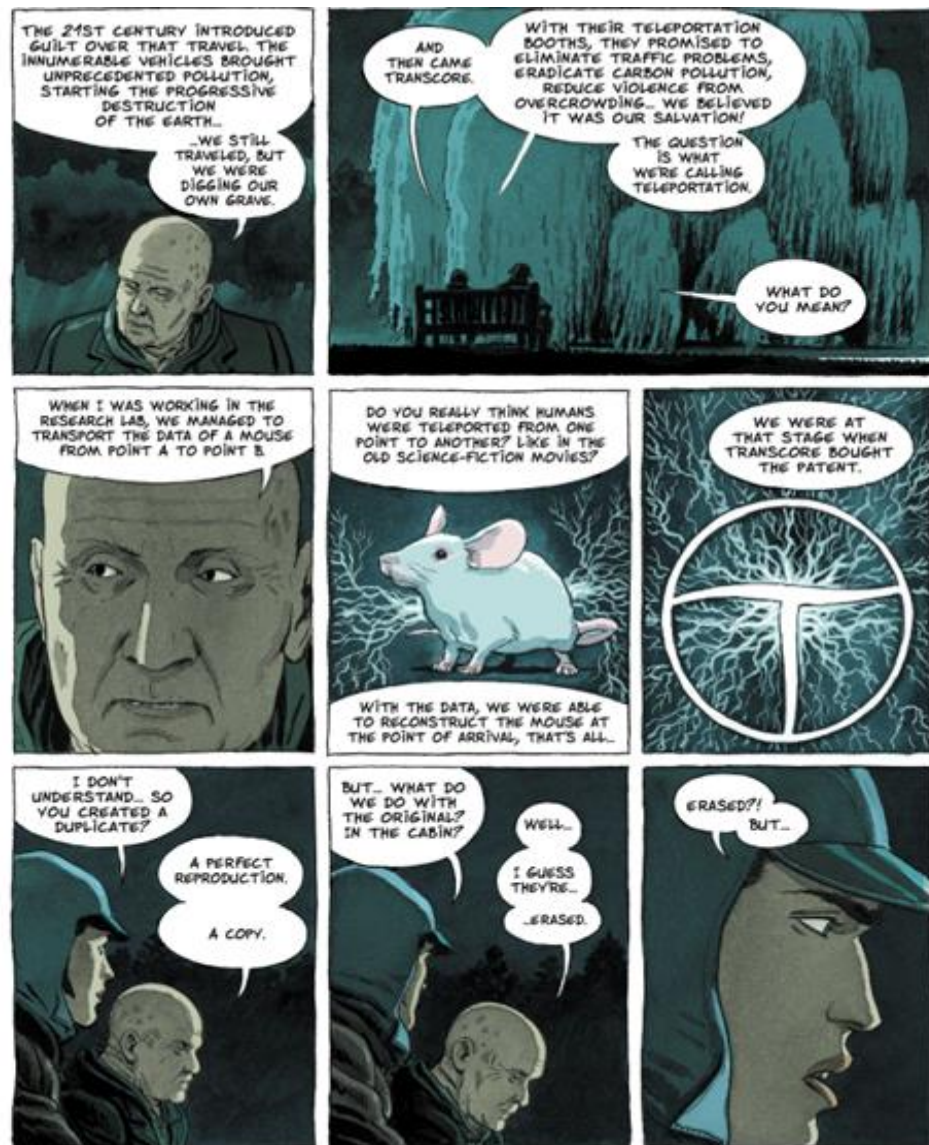


Figure 2.16

4.2.2 Interpersonal Meaning: Surveillance, and Citizen's Right

To extract interpersonal meaning from the graphic novel, it is important to understand how citizens interact with the systemic post-Panoptic urban spaces where spaces are commodified along with the citizens. Commodification happens through consumer seduction. The state-corporate enforces control by codifying citizens with endless desires. It also aids in deterritorializing previous boundaries and reterritorializing citizens into newer ones. Citizens are reduced to desiring machines. They are also programmed to give consent via consumption. This consent enables the state-corporate to propagate its goal of production.

Besides visually oppressing the inhabitants of Paris, these drones emotionally and psychologically oppress them. First off, it takes a toll on their mental well-being. It constantly reminds them that every step, interaction, and movement is being observed and recorded. The system is a kind of tool for behaviour modification. Elaborately, when people are under constant observation, they begin to self-surveil and self-censor. To avoid repercussions for supposed irregular and deviant behaviour, inhabitants live either in fear or in absolute harmony with the oppressive system. They mould their behaviours with the new social system designed by the state-corporate. The oppression doesn't end at psychological, emotional, and visual aspects of daily life in Paris. It extends to social interactions and productions of inhabitants. The social fabric of the city is fractured by the omnipresence of securidrones. People are living in paranoia with a sense of distrust. For instance, after the shocking truth of human clones is revealed to Tristan, he becomes sceptical of the people he talks to. After Miss Sandek dies, he calls Khloe, his girlfriend, he suspects that she probably is a digital clone (Zep & Bertail 39). This system instils a behaviour that inhabitants might be misinterpreted by those around them. This paranoia, suspicion, and fear weakens the community bond since the social interactions go in a certain way. It eventually creates monotonous behaviour among the masses as demanded and mandated by the state-corporate. Moreover, the greatest deprivation for inhabitants is the freedom of movement and right to privacy in urban spaces. Since the movement of citizens throughout the city is decided by the state-corporate. Whether the inhabitants are granted or denied permission to enter certain places and to travel impacts their social interaction as well. For instance, at the beginning of the novel, securidrones scan Tristan to identify if he is authorised access to a metro station (Zep & Bertail 5) and a residence (Zep & Bertail 9). These ever-present drones leave the citizens in a state of helplessness and inescapability. The autonomy over one's life is forever lost under the state-corporate's mandate. Overall, these securidrones are instruments of oppression and control. These technological marvels have efficiently stripped the citizens of the right to privacy or personal space, autonomy, movement, and social interactions.

Further on, Transcore cabins are such high-tech teleportation devices that exploit citizens' bodies. In the disguise of swift travel, it secretly gathers Biometric data using body scans, voice scans, and gait analysis of the user, imitates their physical characteristics, and creates a clone, as witnessed by Tristian (Zep & Dominique 39).

Physical identity, including appearance and vice, etc., has become volatile in current Paris. People can adopt the identity of anyone. For instance, Khloe reveals to Tristian that she “WAS CONTACTED BY A TRACKER WHO’D TAKEN THE IDENTITY AND APPEARANCE OF BOB MARLEY”. She guesses that the “VIRTUOGRAPHERS” MUST HAVE COPIED IT FROM A GAME”. Biometric data collection without consent is a violation of the Parisians’ right to autonomy over their bodies. Such cloning erases the existence of the original human being. Transcore becomes a post-Panoptic space that disrupts natural body rhythms. The sensory experiences of citizens are controlled through omnipresent surveillance in the form of securidrones and Transcore. They must travel through Transcore, which is socially appropriate. This appropriation is embedded in the understanding that it curbs pollution., overcrowding, traffic problems, etc. However, it collects data from the “original” humans’ bodies and memories and simply creates a perfect copy of them. Later on, the originals are eliminated (Zep & Dominique 53). It secretly gets the consent of citizens to erase whatever autonomy they have within the post-Panoptic society.

Another example of the exploitation of citizens' control over their bodies is the right of reproduction. Consensually having children and giving birth to them is one of the primary rights of every individual, but in Paris of 2119, citizens do not have this right. This natural process is authorized by the state-corporate in the form of a “REPRODUCTION VISA”. One can request desired genetic features for the child; for example, Khloe hints at requesting “A BOY... WITH YOUR (Tristian’s) GREEN EYES” (Zep & Bertail 12). The reason behind this is to avoid complications of childbirth. Once again, the citizens are denied the right to make personal decisions involving their bodies. It is an example of the state-corporate’s persistent interference in the reproductive lives of people, which converts personal decisions into state-corporate regulated acts. The natural rhythmic pattern of Kloe and Tristian can be observed as violated. What’s interesting is that Kloe accepts the new reality. This validates Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept of micro-surveillance for control.

Another example of inorganic and disrupted bodily rhythm is the microchip installed in the Parisians, as illustrated by the character, Tristian. Tristian can be seen plucking out the chip. Within the same panel, surveillance drones can be seen (Zep & Dominique 41) (Figure 2.18). This panorama sums up post-Panoptic surveillance in the city. Such chips delineate pervasive and embedded surveillance. This multifaceted

aspect of control extends beyond technological surveillance. In Paris, the microchips function as a tool of corporate state-corporate control. It can be categorized under the theme of consumer capitalism. Chips are a hyper-personalised form of consumption like Transcore. It tracks every aspect of an individual's body and life. Every movement, interaction, and physiological response can be effortlessly traced. Again, Parisians become data nodes. This data collection device acts as a currency for citizens. It grants them access to urban spaces and opportunities.



Figure 2.18

Another example of loss of bodily autonomy is the manipulation of data-driven surveillance. The state-corporate extracts and keeps the data on the citizens through Transcore and securidrones. It exploits the data by making clones of citizens. When Tristan meets the state-corporate representative, he is threatened with the loss of Kloe's memories. The state-corporate can easily remove anyone's memories and disrupt their natural bodily rhythm. (Figure 2.19)



Figure 2.19

Thus, urban spaces and bodies of citizens are sites of post-Panoptic control. Rather than relying heavily on physical and explicit control, the state-corporate embeds control into micro-aspects of citizens' lives.

4.2.3 Compositional Meaning: How is state-corporate control reinforced through visual elements?

This section deals with visual, verbal, and spatial cues embedded in the panels to foreground the narrative of the novel. Surveillance and capitalism can be reflected in their imageries, grids, symbols, etc.

i. Textual and visual harmony:

In the high-tech futuristic cityscape, the visual and textual components work in synergy to represent the narrative. It uses visual elements such as the securidrones, digital screens, advertisements, holograms, and Transcore cabins along with the dialogues of characters which reflect oppression and struggle for privacy and freedom. In the following panel (Figure 2.20 & 2.21), a hologram of a shark occupies the skyline view. Transcore cabin is advertised and the spaces symbolizes futuristic high-tech society. The drones, holograms, and advertisements are a powerful tool of surveillance. They indicate the omnipresence of the state-corporate in public and private spaces. In Paris, these tools are strategically placed in streets and transportation hubs to ensure that they are in sightline of the inhabitants. Usually, these tools are made as eye-catching displays disguised as surveillance tools. They also provide a stimulus to their passersby. The hologram of a shark symbolizes the predatory nature of the state-corporate, its threat, and its control over the city and its size reflects the intimidation tactic of the state.



Figure 2.20

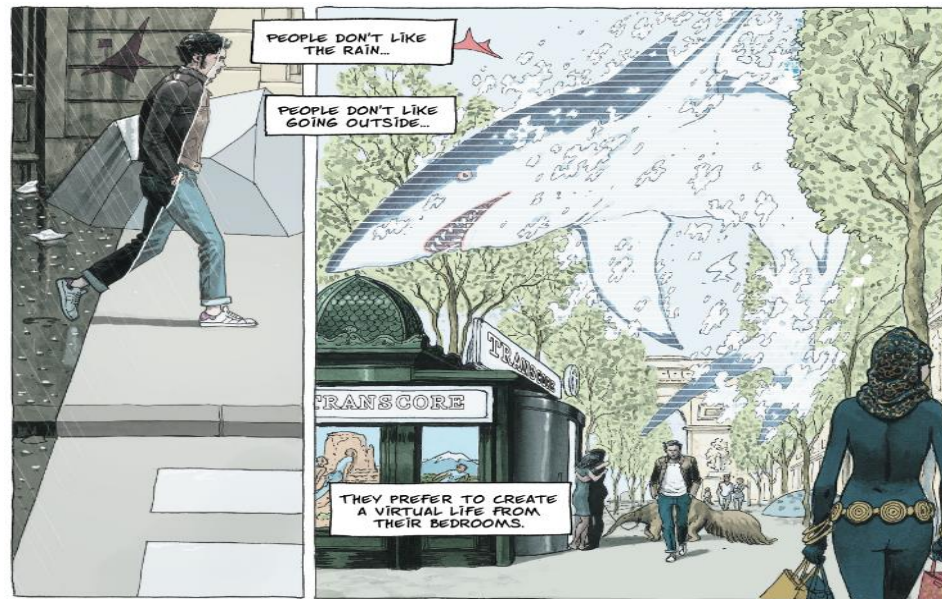


Figure 2.21

The narrative of the novel, as thoroughly discussed earlier, is that Paris circa 2119 is a spatially oppressive city where citizens are monitored and regulated every second, their movements are recorded and even their bodily autonomy is taken away from them. This narrative is supported by the visuals. The novel includes the following figure which is a panoramic view of the city. Drones occupy the skyline like birds. High-tech features are visible in the backdrop along with the historical figures hidden behind the dark trees indicating the rise of modernism.



Figure 2.22

Furthermore, the text of dialogues is completely in uppercase. Like *Soft city*, the monotony of life in the city is indicated by the monotony of speech and thoughts of characters. In the following panel of the novel, Tristan is seen in a dark underground with a sprinkle of light creating a paradox of surveillance. His thoughts appear as uppercase text indicating the monotony of thoughts reflecting the monotony of life in the space. (Figure 2.23)



Figure 2.23

ii. **Spatial arrangement:**

The arrangement and dynamics of spaces show a clear distinction between different sectors of the city; one where the tech-savvy privileged citizens live and another where the “nostalgics” reside and refuse teleportation. Apart from the themes of spatial organization, the spatial arrangement of panels in the graphic novel is crucial as well. The use of tightly packed and confining panels spatially represents the oppressive and claustrophobic environment (Figure 2.24). The authors regressively utilize the spaces in the panels. The physical spaces, citizens, and surveillance tools are squeezed into a small space, conveying restrictions and entrapment of citizens. It creates a feeling of no escape.

The spaces are occupied by physical features that remind one of the settings of the story. The panels are in contrastive dark and light colour palettes. The wide and open urban spaces are dominated by surveillance practices such as facial recognition and monitoring (e.g., Tristan being interrogated about Miss Sandek’s whereabouts through securidrones). Such spaces are contrasted with closed spaces where disenfranchised, zealots, nostalgics, and junkies live. These spaces are seemingly

hidden, giving opportunities for refuge. There is a constant struggle between the space dwellers for accessibility. The following figures provide a contrast of spaces. The first one symbolizes spaces lived by nostalgia and the second one represents the protected and elite space of the city.



Figure 2.24

Comparatively, the panel provided below indicates a well-monitored and supposedly protected space in Paris. Militia men can be seen scouting the area along with securidrones. The holograms cover the significant buildings indicating control.



Figure 2.25

iii. Colours and hues:

The panels in the novel are drawn in a set of colours somewhere with dark hues and others with lighter tones. The dark spaces in the novel indicate the bleakness of life in the new Paris. The contrast also unearths the compartmentalization or segregation of citizens into rigid spaces. For instance, in the urban spaces occupied by poor neighbourhoods, images are created with different shades of black, grey, and brown. Even the greens used for these spaces have a dark undertone, therefore creating bleakness in the panels. The selection of colour schemes also evokes feelings of misery and sadness dominated in certain spaces. In the following panel, Tristian meets the professor. In the background, darker and lighter colours are contrastively put together. The dark sky is illuminated by artificially provided light at certain spots. The white colour of drones can be seen as symbolizing visibility and the clear gaze of surveillance.



Figure 2.26

Contrastively to this darker look, the lighter and warmer tones in certain spaces showcase apparent brightness in life. However, life created by the state-corporate in the elite spaces is everything but bright. Artificial lights are thrown at some structures in these spaces to create an illusion of liveliness here. But when in stark contrast with dark features unearths the paradox of life in these urban spaces. Like the tight panels, darker tones reflect the bleakness and congestive life in Paris.

4.2.4 Conclusion:

In conclusion, *Paris 2119* is a bleak society which can be termed as Guattari and Deleuze's control society, where at every corner, the citizens are met with highly modernized surveillance tools taking aerial shots of them from different angles without any consent. The citizens are registered in the system. Their privacy and freedom are owned by the state-corporate that lures its subjects with hyper-consumeristic tendencies embedded in them through the bombardment of advertisements. The desires are coded, symbolizing encroachment of control society. Citizens are surviving amidst their physical and psychological deterritorialization followed by state-corporate controlled reterritorialization. A multimodal analysis of the graphic novel reveals how the sounds of narrative exist in bleak visuals. Symbols signifying the gaze of surveillance are scattered across the panels of the novel. With the combination of visual, textual, and spatial cues, the author engages the readers in a story that represents a post-Panopticon society where surveillance and control permeate not only physical spaces but also citizens' bodily autonomy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively analysed two European Graphic Novels *Soft City* (2012) by Hariton Push Wagner and *Paris 2119* (2020) by Zep & Dominique Bertail. In these novels, the governing body carries out massive and vigorous surveillance and policing of the urban spaces by creating an institutional post-Panopticon. The physical spaces are strategically compartmentalised and therefore reterritorialized after being deterritorialized by the authorities. To substantiate the aforementioned argument, theoretical support has been taken from Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's comprehensive studies on consumer seduction, coded desires, and reterritorialization resulting from these tools of surveillance capitalism and compartmentalisation of physical spaces. This study also includes Henri Lefebvre's discussions on spatial arrangement and the rights of citizens related to urban spaces. In these hyper-controlled contemporary urban spaces, the citizens are stripped of their primary rights to the city and their bodies. The questions explored quantitatively in this study are; 1. *In what ways do the state-corporate turn the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon in the selected texts?* 2. *How do the state-corporate utilize the post-panoptic urban spaces to refute citizen's right to the city and their bodies in the selected texts?* The study answers these questions by comprehensively discussing the layout of urban spaces, the state-corporate's objectives, and devices of surveillance, consumption patterns, and the rights of citizens.

Firstly, the primary question examined is *what are the ways through which the state-corporate convert the urban spaces into a post-Panopticon in the selected texts?* The study concludes that state-corporate dismantle the pre-existing urban layout and provide a newly planned arrangement of physical spaces. Public and private areas are compartmentalized. After that, the state-corporate manifests its control through surveillance devices with the new arrangement. These physical spaces are designed specifically to promote smooth control. Due to post-Panoptic control, the boundaries of urban spaces cease to exist. The spaces co-exist as one. Thus, surveillance is freely flowing through the spaces. In *Soft City*, the citizens are divided into affluent neighbourhood and working-class residences. Mr Soft, the boss of Soft Inc.'s aesthetic personal space is in stark contrast with the monotonous apartments of employees.

Likewise, in *Paris 2119*, elite Parisians are separated from ghettos and slums of impoverished people. Furthermore, these compartments are monitored through high-tech surveillance devices. In *Soft City*, Mr Soft monitors citizens through his control room. He observes their consumption patterns, their daily routines, and their working progress to favour mass production of Soft products and consumption of them. Similarly, in *Paris 2119*, the citizens are followed by securidrones, miniature up-to-the-minute drones collecting biometric data and disseminating messages back and forth. In *Paris 2119*, surveillance is fused into the spaces. Securidrones and militiamen roam the streets. The only difference is the difference in access to opportunities for citizens of different compartments. The desire-driven citizens live in an advanced part of the city while the dregs of society live in the outskirts. The urban spaces are turned into active agents of control dictating citizens' behaviour.

Besides the exploitation of public and private spaces, surveillance capitalism is also employed through consumer seduction and coded desires. In both graphic novels, desires are created, structured, advertised through codes and hence citizens are seduced to enter the vicious cycle of consumption. In *Soft City*, the citizens absentmindedly buy Soft products. Their consumption behaviours are carefully monitored. The products are coded through posters and banners displayed in the supermarket. Likewise, in *Paris 2119*, the citizens are encouraged to use Transcore cabins for teleportation. These services are promoted to advertisements displayed in the alleys. People use 3D printing for food. Marketing is at the core of both cities. Such behaviours are monitored by Mr Soft in *Soft City* and the securidrones and Militiamen in *Paris 2119*. Tristian's girlfriend, Khloe is a classic example of delusional consumers living in the illusion of advanced life. When in reality, they are robbed of their freedom and identity. Eventually, the citizens become commodities and data nodes in the hyper informational spaces of post-Panopticon.

Next question deemed to be explored was *how post-Panoptic urban society strips people of their fundamental rights to the spaces and their bodies*. Since segregation into compartments based on state-corporate defined groups limits the physical movement of the citizens. For instance, Soft Citizens' daily life is limited to monotonous and dull apartments to corporate sectors, kindergartens for children and supermarkets. Moreover, the citizen's appearances are eerily similar. Men and women are wearing identical apparel. Women's hair is exactly the same. Likewise, men are in

identical uniforms as well. Their movements are synchronized. This indicates how limited and regulated their spatial interactions are. They also have to take Soft pills for morning and night. They lack natural bodily rhythms. They do not express fear, anger, and joy, fundamental survival mechanisms. Similar to Soft Citizens, Parisians in 2119 also have to follow the state-corporate's bizarre rules for their bodies as well. The citizens have to request for reproduction visa if they want to have children. They can also request desired genetic features for their children. Microchips are installed in the citizens' body. Their memories are under the state-corporate's control. The state-corporate exploits this data to either make clones or erase them. In conclusion, bodies are a site of control in both narratives.

Further on, by applying multimodal discourse analysis by Kress and Leeuwen, to the selected graphic novels, reveals visual, textual, and spatial elements that engage readers with the narrative of surveillance in a controlled urban organization and the space dwellers' struggle with the repercussions. The analysis also reveals that the colour palette used and the semiotic components foregrounded in the novels depict how basic rights are increasingly compromised. The sequence of panels, pacing, and transitions along with the font of text navigate the story. In *Soft City*, the monotony of text case used for thoughts and dialogues in a triad with uniform movement of citizens, their desires, appearance, attires, and sameness in the design of physical spaces visually indicate the monotony of life in the Soft city. The rigidity in daily life of the citizens is reflected in the rigid and repetitive spaces occupied by the images. The black-and-white colour scheme of the novel unpacks the monochrome and supposedly colourless life of citizens. Similarly, in *Paris 2119*, the semiotic components, in synergy with textual and visual evidence, navigate the theme of surveillance in the novel. The striking contrast of dark and lighter shades of the colour palette communicates the imbalance of resources, accessibility, and resources between the two halves of the city. The urban spaces and time within these spaces are manipulated using technological control. The advertisements, securidrones, and holograms in the backdrop act as semiotic cues for degrees of surveillance in the supposedly fast and secure city.

However, it is worth noting that, while both *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*, illustrate a post-Panoptic dystopian society shaped by the state-corporate through urban rearrangement, consumerist conditioning, and denial of bodily autonomy, *Paris 2119* uses digitization in exaggeration to *Soft City*. The architectural design of both cities

works to reinforce control for production and consumption. *Paris 2119* relies on digital grids, ultra-modern confined spaces, and cold lighting, whereas *Soft City* illustrated uniform, rigid, and repeated spatial segmentation. In both cases, the city denies its dwellers the right to city and freedom of engaging with their bodies. Both present a control society.

In a nutshell, in a post-Panoptic urban space, the citizens are compartmentalized, reterritorialized, and exploited through non-consensual surveillance, consumer seduction, and coded desires. Their rights to the city are exploited through controlled physical spaces. Their personal autonomy and bodily integrity are eroded. *Soft City* by Hariton Push Wagner and *Paris 2119* by Zep & Dominique Bertail are classic examples of post-Panoptic societies.

5.1 Future Research Recommendations

This study encompasses urban arrangements and the overall design of life in these arrangements. A framework designed with critical ruminations of Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Henri Lefebvre is utilized to analyse the selected novels, *Soft City* and *Paris 2119*. However, there may be numerous other potential lenses through which the themes of surveillance, spaces, and capitalism are analysed. Following is some of the research recommendations for further study involving the selected texts or theoretical concepts;

i. Comparative analysis:

This study is about the urban arrangements of the cities in the selected novels. However, the analysis is somewhat focused on the novels separately. Further on, a comparative analysis can be carried out using the selected text. It may compare nuances and degrees of surveillance in both urban layouts.

ii. Gender studies and Feminist theories:

The understanding of gender roles and power dynamics can be examined. It can also be analyzed how surveillance and monitored environments impact genders and their rights to bodily autonomy differently. Further studies can be conducted on the triad of gender representation, surveillance, and urban spaces. Both narratives are not analyzed through a gendered lens. It can focus on degrees of surveillance under patriarchal structures within the dystopian setting.

iii. Ecological Criticism:

The environment and implications of its exploitation through technology and capitalism can be investigated with textual and visual evidence. The dystopian settings often indicate environmental degradation. Alternates to the existing vision of life can be presented.

iv. Dismantling post-Panopticon/Resisting the control:

One of the interesting studies will be presenting extended research focused on the transgression of citizens from the system of control and the dismantling of the post-Panopticon after psychological and physical turmoil. Both narratives portray resistance in multiple forms which will be interesting to explore.

v. Spatial Memory and Role of Collective Consciousness:

Existing research focuses on spatial control, however, one interesting area to research would be how citizens remember the past versions of the city with freedom. Do the citizens try to recreate it or how does their memory function against the control?

Other than these researches, there is vast scope and potential in the selected primary text. Exploring different possibilities of perspectives can illuminate the existing body of knowledge.

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