

Restoration of identity from space in Alastair Reynolds's *Chasm City*

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Analysoin pro gradu – tutkielmassani tilojen vaikutusta ja suhdetta identiteetin jälleenmuodostumiseen Alastair Reynoldsin science fiction -romaanissa *Kuilukaupunki*. Tutkimuskysymykseni hakee vastausta siihen, millä tavoin romaanin esittämät tilat vaikuttavat romaanin päähenkilön identiteetin palautumiseen ja eheytymiseen muistinmenetyksen ja persoonallisuuden vaihtumisen jälkeen. Romaanin tiloilla ja paikoilla vaikuttaa olevan voimakas kytkös päähenkilön edellisen identiteetin tallentamiin muistoihin, ja työni tavoitteena on havainnollistaa ja tuoda näitä kytköksiä esiin.

Tilallisuus on noussut eri tieteenaloilla vuosituhannen vaihteessa ja sen jälkeen suureen rooliin; puhutaan 'tilallisesta käänteestä' tutkimusparadigmassa. Pro gradu – työni pyrkii tuomaan Reynoldsia esiin paitsi arvokkaana tutkimuskohteena tieteiskirjallisuuden osana, myös hedelmällisenä maaperänä tilateorian kehittämiseen. *Kuilukaupunki* valikoitui tutkimuskohteeksi romaanin erittäin omalaatuisen nimikkokaupungin tarjoaman ympäristön vuoksi, sekä siksi, että identiteetin pysyvyys on romaanissa vahvasti esillä. Postmoderni käsitys identiteetistä alati muuttuvana osana ihmistä tulee esille paitsi päivittäisessä elämässä, myös *Kuilukaupungissa*, mikä tekee tästä aiheesta tutkimisen arvoisen. Tutkielmani teoriapohja muodostuu useiden eri tilaa tutkineiden teoreetikkojen töistä, tärkeimpinä näistä ovat Henri Lefebvre, Fredric Jameson sekä Edward Soja; lisäksi käytän identiteetikäsitteen havainnollistajana Stuart Hallin näkemystä postmodernista identiteetistä.

Reynolds esittelee painajaismaisia visioita epäonnistuneesta teknologiaautopiasta jossa ruumis ja identiteetti ovat vapaasti muokattavissa ja koneistuneisuutensa vuoksi alttiita tietokoneviruksille ja näiden virusten aiheuttamille muutoksille. Kehon ulkopuolinen ympäristö toimii kuitenkin romaanissa muistia ja sitä myöten identiteettiä tukevana aspektina joka edesauttaa aiempien identiteettien tallentamien muistojen paluuta, ensin unijaksoina ja sitten hallusinaatiokohtauksina. Lopulta kirjan päähenkilö näyttäisi eheytyvän yhdeksi ja samaksi persoonallisuudeksi, joka tämä oli alun perinkin. *Kuilukaupunki* vaikuttaisi siis liputtavan identiteetin pysyvyyden puolesta, mikä on huomionarvoista aikana jona identiteettejä voidaan omaksua ja hävittää virtuaalimaailmassa salamannopeasti. Tutkielmani esittämä tapa lukea Reynoldsin romaania tuo esiin tilallisuuden ja tilojen tärkeyden identiteetin osana, ylläpitäjänä, ja jopa sen palauttajana.

Avainsanat: Tilallisuus, tilat, science fiction, identiteetti, muisti

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1. Introduction and background

“Space is social morphology: it is to the lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound up with function and structure” (Lefebvre 1991, 94). As this quote from Henri Lefebvre, a French spatial philosopher illustrates, space is, both conceptually and concretely, vital for our ability to experience life. Numerous critics argue that there is an inherent spatiality within humans, and a shift in focus from time to space has been taking place across most scientific disciplines. This spatial turn will be explored further in this thesis, which situates itself as a part of the body of work which follows the turn, and it also situates itself as a part of the growing studies of science fiction (hereafter SF).

SF, too, is spatially oriented, or it can be perceived as such. By locating the narratives in far corners of the universe or in the *distant* past or future, SF allows for infinite variety in the interaction between spaces and places and the themes it wishes to depict. Technology, science, and their possibilities have, of course, been highlighted throughout the history of the genre, and they have always been necessarily linked to the spaces of the stories; that is, the spaces have provided a background for the science to take place.

This thesis will analyze a relatively recent SF novel, Alastair Reynolds’ *Chasm City* (2001), from a spatial perspective. Prominent themes in the novel include memory, identity, and how a futuristic, technological world capable of feats such as space-flight or extreme physical augmentation handles these issues and the difficulties in them that postmodernism with its relativism has raised. Despite all the play and delight in being able to alter one’s looks and change one’s identity, *Chasm City* appears to oppose the idea of a free-floating identity in favor of a more traditional, singular notion of oneself. With a protagonist who suffers from amnesia and has transplanted another person’s memories to himself, the novel construes itself as a story of revelation about oneself along with the book’s chase-oriented detective narrative. What makes this interesting

is that *Chasm City* seems to suggest a solid connection between identity, spaces, and the mental mapping of places through which one's identity is created, upheld, and even restored. Hence, this paper approaches the novel with two questions: Is there a connection between spaces and identities in the novel? If so, how do the spaces and their mapping affect the recreation of identity?

The paper begins with an introductory background to SF and *Chasm City*, moves on to introduce spatial theories, which are then followed by the analysis itself, after which results of the analysis and some concluding remarks are presented. Chapter 2 introduces spatial studies with theories from Yi-Fu Tuan, Robert T. Tally Jr., Edward Soja, Michel Foucault, Fredric Jameson, and others. The chapter finishes with an introduction to theories of identity used in this thesis; of these Stuart Hall is explored the most. Chapter 3 turns to investigate technology and its role in SF specifically. Imaginary technologies capable of impossible feats abound the entire field of SF and affect the narration and plotting of SF books, which in turn affect literary criticism of SF. Chapter 4, divided into two large subsections, will provide an analysis of two significant spaces of *Chasm City*: Chasm City itself in chapter 4.1., and cosmic space and spaceships in chapter 4.2. This chapter introduces a few theoretical viewpoints as well when necessary and will otherwise draw from chapter 2 for its analytical grounding. Chapter 5 combines the analyses of spaces in chapter 4 and provides an overview of what kind of an effect the spaces do have, if any, on the recreation of identity. Finally, chapter 6 brings about a brief conclusion to the thesis with suggestions on where to continue with studying Reynolds.

1.1. Background

The following sections will provide a short and narrow summary of the short but wide history of SF as a genre, followed a brief introduction to *Chasm City* and its generic roots, as well as to Alastair Reynolds.

1.2. A brief history of SF

Accounts attempting to pin down an exact definition of SF crowd the shelves of SF criticism, with none of them reaching a conclusion more valid than the others. A classic definition of SF, proposed by Darko Suvin, is that it is a “*fiction of cognitive estrangement*” (original italics) (1979, 4). SF estranges its readers by presenting a world different from ours, and thereby it makes them compare the differences between the two with a final purpose to make its readers think differently about issues in the real world. This effect is produced by what Suvin calls a *novum*: “*SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic*” (italics original) (1979, 63). Furthermore, Suvin argues that the *novum* is “a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author’s and implied reader’s norm of reality” (1979, 64). Thus, the *novum* is always either an “Unknown” or “Other” (ibid.), which then estranges the reader by confronting them with otherness or newness. The estrangement must operate logically and be somehow scientifically explainable in order for the book to classify as SF in the Suvinian sense; this rules out fantasy literature, which Suvin considers immature and of less value than SF. The *novum*, for Suvin, must also be totalizing, in the sense that its presence in the work crucially affects the story and narration in some way (1979, 64). Pursuing this, Suvin differentiates between “true” and “fake” *nova*: “The distinction between a true and a fake *novum* is...not only a key to aesthetic quality in SF but also to its ethico-political liberating qualities” (1979, 82). If the *novum* is not validated by “cognitive logic” it is false, and for Suvin, then, the entire work is classifiable as a poor and disposable example of SF. Suvin unfortunately leaves the “ethico-political liberating qualities” unelaborated, which, in part, has led to wide-spread confusion, misreadings, and a general lack of clarity that plagues the critique *Metamorphoses* has received. Suvin’s definition and polemic style have – understandably – provoked angry responses from various critics (see e.g. Miéville 2005) and his is by no means an uncontested definition, but it is the most wide-spread and still an extremely useful one. The following overview of the history of SF as a

developing genre is derived mostly from Roger Luckhurst's *Science Fiction* (2005) that approaches SF's history from a mechanistic perspective with additions from Booker and Thomas's introductory *The Science Fiction Handbook* (2009) as well as a few other sources.

Anglophone SF has traditionally been divided into American and British varieties. American SF stems from the pulp magazines that were popular in the 1920's and 1930's and featured easily accessible, often very formulaic stories. According to Roger Luckhurst their protagonists were often modeled after a cultural image of the successful, self-made man of science, of whom the best example was Thomas Edison (Luckhurst 2005, 52-3). The pulps were never considered part of any higher literary movement in their time, although some writers who contributed to these magazines later became known figures in their own genre – notable examples being Robert A. Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. More professionally edited and published magazines started to appear in the 1930's with *Astounding Science-Fiction*, edited by John Campbell Jr., as their forerunner (ibid.).

British SF, on the other hand, was more focused on social issues and is generally considered more a part of mainstream literature rather than belonging only to SF in particular. Christopher Priest, himself British, argues that the difference between American and British SF is that mediocre American SF is poor in an uninteresting way, whereas mediocre British SF is poor in an interesting way (1979, 197). Priest writes SF himself, which makes his criticism rather biased, although Priest does admit the influence and merits of American authors as well.

In Britain, writers such as H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, Mary Shelley and George Orwell have all been connected to both mainstream literature as well as to SF. By mainstream literature I am referring to works generally considered a part of the canon of high literature and to works that have received extensive academic attention outside generic studies. Nevertheless, SF was in the margins for a long time in Britain as well as in the U.S. Kingsley Amis provides a revealing example of this in a 1960 essay titled "Starting Points", in which Amis names C.S. Lewis, William Golding, Orwell, and Huxley as "serious authors" who occasionally dabble in SF (1976, 22). Christopher

Priest, on the other hand, argues that American pulp SF that began with Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* owns its entire existence to the stories and novels of Wells; in its first three years *Amazing Stories* published six of Wells's novels as continuing stories along with seventeen of his short stories (1979, 189-192).

After the Second World War division between British and American SF started to erode as influence across the Atlantic started to increase, which ultimately led to what critics have called the second golden age of science fiction in the late 1940's and 1950's (see e.g. Scholes 1977, 51). Christopher Priest attributes most British SF dating from this period to follow in the footsteps of the huge success of the American variety of SF, with the British coming always a little behind (1979, 193). This was a highly productive period for Asimov in the U.S. and Arthur C. Clarke in Britain, who, in their part, helped popularize the space opera sub-genre. Their space operas featured interstellar travel with space-ships that used technology which was credible at the time (Booker and Thomas 2009, 41-43). Robert Scholes offers a definition for what space opera meant in the 1950's: "The term 'space opera' is modeled on 'horse opera', a critical term for Western fiction. Space opera denotes those works which have the typical structures and plots of Westerns, but use the setting and trappings of science fiction" (1977, 171). Originally then, in other words, space opera was cowboys and Indians in space.

The 1960's saw the rise of what later became known as New Wave SF. Society as a whole was undergoing a cultural turmoil and a political awakening that focused heavily on civil rights and social issues, both of which became visible in the SF stories of the time as well. This is not to say that previous SF would have been totally oblivious to social issues, but they did gain new prominence in the genre at this point, partly due to the grown interest for social sciences and the humanities. Robert Scholes notes a "new literary consciousness and a new social awareness" (1977, 88) among the most definitive features of New Wave SF. Writers such as Brian Aldiss, Ursula Le Guin and Samuel R. Delany experimented with literary form, and shifted the sciences in focus from

physics and mathematics to sociology, linguistics, and more, thus effectively inaugurating “soft” SF – writing focusing on “softer” sciences rather than the “hard” ones (Booker and Thomas 2009, 8-9). This separation still underlies most SF today, although hard SF authors have been forced consider their literary strategies and style because of the impact of New Wave SF. Christopher Priest argues that New Wave was essentially a British form of SF that revolted and reacted against the axioms of American SF of the 1940’s and 1950’s (1979, 199). New Wave SF is usually considered to have ended with the rise of the cyberpunk movement in the 1980’s.

Cyberpunk was SF’s reaction to postmodernism. It focused on surface details, brand names, virtual realities, and the blending of man and machine (Booker and Thomas 2009, 112; Sponsler 1992, 631). William Gibson remains the sole author credited for inaugurating the genre, although other authors gained fame within the genre soon after Gibson – most notable of these was Bruce Sterling, editor of the seminal cyberpunk anthology *Mirrorshades* in 1986 (Booker and Thomas 2009, 114). Cyberpunk as a genre was relatively short-lived, and for example Booker and Thomas (2009, 114) argue that it ended in 1992 with the publication of Neal Stephenson’s *Snow Crash*, which they see already as a representative of post-cyberpunk. Greta Aiyu Niu differentiates between cyberpunk, which is seen as a computer-focused genre, and nanopunk which centers on nanotechnology, and came to prominence in the 1990’s (2008, 73) with Neal Stephenson as its forerunner. *Chasm City* follows this trajectory throughout SF’s history with elements from virtually all of the movements described above. Roughly generalizing, it could be said that the noir feel and gritty action in *Chasm City* derives from the influence of American SF and its thematic complexity is more attributable to the British SF tradition.

1.3. *Chasm City*

Chasm City borrows from most of the movements in the history of SF – it is a space opera, it features social issues, it has elements deriving from cyberpunk, and, according to Booker and

Thomas (2009, 48), is like Reynolds' other novels set in the same Revelation Space¹ universe. Critics have also linked Reynolds to what is called the British Science Fiction boom that began in the late 1990's, but Reynolds' work has also been seen to be a part of the revival of space opera (Booker and Thomas 2009, 47). *Chasm City* could also arguably be considered a part of the nanopunk movement, as the technologies most prominent in it are nanomachines.

Chasm City's basic narrative frame is a noir, almost hard-boiled detective fiction – a motif heavily used by cyberpunk author William Gibson – but Reynolds mixes this by introducing a parallel, intradiegetic storyline narrated in flashback. This alternate storyline features a generation ship (a spaceship that makes an interstellar journey which lasts for decades; the ship's crew is born and raised aboard the ship) that was introduced to SF in the early 1940's. As the novel progresses, the flashbacks experienced by the protagonist-first person narrator, Tanner Mirabel, become more intense, and at the very end the protagonist in these flashbacks, Sky Haussmann, appears to actually be the same person as Tanner. Sky had literally stolen Tanner's identity, but in the course of the novel the stolen Tanner identity gradually disintegrates and the real Sky Haussmann finally breaks through. The reader here should note that whenever Sky Haussmann or Tanner Mirabel is discussed in this paper, the names refer to the same character in different stages of his identity. For clarity's sake excessive explanation of this matter will be limited to minimum in the analysis section.

The novel, as I will argue, can be read as a story about regaining identity through experiencing various spaces that facilitate the reproduction of one's original identity. As *Chasm City* is an SF novel, the technology level of the novel's fictitious world inevitably plays a part in both the reformation (and the original misconstruction) of Tanner's identity and the formation of the various spaces of the novel. Contrasting to the postmodern notion of identity as something fluid and

¹ The name derives from Reynolds' first novel *Revelation Space* (2000), that begins a series of novels in the same universe that continues with *Chasm City* (2001), *Redemption Ark* (2002), *Absolution Gap* (2003), and *The Prefect* (2007)

non-stable Reynolds seems to suggest in *Chasm City* that a permanent identity exists, and even that it inevitably returns even after a complete, technological change of one's identity. This thesis will investigate the ways in which the space(s) and technologies prominently depicted in *Chasm City* affect and assist the reformation of Sky Haussmann's identity. Furthermore the analysis will draw parallels between Chasm City and Tanner's identity; if bodies and identities are becoming like cities as Celeste Olalquiaga (1992) argues, so will the identity of the city become more like a body, and a mutual effect can be found at work between them within *Chasm City*.

A defining feature of Chasm City in the novel is that its buildings were once maintained by miniscule, nano-sized robots that "lived" in the walls of the buildings of the city. Most citizens had these machines within their bodies as well, where they acted as anti-viral agents, rebuilders of cells and general improvements to the human biology. However, thirty years before the events taking place in Chasm City in the novel, a technological virus struck the City and the nanomachines with catastrophic results. The nanomachines reformed every building in the city in a chaotic manner by building them rapidly into almost every direction; the people experienced similar horrors as the machines within them started to reorganize their bodies. The virus became known as the Melding Plague, and it led to the city's social and economic downfall. The plague will be discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.1, but it is such an essential background force in the novel that it warrants a mention before an actual analysis.

A part of this thesis will be dedicated to discussion on economic and class issues depicted in the novel, as they are arguably an integral part of both the production and re-production of identities. SF has a long history of participation in discussing social issues which is, arguably, also the case with *Chasm City*. A Marxist SF writer and critic China Miéville sees the cognition in Suvin's cognitive estrangement effect as a highly ideologically charged term which leads to a very narrow definition of the kind of science rationally allowed for in science fiction, namely that which can be rationalistically grounded in the goals of capital and capitalism. Although Miéville's dispute

is primarily against Suvin's belittling of the fantasy genre, for the purposes of this thesis analyzing the relationship between the kind of technology and scientific *nova* portrayed in *Chasm City* will benefit from bearing in mind Miéville's remark of the ideological backgrounds of that technology.

Previous academic writing on Alastair Reynolds' work is scarce and mostly focused on novels other than *Chasm City*. Reynolds' trilogy of books formed by *Revelation Space*, *Redemption Ark* and *Absolution Gap* has received the most attention, but a full study – or even an article-length paper – on the books remains to be written. Reynolds is mentioned mostly in companions or guidebooks on SF in general as a part of the revival of the space opera genre or as one of the writers of the British Boom, a period starting from the mid-1990's that produced numerous highly acclaimed novels by British SF authors (see e.g. Booker and Thomas 2009).

2. Space

In recent years critics have noted an increased concern towards spatiality in literary and cultural studies. This concern has been named the “spatial turn” and is explored in detail by Robert T. Tally in the first chapter of his 2013 book *Spatiality*. In short, whereas the period before the Second World War was inclined towards time and history, the post-war period has been increasingly more spatial. Tally notes that this is visible in the very vocabulary of critical studies: geographical and spatial expressions and metaphors are in abundance, and furthermore, conferences and studies devoted to spatial and geographical issues and questions are held and organized on a wider scale than before (2013, 12). This development stems partly from the increase of mobility on a global scale and globalization; people are constantly more and more perceiving their lives spatially, map-like, rather than as a temporal line. Edward Soja, an American geographer, however, argues that the spatial turn is essentially threefold: in order to grasp the idea in its entirety it is vital to bear in mind the social and the historical dimension as well as the spatial (2000, 8).

The modern, and especially postmodern, rootlessness contributes to this kind of a world-view, as few are intimately connected to a single, particular place in which they would lead their whole lives. Virtual space further accelerates the move toward a spatially oriented society as anything online is practically accessible from anywhere in the world at all times within the limitations of the technology at hand. With the inauguration of a “24/7” society and modern technological advances, time – and concordantly daylight – no longer pose strict restrictions for activities, and space, rather than time, can be raised as the focus of studies.

SF studies in particular seem to call out for space. Fredric Jameson remarked in an 1987 article that “the use and representation, in virtually all types of SF, of *space*...remains to be worked out” (Jameson 2005, 306; italics original), and fifteen years later Rob Kitchin and James Kneale

still express, in their introduction to *Lost in Space: Geographies of Science Fiction*, that “there is a great deal of work to be done in this area” (2002, 16).

Darko Suvin, in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, saw space as a “valid locus” for SF in the “precapitalist lifestyle”, before “time itself became spatialized” (1979, 73). Early works of SF could be situated in unknown islands, but with modern cartography, satellite imaging, and general increase in geographic knowledge of the Earth, these islands became known, which consequently forced SF to move into “the spatialized future which now becomes the vast ocean on whose other shore the alternative island is to be situated” (ibid.). However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, space and time are inseparable, although space has recently gained the spotlight over time. Suvin approaches this by stating that “all significant SF” is not spatial, nor temporal, but spatiotemporal in “ways, all of which approximate a reinvention and putting to new uses of the precapitalist and preindividualistic analogic times and spaces of the human imagination” (1979, 74). As of today spatial studies continue to grow in SF studies as well, but major, defining works in the field are yet to be published.

The following chapters will present theoretical issues on space and place concentrating on active experience of space and place as well as the relation of memories and identity to places and spaces. Chapter 2.1 focuses on identity and memory in relation to spaces, chapter 2.2 discusses spaces in cities, chapter 2.3 introduces Fredric Jameson’s aesthetic of cognitive mapping, which combines class consciousness and socio-economic concerns with spatial issues, and chapter 2.4 explores issues relating to space and identity.

2.1. Space and time

Spaces and places are fundamental to our understanding and construction of our identities, and any study of space, as Bertrand Westphal argues, cannot avoid also temporal concerns, that is, any study of space is by its nature spatiotemporal to some extent (2011, xv). Henri Lefebvre, a well-known

spatial critic, argues also that “every social space has a history, one invariably grounded in nature” (1991, 110) – that is, spaces are solidly connected to time. David Harvey also notes that during the last few decades (meaning the 1970’s and 1980’s, but arguably even more so now in 2013) there has been an intense experience of space-time compression both culturally and socially (1989, 284). For Harvey, then, space and time have a cultural, as well as a social, level in them, which leads to the conclusion that they should not be studied separately.

Identity, on the other hand, is built through memories, which in turn, are memorized through experiences of various spaces and places rather than as a time-flow. Eric Prieto (2011, 16), in quoting neurophenomenologist Fransisco Varela, claims that for a definition of self, an active exploration of space is necessary. For Varela, activity is of the essence when exploring and consequently experiencing spaces. Activity seems to be a key element for many theorists of space. In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes: “Space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work” (1994, 12). For Bachelard, imagination, and images, are a crucial part in the formation of our memories; he argues that imagination engraves pictures into our memories (1994, 31-2).

A similar argument can be found from Yi-Fu Tuan, who stresses the influence of the past in the formation of our identities. Tuan writes that “[t]o strengthen our sense of self the past needs to be rescued and made accessible” (1979, 187). For Tuan, the past is not a continuous temporal line but rather a collection of various points – or pauses – in time (1979, 179; 198). Bachelard is of a similar opinion regarding memories and space, as he argues that “[a]t times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being’s stability...in its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for” (1994, 8).

It is worthwhile to note that contrasted to time, places and spaces are static points. Tuan argues that “sense of time affects sense of place” (1979, 186), although the opposite could also be

argued for, namely that sense of place affects the sense of time in that particular place. Prolonged periods in a place, however, may not leave lasting memories even of the place itself; intensive experiences are much more crucial to their formation, as Tuan argues (1979, 184-5).

Active experience of space is, then, highly important for our sense of self. Eric Prieto notes that self-awareness and spatial awareness are closely related (2011, 24); awareness by its definition forms through active perception. Experience of spaces and places, then, can be achieved through physical contact with the space itself, but the experience is strengthened by a simultaneous mapping of the space while journeying through it. Mapping a space separates portions of that space into various places, which are then named and consequently start to gather significance and meaning for the mapper of that space. Maps and mapping of fictive spaces can be studied with this kind of an approach, as every map corresponding to real-world places is itself necessarily a fictitious representation of the spaces and places it depicts, as Robert T. Tally Jr. (2013, 147) notes.

Michel de Certeau famously differentiates actual maps from what he calls an *itinerary*, that is, movement through space that creates a mental roadmap based upon fixed landmarks, places, and locations rather than upon a panoptic, bird's-eye view of the whole space (Tally 2013, 130). Arguably a personal, mental map which combines the panoptic map with an itinerary that is formed through a physical experience of space would be the most useful of all.

A mental map corresponds in Edward Soja's theory to what he calls *secondspace*, that is, "thoughts about space", which is in contrast with *firstspace*, that is, "things in space" (2000, 11). Soja fuses these two spaces together in his argument for a study of spaces that combines both the social and physical dimensions of space, and these along with the historical dimension create what Soja names *Thirdspace*, which is also the title of his 1996 book. The crux of Soja's argument lies in developing Henri Lefebvre's idea of produced space, that is, that spaces are produced in a way similar to any other product in a capitalist system and realized in and by the forces and mode of production (Lefebvre 1991, 77). Rather than merely existing objectively in the world, spaces –

especially social spaces – are, in fact, largely produced; their meaning being the “product of social translation, transformation, and *experience*” (Soja 1989, 79-80; italics added). Soja, in developing Lefebvre’s thinking, sees space and sociality as necessarily interconnected and that the social dimension is basically impossible to be study separately from space: “all social relations...remain abstract and ungrounded until they are specifically spatialized” (Soja 2000, 9). Spatialization, then, becomes necessary in order to have the social relations mean something concrete.

Whereas earlier space tended to be viewed as something objective and physical, with “an aura of objectivity, inevitability, and reification” (ibid.), Soja’s postmodern geography calls for a more dynamic perspective of space; something which Tuan had already begun in *Space and Place* and to which Fredric Jameson developed the idea of cognitive mapping as a tool. Cognitive mapping will be discussed further later on; the next chapter will focus on cities, the most produced of all human spaces.

2.2. Space in cities

For Yi-Fu Tuan, architectural spaces differ from natural environments in that they form a “microcosm” that “possess[es] a lucidity that natural features lack” (1977, 100), and as he notes elsewhere, “[a]n early and essential function of the city was to be a vivid symbol of cosmic order” (1980, 145). Cities, then, exemplify human endeavors towards an organized and harmonious life both architecturally and socially (ibid.). Man-made spaces are understood and experienced more easily than naturally formed spaces, as they clarify social relations, and through this they also clarify personal identities (Tuan 1977, 102). For the powers that be, social order should be hierarchical to best suit the order of the cosmic city (Tuan 1980, 145).

This argument should be approached with caution, however. Michel Foucault, in an interview titled “Space, Knowledge, and Power”, argues that architectural spaces reproduce social relations and power relations only in very simple cases; Foucault’s example of this is the military camp

(2002, 363). We should, it seems, be wary of making judgments about relations based solely on the geographical layout of the space or place in question.

Tuan remarks that in a hierarchical space “social distance may be the inverse of geographical distance” (1977, 50), that is, the CEO may work only one room away from the common worker, geographically close, but the social distance between the two may be enormous. The physical placement of social spaces has been altered by modern technology – whereas previously the most prestigious space was one floor above street level, elevation has once again become prestigious because living higher is no longer as practically demanding as it used to be (Tuan 1977, 38). Social distance and geographical distance could be said to correlate at least in larger cities where skyscraper penthouses are considered the most prestigious homes available. The prestige awarded by higher ground, however, is not always found in natural environments – the outskirts of a city may well rise geographically higher and yet house people of much lower income and social status than the downtown houses. An example of this would be Bunker Hill in Los Angeles in the 1920’s and 1930’s as discussed by Soja in *Thirdspace*: although on a hill – and thus literally higher – the area was mainly inhabited by the poor and the unemployed. Of course, there are high-rise areas that award prestige to houses on them (in Los Angeles, for instance, to return to this example, Beverly Hills); but then again it is the built environment, and not natural, that *highlights* the prestige of elevation with penthouse apartments.

In an article on SF horror cinema, Stuart C. Aitken argues that “[s]cience fiction cities are constructed out of a very clear three-dimensional space” (2002, 115), and that this space is controlled and travelable only by those in power – more often than not white, upper-class men (ibid.). The vertical dimension is highlighted in many works of SF that have to do with cities in the form of skylifts, hover cars, and extraordinarily high skyscrapers. Furthermore, especially in SF the vertical dimension serves to emphasize social difference – as in *Chasm City* – which takes on a very spatial form: lower classes are restricted to ground-level, less light, and limited mobility, whereas

the higher class and the authorities are able to move through the whole three-dimensional space of the city, although the higher class is reluctant to risk exposure to the Melding Plague and does not therefore venture often into the lower regions of the city. Aitken's examples of this are hover cars used only by officials in Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982), the restriction of workers to elevators and not the secret stairs in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1926), and the alien controllers of the city in Alex Proyas's film *Dark City* (1998).

Tuan argues furthermore that “[t]he built environment, like language, has the power to define and refine sensibility”, and that it may even “sharpen and enlarge consciousness” (ibid., 107). Pursuing this line of thought, and considering the previous argument about experiencing space, it could be claimed that cityscapes, buildings, and built environments necessarily create stronger impressions on one, and consequently the memories they create are more powerful than those formed in natural environments. If the city is a place of refined, or heightened, sensibility, the experience it gives affects the senses more than any other space could. Tuan also notes that bodies respond to architectural features (ibid., 116), which supports the idea that built environments are highly polysensorial.

As previously mentioned, Michel de Certeau's idea of itineraries have to do mostly with cities, and indeed, itineraries adhere to Robert T. Tally's call for polysensoriality in spatial studies (2013, 142), as actually experiencing the space necessarily activates senses other than vision, which are important to people experiencing the space (ibid.). Tally's discussion of itineraries draws also from Walter Benjamin's classic idea of the *flâneur*, the modern figure walking through the city, the “man of the crowd”, who is a product of urbanization and the alienation that follows urban life. *Flâneur* first appeared in Charles Baudelaire's essay “The Painter of Modern Life” (1863): “For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude...[t]o be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home” (Baudelaire 1964, 9). The *flâneur* is a figure who writes the city by walking through it and observing the crowd; in

other words the *flâneur* creates an itinerary of his own rather than a map of the city. However, as noted above, creating an itinerary could also be seen as a form of mapping even though the map created through walks throughout the city remained only mental or requiring an active extracting from the text by the reader. Edward Soja argues for a simultaneous birds-eye and a pedestrian's view of the city, or, in his words, the macro- and micro-geographical perspectives must be taken into account simultaneously as interactive, and not separate, isolated realms (2000, 10).

Unfortunately, creating a comprehensive mental map of a modern metropolis is a fundamentally impossible task for anyone; not only because of the vast size and detail present in the city, but also because the city is constantly changing and its borders are difficult to pin down. The boundaries of cities are slowly vanishing in the suburban sprawl with haziness and indistinctness gaining ground inside the city itself. Celeste Olalquiaga pursues this claim and argues that cities are becoming like bodies – the space defined by bodies is becoming confused with represented space which leads to an erosion of boundaries in both the city and the body (1992, 93).

As mentioned earlier, Yi-Fu Tuan, too, sees a connection between bodies and architecture (1977, 116). The body is perceivable as the “geography most known to us” (1979, 89) which makes a comparison between it and the city a fruitful approach, as will become evident later in the analysis of *Chasm City*. An analogy between the human body and the Earth is furthermore a way of perceiving humankind's place in the cosmos and in the cosmic order, Tuan argues (1989, 89). Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows share the line of thought regarding comparison between bodies and architecture. For them, this connection results in something they call cyberbodies, that is, bodies depicted in the late 20th century fiction, especially in relation to virtual realities. Cyberbodies bring together cyberspace and body augmentation by technology in an urban setting, thus acting as points of intersection (Featherstone and Burrows 1995, 10). Post-cyberpunk bodies, then, have a strong connection to urban settings and cities in general, which is visible, in my reading, in *Chasm City* as well.

Conception of a metropolis in the SF of the 1980's and early 1990's was affected by "the productions of postmodernism" from which began "the redefinition of the city", argues Scott Bukatman (1993, 126). According to Bukatman, a "remarkably consistent" image of a city emerged from the texts; and in these texts the postmodern metropolis was first and foremost characterized by its boundlessness (ibid). "The city is both micro- and macrocosm: even when it turns in upon itself, as it often does...it both celebrates and denies its own interiority" (ibid.). Bukatman's example of this is the shopping mall: a space simultaneously indoors and outdoors. There is no weather but there are plants, there are no cars but there are "streets" (ibid.). In other words, the extreme artificiality of a modern city is best exemplified in the shopping mall that brings together seemingly irreconcilable aspects of space (indoor/outdoor; closed/open) inside one, huge domain. Furthermore the space of the mall is a space of capital and monetary exchange, which only underlines its metaphoric possibilities of representing a postmodern city.

Soja, too, argues that divisions and polarities such as the bourgeoisie/proletariat, black/white (racially), and the wealthy/middle class/the poor have not disappeared in the postmodern city, but that they have become more fractured and multi-formed than previously. The postmodern city, or postmetropolis, brings about "an intensification of socio-economic inequalities" rather than erasing them (Soja 2000, 265). Socio-economic issues are a fundamental part of any city; and we will now turn to Fredric Jameson for a combination of physical and socio-economic mapping.

2.3. Cognitive mapping

Fredric Jameson (2000, 282) argues that Kevin Lynch's book *The Image of the City*, published in 1960, inaugurated a subdivision of geographical studies known as cognitive mapping, although, as Robert T. Tally points out (2013, 130), Lynch's book is more about itineraries than maps.

Originally referring to the ability to situate oneself within one's immediate surroundings in the city and to the city on a larger scale, Jameson extrapolates cognitive mapping to encompass also social

and political space. Cognitive mapping includes the city as a whole – and the world at large – as an absent presence; a something constantly in the background which cannot nevertheless be seen or experienced first-hand at a given moment. This absence must be accounted for, however, when locating oneself within the particular district of the city and concordantly locating, or visualizing, the district as a part of the city as a whole. An important idea in Lynch's book should be mentioned here: that of *imageability*, meaning "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer" (1960, 9). An easily mappable city is, concordantly, filled with buildings and sites with a high imageability with which individuals can orient and guide themselves through the city. A city without such landmarks is difficult to map and make sense of, which leads to disorientation and confusion by visitors and residents alike.

Jameson sees space as grounded in modes of production and economic relations. He stresses how each historical stage of capitalism has created its own, unique kind of space (Jameson 1991, 410); that is, analysis of a given space, in a Jamesonian perspective, must also take into account the mode of production, or the stage of capitalism, surrounding that space be the space a real, physical one or a creation of literary imagination. A similar tone is found in Henri Lefebvre's work by Stuart C. Aitken in his study of science fiction cities: "For Lefebvre (1991: 227), buildings (vertical space) are a 'homogeneous matrix of capitalist space' and, as such, they narrate stories of the intersection of particular forms of power with a specific form of political economy. Buildings contain activities in socially controlled spaces and sites equipped for particular kinds of production and reproduction" (Aitken 2002, 115). Following this, it could be argued that the city creates its own mode(s) of production which in turn affect how the city functions and affects its residents.

According to Jameson "the incapacity to map socially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience" (2000, 283), elsewhere he states that it is the new postmodern hyperspace that surpasses the human body's ability to map cognitively its position in a mappable, external world (Jameson 1991, 44). If one is unable to situate oneself

accordingly in relation to one's social class, one will be at a loss in terms of social experience, which seems to be almost inevitable. Jameson goes on to elaborate the need for cognitive mapping in a world where capital, and capitalism, remains the only totality up to the point where he claims that "anyone who believes that the profit motive and the logic of capital accumulation are not the fundamental laws of this world...is living in an alternate universe" (2000, 284). The absent presence, which in Lynch's writing is the city in its entirety, transforms into ideology in Jameson who sees capitalism as the dominant ideology in the postmodern age. For locating oneself in the world, one should therefore situate oneself not only in relation to space and social class, but also in relation to capitalism as an all-encompassing systematic model of how the world functions.

Robert T. Tally notes that Jameson has later "concede[d]" that "'cognitive mapping' was really nothing but a code word for 'class consciousness', but of a new kind that could also account for that 'new spatiality implicit in the postmodern'" (Tally 2013, 74). For Edward Soja, cognitive mapping offers "a more acute way of seeing how space hides consequences from us" (1989, 63). Awareness and active engagement are quintessential for cognitive mapping to take place, although as my analysis of *Chasm City* will show, in order to begin and uphold the cognitive mapping process the individual, or a character, in this case, need not be consciously aware that they are doing *cognitive mapping* – an awareness of a mapping process appears often to be enough for the cognitive mapping to happen.

To re-create a cognitive mapping in a work of art the critic should, I would argue, assess the spatial presentations of the work and situate it against the socio-political capitalist totality the text presents. An attempt to impose a process of cognitive mapping to a work that lacks any depiction, notification, or a description of an economic model would, then, be a futile and pointless effort; as Jameson himself has argued, cognitive mapping requires a consciousness of class.

Timo Siivonen argues that a cognitive mapping is possible if the mapping subject in question is a cyborg subject that defines itself via technology and is also irremovably connected to

technology. Furthermore Siivonen claims that it is technological sublime that produces the mapping in the body of the cybernetic organism (1992, 191; 194). Siivonen uses examples from SF that operate in virtual space, but the analysis of *Chasm City*'s cognitive mapping processes would benefit from bearing in mind the need to have a cybernetic organism as the subject in order for the cognitive mapping to happen. The cyborg subject, introduced by Donna Haraway, is necessary, since a traditional (modern) subject seeks unity and a singularity of self instead of a plurality of selves, which is what the cyborg does according to Haraway (2001, 2293). Haraway notes that "bodies are maps of power and identity" (2001, 2298), and through a cyborg body that embraces differences – most importantly here would be the difference between man and machine – rather than attempting to reconcile them in a way that the non-cyborg body does, a cognitive mapping would be possible in the way that Siivonen presents it. The mapping requires subjects to organize themselves spatially, and this is possible through an erosion of dualities: "It is the simultaneity of breakdowns [between man/animal, man/machine, self/other] that cracks the matrices of domination and opens geometric possibilities" (Haraway 2001, 2293). Through transgressions power can be rearranged, and cognitive mapping would be a way for this sort of a rearranging. The cyborg, then, becomes a spatial possibility. Subjects and identities will be discussed further in the next section that focuses on space and identity.

2.4. Space and identity

Chasm City explores themes of identity and memory which, in my reading of the novel, have a strong connection with the various spaces represented in the book. This section explores the relationship between space and identity with sidesteps to how these two notions connect and intersect with technology. Firstly, though, an elaboration on what identity refers to in this paper is in order, and for this Manuel Castells offers us a starting point.

Castells (2004, 6), writes that “[i]dentity is people’s source of meaning and experience”, and that identity is “constructed through a process of individuation” (2004, 7). There have been no known groups of people that would not have separated individual beings among themselves, which lends support to Castells’ argument, and indeed identity and individuality are in most cases closely related. In *Chasm City*, however, the protagonists’ identity comprises of a mix of different individualities achieved through technological manipulation of his memories, which makes attributing identity to a single individuality rather troublesome in the case of *Chasm City*. On the other hand, Castells, when discussing what he calls network society, that is, the late 20th century and early 21st century society, argues that “*in the network society...meaning is organized around a primary identity...which is self-sustaining across time and space*” (2004, 7). There is an essence, then, that remains throughout time and space, which happens in *Chasm City* as well, although Castells does not discuss where this essence is contained or how actually it manages its self-sustenance through time and space. Neither does *Chasm City*, so we are rather forced to conclude that individual identity is a vessel for organizing individual meanings and experiences around a single human entity, and that despite adding experiences from other individuals, there is an essential form of identity underneath other layers which somehow sustains itself. My argument is that in *Chasm City* this sustenance can be seen to connect strongly with the spaces of the novel and is partly upheld by the technologies depicted, and that it is partly the product of a cognitive mapping process.

Michelle Kendrick has pointed out that after the shift from modernism to postmodernism there is a link between technological advances and the sense of identity. According to her, communicational technologies are constantly reinscribing the narratives of identity; a fact which she sees is fundamental to a potent critique of the redefinition of space, time, and subjectivity (2002, 57). The necessity for this sort of critique, Kendrick argues, arises from a crisis in the experience of

time and space, on which Kendrick quotes Fredric Jameson – a crisis that, according to Jameson, our technological, late capitalist age has incited (Kendrick 2002, 57).

For Celeste Olalquiaga technological images are “the mirrors in which to look for an identity” (1992, 4); her example is the surveillance camera, through whose eye we can perceive ourselves and ponder upon the question who that person in that particular image is (ibid.). Furthermore the electronic, image-bound identities are many and disposable (ibid.); like a set of ID cards, or a quickly created, easily forgotten digital or virtual identity today.

SF has explored the relationship between spaces, identities, and memories in several works. Alex Proyas’ 1998 movie *Dark City*, briefly mentioned in section 2.2, is a particularly interesting piece of work in relation to this theme; in it, the city’s residents are subjected to narcotics while they sleep, and their identities and memories are exchanged via a specifically created liquid. The cityscape is also changed during the night: buildings change shape and place according to the memories implanted on the oblivious citizens. In the end it is revealed that there never was any city, and that the entire setting was a spaceship, and that the purpose of the experiment was to find out whether or not there is some sort of a transcendental, individual identity within human beings or are we all just the sum of our memories. There is a perpetual night in the city of *Dark City* and the whole tone of the movie is understandably oppressive, but the idea of a totally mutable and transformable city is not too far from the contorted, misshapen buildings of *Chasm City*.

For David Harvey, the constant bombardment of spatial images disturbs our sense of place, and effectively then forces us to create a spatial identity for ourselves from a collage of images. The identity thus formed is, however, “somewhat limited and limiting” (1989, 303-4); these images may, arguably, be ideas of that place born without any external reference or comparison, or ideas of what kind of people tend to emerge from that place. Furthermore, it could be claimed that these images can also form from identity cards (as with Celeste Olalquiaga quoted above), virtual projections of oneself (for example in the internet), or from other similar electronic images, which

then produce what could be dubbed an electronic identity which is not necessarily bound to any specific place, like a contrastive analogic identity, but is instead free-floating, unstable, and subject to changes as time passes.

Following this kind of an approach for understanding and analyzing identities, a postmodern idea of identity merits its place in this section. For this we will now turn to Stuart Hall and his theory of identity. Hall sees the idea of selfhood forming through an ambivalent relationship with the real me: someone else, or other, who is always both absent and present (1999, 11). This formulation is strongly reminiscent of poststructuralist theories about language as an absent presence, and is very applicable to my reading of *Chasm City*, because the very notion of absence/presence is a spatial metaphor in itself. Hall's linking of identity with language continues with him arguing that identity is ultimately endless, like discourse, and is always open to reformations and redefinitions (1999, 14). Identity is never ready or complete, or even stable, but continues to mutate throughout one's life. It is fundamentally unstable because it is produced culturally and politically (Hall 1999, 11-12), and both cultural and political atmospheres are subject to and tend to change constantly.

Hall classifies three different perspectives in what he calls the subject, but what can be taken to mean perspectives on personal identities as well; these are the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject. The enlightenment subject-identity is perceived as a stable entity, something which one is born with, and dies with. The sociological subject is constructed dialectically between society and the self, it changes in the course of one's life and is affected by the surrounding cultural worlds as well as by other people. The postmodern subject consists of multiple identities inside a single subject; these identities may even be contradictory with one another (Hall 1999, 21-3). For the purposes of this thesis Hall's postmodern subject provides the best theoretical background for analysis, as the protagonist under analysis is a subject consisting of multiple identities.

Multiplicity and lack of unity are a major theme in Hall's theory of identity. Hall argues that identity forms unconsciously in the course of time, and that its apparent unity is only illusory to the subject. Identity-formation, in fact, according to Hall, stems from a lack of unity which both is in us and which outside agents impose on us (1999, 39). All identities, to Hall, consist of several discourses, practices, and positions (1999, 250), and should be perceived as points into which we attach ourselves in a particular moment when we take a specific subject position within a discourse that we are engaged in at that moment (1999, 253). Looking at identities this way they seem to be located both in time and space, although Hall does add that the time and space in question are both symbolic, not actual times nor spaces (1999, 60). As discussed in the previous sections, however, non-symbolic time and space can be argued to have connections to identity despite Hall's argument that they would be only located in symbolic time and symbolic space. Spaces hold memories, and memories build identities and sustain them through time, which, I would argue, makes the claim that identities are located only in symbolic time and space incorrect. From this discussion on identity and spatial issues we will now turn to examine the various roles that technology has both in SF at large and in *Chasm City*; as Markku Soikkeli argues, in SF technological gadgets inevitably affect the technique of narration as well (Soikkeli 1997, 275).

3. Technology

This chapter will take a look at the technological aspect of SF along with some examples from *Chasm City* to showcase how the applications of technology could affect literary analysis of a SF novel. The chapter closes with a discussion on Dream Fuel, which in *Chasm City* is a source for maintaining the technological standard of living in Chasm City.

A fictional world where interstellar travel is possible, and voyages that last for decades can be undergone in cryogenic sleep, so that the passengers do not age at all during the trip, arguably undermines temporal constraints posed by such long journeys on non-SF novels. In essence, time ceases to exist, or becomes more a measure of space and distance than time – light-years are units of distance, not time. Yi-Fu Tuan’s previously mentioned claim (see section 2.1.) that sense of time affects the sense of place could not manifest itself more clearly.

Claire Sponsler (1992, 628) argues that technology has become so pervasive “that it has altered human perception of the natural world, making that world describable and indeed even visible only within a frame provided by technology.” Sponsler’s argument and its implications are compelling when examining *Chasm City*. Metaphors used in the novel derive from the realm of technology when referring to organic beings, such as thinking described as “little gears working in his head” (CC 153); however, in contrast to this, spaceships – arguably the most hyper-technological things appearing in the book – are compared to animals, and are otherwise described in organic terms almost as if they were living entities, such as the transport vehicle between Chasm City and the orbital drop-off point which Tanner sees as “worryingly alive” (CC 199). A noticeable difference to this pattern is Chasm City, which appears to Tanner “like the innards of a fantastically complex machine” (CC 194) when he observes it from above.

This metaphoric tendency to perceive mechanical creations as alive and autonomous could be linked to a larger historical belief in progress through technical or mechanical inventions: Leo Marx

argues that there is a “common tendency” in “contemporary discourse...to invest ‘technology’ with a host of metaphysical properties and potencies, thereby making it seem to be a determinate entity, a disembodied autonomous causal agent of social change” (1994, 249). Marx is doing a semiotic analysis on the origins of the word ‘technology’, but his remark quoted above seems accurate and appropriate when applied to *Chasm City*; after all, technology is almost autonomous in the novel in the form of the nanomechanical viral robots that reform Chasm City and its residents, thus inaugurating an enormous social change. In other words, technology transcends from being a denominator of scientific progress to an active social agent, which understandably makes embodiments of it, such as the transport vehicle, appear “worrying” in their liveliness. Furthermore, towards the end of the Sky Haussmann narrative, a voyage to a spaceship that is supposed to be travelling behind the flotilla reveals that the ship has been thoroughly infested by a technological entity that has transformed the entire ship into a hybrid being of metal and flesh. This ship, known as the *Caleuche*, after a ghost ship legend off the coast of Peru, will be discussed further in section 4.2.3.

The metaphors describing technology in *Chasm City* seem to blend the boundaries of organic and inorganic which, in part, could be seen as adjustment in the level of language for a world engulfed in technology. Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows claim that the division between “subjects, their bodies, and ‘the outside world’ are being radically reconfigured” (1995, 3) in the era of high technology. Timo Siivonen pursues a similar argument regarding the body, as he writes that in postmodernism the body is objectified and it succumbs to modification as technology is gradually becoming an irremovable part of corporality (Siivonen 1992, 186). Furthermore, Featherstone and Burrows argue that “[c]ategories of the biological, the technological, the natural, the artificial, and the human are now beginning to blur” (1995, 3). Featherstone and Burrows’ article, although dated, seems almost prophetic, as they write eighteen years ago that

“[t]echnology is beginning to mediate our social relationships, our self-identities...to an extent we are only just beginning to grasp” (1995, 13).

Claire Sponsler (1992, 631) sees the cyberpunk genre’s “infatuation with boundary crossing...between organic and inorganic, natural and artificial, human and machine” as resulting ultimately in a “decentering of the human subject” which, according to her, “many chroniclers of our age have seen as a hallmark of our postmodern condition” (ibid.). Arguably, the decentering in *Chasm City* leads to nihilism among the upper-class citizens of Chasm City’s Canopy level who have gained immunity to age via longevity treatments, and can now only find pleasure in either risking their own lives or by capturing and hunting people from the lower level of the city, the Mulch. Technology, and especially the problems caused and heightened by the arrival of the melding plague, are ever-present in Chasm City.

These treatments are not immune to the melding plague virus, however, and the denizens in Chasm City have to resort to taking a drug known as dream fuel to counter the effects of the plague. In a striking scene Tanner witnesses a man struck by the plague crawling out of a modern palanquin:

There was something terribly wrong with him. Down one half of his body he was deceptively normal...[b]ut the other half of him was submerged in a glistening growth that locked him rigid, countless branching filaments of silver-grey piercing his flesh, radiating outwards for tens of centimeters until they became only an indistinct grey haze (CC 433).

A crowd stares at the man in horror, calling out to burn him, but the tormented man is quickly reduced to a spectacle, “as if...[he was] a bizarre piece of performance art”, and elicits comments such as: “He’s an extreme case. I’ve never seen that degree of asymmetry” (CC 434). The plague victim exemplifies the breaching of man/machine boundary in a horrific way, as it lays bare the degree to which people in the Canopy have fused their flesh with technology, and the nightmarish consequences of running out of Dream Fuel.

Dream Fuel is a substance extracted from an alien machine-organism which is hinted to be the same creature that overtook the *Caleuche*, one of the generation ships in the Sky Hausmann narrative in *Chasm City*. The metaphoric and symbolic significance of Dream Fuel in the novel merit some further delving into. Firstly, as the substance functions as a vaccine against the melding plague, it can be seen also as a tool of hindrance against over-doing the merging of humans and machines. Dream Fuel halts the merging and the breaching of boundaries to a sustainable degree and, more importantly, allows the users of the technology stay in command of it. Secondly, Dream Fuel upholds the level of augmentation present within the dwellers of the Canopy, allowing them to act as if the Melding plague never happened, and even to remain, if not completely so, but partly, in the pre-plague state of affairs, in a utopian version of Chasm City. As will be argued later, the pre-plague city is presented as a form of post-scarcity Utopia – that is, a no-place, a place of dreams, which can still exist, provided that Dream *Fuel* is available. Post-scarcity here refers to an idea of a world whose inhabitants have no need to compete for resources such as food, water, or clean air, as everything is available in abundance, and furthermore, labor is almost abolished in the post-scarcity world.

Dream Fuel is procured and distributed by a complex network of criminals, and it is available only illegally, which also means very high prices for it. In this sense, the substance is very much like any drug found in the real world: cocaine, heroin, or any other substance with limited availability. On the other hand, Dream Fuel is used and purchased only by the wealthier citizens and used by them to maintain their status and acquired technological level compared to the denizens of the Mulch, in which “[t]here are parts...that haven’t even got steam power” (CC 507). From this perspective, the cure, rather than the virus *per se*, is the cause of social injustice. This could be, arguably so, perceived as a commentary on health politics, but the argumentation for this would require space outside the limits of this paper. A connection between financial resources, social

status, and maintenance of a certain level of high technology is nevertheless firmly established in *Chasm City* with the social moderator being, in part, Dream Fuel.

The name of the vaccine might also be read as a pessimistic comment on the impossibility of achieving or sustaining a utopian (which is by its semantic definition unachievable) future; even dreams cannot perpetuate without outside substances, without an illegal “fuel”. Dream Fuel can also be seen as a sort of narrative fuel that propels Tanner’s familiarization with the city, as most encounters that move the Tanner narrative to new spaces have to do with Dream Fuel: Tanner encounters it on the shuttle to Yellowstone’s surface and to Chasm City, even commenting that it “might open some doors for [him]” (CC 168); Tanner first gets into the Canopy by presenting Canopists with Dream Fuel (CC 225), and Tanner follows the source of Dream Fuel to the bottom of the Chasm where he encounters the alien from which Dream Fuel is extracted, and by using it Tanner has a final revelation about his true identity. This alien will be discussed further below in section 4.2.3, as it is not the only one of its kind to appear in the novel. The following chapter will now delve deeper into an analysis of the spaces of action in *Chasm City*, with a focus on Chasm City itself and the spaceship flotilla where the Sky Haussmann flashback narrative takes place.

4. The space(s) and place(s) of *Chasm City*

The spaces and places of *Chasm City* are divisible into two separate categories that will be studied separately in the following chapter. The events unfolding in the novel take place basically in *space*² or in Chasm City, which leads to an easy categorization of the analysis into, respectively, Chasm City and *space*. The analysis of *space*, it should be noted, will focus mostly on spaceships in *space*, as very little of *Chasm City* happens in actual *space*. The cosmic background, I will argue, however, acts as a contrasting element to the confined spaces and places of the spaceships. Chasm City as a place features more social and economic elements than the spaceships, which are largely transitory spaces or borderline post-scarcity utopias, which is why economic and class concerns will be less prominent in section 4.2. Spaceships are not completely bare of any social concerns, though, as there is a crew aboard each of them, but their role in this narrative, I would argue, is not to provide a social laboratory to study social issues, but to act as a background for Sky's and Tanner's identity and to provide a vessel for narration.

4.1. Chasm City

The eponymous city of the novel, Chasm City, is a vast megalopolis built around a huge crater on a planet called Yellowstone. Once a prosperous city bordering on the line of a post-scarcity utopia, the city has now fallen victim to a technological virus known as the Melding Plague. Every building within the city was created and maintained by nano-sized robots – nanomachines – and most citizens in Chasm City have or have had nanomechanical alterations inside their bodies. The Melding plague caused the nanomachines to malfunction, which lead to both buildings reforming

² Italicized *space* refers to space as understood in astronomy; that is, the black cosmic void between stars and planets.

Unitalicized space, refers to the abstract, theoretical notion of space. The author hopes that this practice will not prove to be excessively confusing to the reader.

and reconstructing themselves in twisted shapes, and to people losing their sanity and corporal integrity after the machines begun chaotically to reform their bodies. During the events of *Chasm City*, most residents of city's lower levels – and class – have had their alterations surgically removed in order to avoid the plague. The buildings, not having been able to receive such treatment, have “grown” together at the top floors, forming an entirely new, large platform high above ground level; this is a place that the citizens of Chasm City have taken to call “the Canopy”. The previous upper class and aristocrats have moved to live in the Canopy, and they have been able to retain their augmentations through an anti-virus which only the rich can afford. Following Edward Soja (2000, 265), it could be argued that after the virus struck Chasm City, it has become a postmetropolis where socio-economic differences are vastly intensified. Furthermore, the plague has definitely dislodged Chasm City from being a symbol of cosmic order, which is one of the functions of cities according to Yi-Fu Tuan (1980, 145). A more appropriate symbolic status for the city would now be that of cosmic disorder and chaos.

Raymond Williams, in an article discussing utopias and SF, has distinguished four types of utopias/dystopias, one of which is brought about by “the technological transformation”, which either improves or degrades the conditions of life in the world of the story (1979, 52-5). Chasm City suits this description to a tie, as the pre-plague city clearly resembles a utopia brought by the application of nanomachines and the post-plague city, contrastively, is an example of a dystopia caused by malfunctioning technology. The city's dystopian aspect is underlined by frequent remarks by its citizens about the condition of the city and the repulsion they feel towards living in it. Before the finale of the contemporary storyline of the novel, a character named Zebra tells the protagonist (Tanner/Sky/Cahuella) that he looks as if “almost miss[ing] the place” (CC 592) with a tone heavily suggestive of sarcasm.

Chasm City borders temporally and thematically between the modern and postmodern; there are arguments supporting a labeling of the pre-plague city as postmodern and the post-plague city as

modern, and vice versa, depending on the angle of observation. Technology-wise the pre-plague city was more on the postmodern side and as such it represents “esotechnicality”, which is the third order of Baudrillardian simulation according to Mike Gane (1999, 76). Technology and prostheses – that is, nanotechnical augmentations in *Chasm City* – become “esotechnical”, wholly internal and therefore invisible. After the plague has struck, technology, at least in the Mulch, the city level underneath the Canopy, has reverted back to “exotechnicality” that is to Mike Gane the second order of simulation; otherwise describable as the external extensions of man (Gane 1999, 76). The plague can, then, be seen as a periodical as well as a class divider within the city, as it keeps the poor from advancing to postmodernity (or the third order of simulation) whereas the aristocrats and the upper classes, through their wealth and Dream Fuel, can retain their position in the esotechnical stage. Note that this division is referring to the level of technology available for the citizens, not the city’s spatial layout, which will be discussed next.

Dividing the city into modern/postmodern follows, in terms of spatiality, David Harvey’s classification of urban planning and structuring which he introduces in his 1989 book *The Condition of Postmodernity*. According to Harvey, a postmodern city seeks “pluralistic” and “organic” strategies and models for urban solutions, rather than following a large-scale plan in city design (1989, 40). Furthermore, “postmodernists tend to view the urban process as uncontrollable and ‘chaotic’”; the urban area sprawls uncontrollably and organically rather than following a clean, well-structured plan (1989, 44). What the plague has done to the city’s layout and formation is curiously similar to the way in which, according to Harvey, postmodern urban planners – or designers, rather, – perceive the progression of the development of cities. The pre-plague city, with an apparent plan to the city’s outline and development could be said to have adhered to the principles of modernity and modern city planning, whereas the plague transformed the city into a postmodern one; this is in contrast with the city’s level of technology, which is exactly the opposite.

Chasm City is an enclosed space: it is sheltered from the surface conditions of the planet by huge domes known as the Mosquito Net, and the city is accessed via a train-like machine that goes through a long tunnel on its way to the city's central station. As discussed in section 2.2., Scott Bukatman argues that the postmodern city is characterized by its boundlessness (1993, 126), which Chasm City as a space with definite borders visibly lacks. I would argue that Chasm City is nevertheless a postmodern city due to its organic layout that follows no plan, despite the fact that the city is contained within a gigantic dome that sets definitive borders for its outlines. The City's area is simply too vast and its current map too chaotic for it to be comfortably categorized as a modern city that is in accordance with David Harvey's theory. An argument could be made that the different levels of the City, the Mulch and the Canopy, belong respectively to the modern and the postmodern, which would hesitantly then categorize the city as a postmodern one due to its collage of ages (nanomechanics vs. lack of even steam power) and its ability of metamorphosis, although the Plague has not significantly changed any buildings lately at the time Tanner visits the city.

Passengers arriving in Chasm City are first dropped off from an orbital aircraft and then transported to the city with a train-like vehicle. The train's windows display holographic, realistic images of the city as it was before the Melding plague; symbolically the past is constantly imposed upon the people arriving to the city, making it impossible to forget the city's glorious days of old. On his first arrival to the city, Tanner expresses doubts whether "there had been anyone truly poor in Chasm City back then" (CC 212), which concretizes the current degradation the city has fallen into.

In a way, the city could be viewed as an agglomerate of heterotopic places, after Michel Foucault's 1984 essay "Of Other Spaces", translated into English in 1986. According to Foucault heterotopias are places within places that take upon them several layers of symbolic meanings, that is, heterotopias compress different functions of spaces into a single site or place. Foucault lists six principles of heterotopias: All societies create and uphold heterotopias that can be "privileged or

sacred or forbidden places" where transformative experiences take place (24), or places "in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (25). Secondly, all societies can alter the functions of their heterotopias. Third, heterotopias juxtapose multiple incompatible places or situate them inside a larger place. Fourth, they are "linked to slices in time" (26). Fifth, they can open and close, in a system "that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (26). Sixth, "they have a function in relation to all the space that remains" (27)" (Foucault and Miskowiec 1986). The fifth principle applies directly to the whole city: Chasm City is isolated from its surroundings but is "penetrable" by the train.

As said, heterotopias are "most often linked to slices in time – which is to say they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies" (Foucault and Miskowiec 1986, 26). In other words heterotopias combine not only different aspects and functions of a place into a single site but also different periods of time, along with the meanings and symbolic functions the different time-periods pertain. Chasm City, then, is perceivable an example of such a heterochronic site, through the ever-present past visible in the distorted buildings which meld the new and old into one.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind, as Joan Gordon reminds us, that heterotopias in Foucault's use refer to "real" sites and places (2003, 465). In applying the concept to a work of fiction, we must therefore approach the fictitious world depicted in that work as if it were "real" (ibid.); however, this does not, in my view, severely affect the usefulness of heterotopia as a concept when used to analyze fictitious sites and places.

Foucault also sees heterotopias as sites that "suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (1986, 24) in relation to other sites. Utopias, on the other hand, act as a contrast to heterotopias; as utopias are "fundamentally unreal spaces" (ibid.) that represent "society itself in perfected form, or else society turned upside down" (ibid.). Against this definition Chasm City forms a definite heterotopia, being a former utopia which, narrative-

wise, is impossible to ascertain or access but through secondary sources within the text. Chasm City before the Melding plague is not visited by any of the characters within the novel, which makes it a placeless place whose existence relies solely on accounts told by decadent aristocrats or by a pre-recorded message that is the prologue of the novel. Even the visions projected on the train from the drop-off point to Chasm City are not described in detail, and are holographs in any case, without any proof of actual substance to them.

To sum this up, heterotopic places gather together several different identities of a place, which resembles Stuart Hall's idea of the postmodern subject as discussed in section 2.4. For *Chasm City* both the city and Tanner's identity are a mixture or a collage of several identities in one entity with different meanings for different individuals. In Tanner, underneath other layers there is Sky Haussmann, then Cahuella, and finally Tanner, who is actually an another person entirely; yet all these identities are lodged inside a single body, or subject, whose name finally remains uncertain. Likewise Chasm City as a whole city appears very different to residents of the Mulch, the Canopy, the Rust Belt, and to people on other planets who, unaware of the situation, know Chasm City only in its pre-plague, utopic glory. The City, furthermore, contained underneath huge glass domes and accessible only via certain routes, or holes, can be perceived as a single subject-body.

Chasm City's corporality is concretely visible in the novel's linguistic level, in metaphors that invite interpreting the City as a living organism, even when looked at from afar: "...there was something queasily wrong about those buildings; something sick about their shapes...[e]xcept for a sprinkling of lights at their upper and lower extremes...the buildings were dark and dead-looking" (CC 194). Initially, though, the inside of the city resembles a natural environment: the train station appears to Tanner as a jungle (CC 203) and as night falls the City appears as a hybrid entity of trees and human parts: "The towers around me grew dark, until they really did look like enormous trees, and the tangled limbs of the Canopy...were like branches hung with lanterns and fairy-lights. It was both nightmarish and beautiful." (CC 228). Later, when Tanner is taken to a woman named Zebra's

apartment, the building in which she lives looks like an enchanted tree (CC 283), and her apartment is “like an animal’s sett” (CC 284). The interior of Zebra’s apartment, like most of the city, is very organic in appearance: “It was like entering an internal organ in some huge, walkthrough model of the human anatomy...[t]he surfaces of the walls and ceiling were rigid, but uneasily organic in nature; veined or patterned with irregular platelets.” (CC 285). Not only do the insides of the buildings seem organic, but there are signs of this on their outsides as well, as Tanner notes when he is navigating a cable car for himself for the first time:

There was a building which looked uncannily like a human hand, grasping from the sky, its fingers elongating into tendrils...[h]ere was another, which resembled an oak tree, and others which expanded into a froth of shattered bubbles, like the face of someone stricken with an awful pestilence. (CC 339).

The City is a victim of the plague on an organic level as well; although it could be argued that perceiving the buildings as the face of a pestilence victim stems from the constant knowledge of the plague’s existence in the City, which affects the level of metaphors as well. For my reading, however, description of Chasm City as a living, bodily entity enforces the connection between the identities of Tanner and Chasm City. Furthermore, Chasm City is not the only environment in *Chasm City* that provokes metaphors of organicity (see discussion on the *Caleuche* below in section 4.2.3.), which suggests a strong, emphatic link between places and human bodies in the novel. As bodies – especially in *Chasm City* – very often are vessels for identities, reading the places as supporters of the reconstruction of identity paves the way for a discussion on how places affect the sense of self, especially in fiction but in real life as well.

4.1.1. Class and plague

As mentioned previously, a technological plague has struck Chasm City, separating the wealthier upper classes from the poorer lower classes concretely from each other. The upper classes live above the city and continue the use of technological augmentation because they can afford a cure

for it, whereas the lower class lives underneath them in the shadows and without the help of technology. A virus, then, has reverted the city backwards in its utopian development. In addition, in the beginning of *Chasm City* Tanner is subjected to an indoctrination virus that, arguably, facilitates his realization of his true identity as a member of the upper class. Viruses in the novel seem to function as restoring forces in the novel in that they reinstate class order, both individually and on a society-wide level.

Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz (2010, 129) argue in their discussion on plague in literature that “[p]lague acts as a social leveler, infecting regardless of any class, racial, or national distinction”, which applies to *Chasm City* as well, but with the difference that in *Chasm City* there is a cure for the plague available for anyone with the wealth to acquire it. Curiously enough there is no mention whatsoever just exactly *where* the wealth of the upper class comes from – the only reasonable guess for the reader is that the wealth so many seem to boast in *Chasm City* is inherited or continues to flow to them from outside investments. An absent economic base serves to highlight the stability of social relations within *Chasm City*. There is no way from the Mulch to the Canopy without someone from the Canopy reaching out, and those in the Canopy are never in risk to fall down to the Mulch. The situation is not totally immutable, however, as Tanner is able to navigate through both levels of the city, and he is able to penetrate into the core of the chasm in the middle of the city as well – in other words he is able to master the city’s socio-spatial landscape better than any resident of *Chasm City* has done before. This power appears to stem from an ability to exit the city, from a sort of an outsider’s perspective to *Chasm City* itself. Another argument for the source of Tanner’s spatial power would be that as a non-augmented but relatively wealthy individual he is not economically or socially tied to either the Mulch or the Canopy and can therefore move back and forth between them with ease, unlike the residents of *Chasm City*. Tanner has not established a permanent position in the city and because of that his mobility is not yet restricted; in a properly postmodern manner his spatial base remains a fluctuating one.

A career in crime or a profession in customer service seems to be the two choices for provision for the people of Chasm City, both in the Mulch as well as in the Canopy. Augmentation clinics and shops selling clothing and accessories are prominent in the Canopy, whereas augmentation removal clinics, rickshaws, and bazaars are abundant in the Mulch. The situation is reminiscent of late capitalism, whose “cultural logic” is postmodernism (Jameson 1991), and where a production-focused economy has shifted into a more service-oriented economic structure. Machines are largely responsible for maintaining the city, and even their maintenance is handled by machines, not humans. Unemployment is not touched in *Chasm City* at all, which is arguably a residual remnant of the pre-plague, post-scarcity, utopian city. A post-scarcity utopia would have no need for labor force as machinery could be used for practically everything, leaving the citizens to live their lives as seen fit. The City has become “a city for thieves and beggars and those who could live by their wits rather than their credit ratings” (CC 216).

4.1.2. The Mulch

The Mulch is a name given to the lower regions – lower vertically and socially – of Chasm City by its citizens. Perpetually in the shadow of the higher regions of the city and its buildings, the Mulch is a murky and dark place populated by equally dark and shady people. What differentiates it from the Canopy, the higher levels, is first and foremost wealth. When entering Chasm City every visitor first arrives in the Mulch – it is not a region or a locale isolated on the fringes of the city but located in the very center of it and is thus almost the norm against which every other part of the city is measured. The Mulch seems to spread throughout the ground level of Chasm City and can therefore be seen as the city’s spatial base.

That said, there are areas of the Mulch that lack even steam power (CC 507) and areas into which few inhabitants wander voluntarily. These areas tend to be populated by “pigs”, human that have been genetically altered with pig genes, or pigs that have been modified with human genes.

The purpose of this was originally to create a docile and servile bulk of labor-force that would take care of unpleasant jobs and maintenance tasks without feeling that they are somehow of a lower class – for connoisseurs of SF this appears to be a conscious nod toward Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, in which humans are genetically engineered and brainwashed to believe that they belong, and should belong, to a certain social class, be that the upper, middle, or lower class. As is common in such cases in most works of fiction, the experiment in *Chasm City* was a failure; if not otherwise, then at the latest when the Melding Plague struck and set loose the man/pig servants, who now populate areas of the Mulch and act hostile towards most outsiders. It is hinted, however, that this malevolence and mistrust is mutual, so that the pigs do not like anyone and almost no one likes the pigs either. Theories of race, class, and otherness would likely find a more thorough analysis of the relationship between the pigs and humans in *Chasm City* fruitful, but that approach is out of the scope for this study. The pigs represent a merging between man and beast, and as such are yet another example of boundary-crossing (as discussed in chapter 3) and physical contact with otherness that is present in *Chasm City*.

Tanner's initial encounter with the Mulch pigs is extremely hostile and occurs during an episode of the Game, which Tanner has been made to participate and which consists basically of the Canopy people hunting a specific person, most often one from the Mulch, with lethal weapons through the Mulch. The pigs happen to come across this hunt and interpret Tanner as being someone from the Canopy after their lives, but due to their anatomical deficiencies, the pigs are unable to communicate with Tanner. Symbolically, though, this may be seen to represent an initial communication barrier between people from highly different social classes; their language is so different (the pigs grunt and wave with their hands) that normal human interaction is impossible.

Tanner's second encounter with the pigs is more productive, however. This also occurs as the result of a firefight which ends up with Tanner falling from the Canopy with a cable-car straight through a pig couple's settlement. Having destroyed their kitchen and scared the couple half-dead,

Tanner attempts to settle the conflict with money, which the pigs grudgingly accept. After this encounter Tanner experiences an episode of dislocation as his cognitive map has to readjust: “My earlier sense of having found my feet – the sense that I had begun to assemble a mental map of the city – evaporated....” (CC 356-7). An encounter with otherness that did not result immediately in violence arguably forces Tanner to rethink his social location in the city again, as he is now able to communicate and maneuver with both the Canopy occupants as well as the (socially) lowest class of the Mulch.

A further cause for disorientation for Tanner at this point is the fact that he has now lost his birds-eye view of the Mulch, and is uncertain of his location relative to the few landmarks of the city that were visible from Zebra’s apartment. This encounter could be read as one where Tanner begins to construct an itinerary of the city, or at least a mental map of some kind. Tanner notes this, and remarks that “[the mapping] would happen, sooner or later, of course” (CC 357), but disregards mental mapping for now as he does not plan on staying in the city long enough for it to form. Furthermore, the pigs take him back to the station on a rikshaw of sorts, which gives Tanner little footing of his own to start creating a map of the Mulch for himself. The practical, first-hand bodily experience called for by Tuan and de Certeau is missing from travel by a rickshaw, which arguably seems to not allow a mapping of any kind, as a first-hand experience would require the mapper to stroll through the place with his own feet, to feel the pavement under him, and to expend his physical strength in order to be able to move around the city. This creates a bodily memory that strengthens the immersion into the structure of the surroundings one is mapping; although such an experience would be present at some level in a rickshaw-journey in the form of bumps on the road, this does not seem to be enough in *Chasm City* for the mapping to happen.

4.1.3. The Canopy

The Canopy is, as its name suggests, the higher region of Chasm City that is upper both socially and spatially. The actual height of the Canopy is never exactly revealed in the novel but several passages note it as being several hundred meters above ground level. The Canopy forms from skyscrapers joined together after the virus has twisted their form. The buildings have effectively created a level platform high above the ground that serves now as a dwelling for the wealthy, complete with shops, coffee houses, restaurants, and bars.

The Canopy is further divided into different regions, although few of them are named, and only a place called Escher Heights is featured with any prominence in the novel. Escher Heights is in many ways a culmination of the high-tech aesthetic of the Canopy, and even the City itself: its residents are more augmented than others, its buildings are more eccentric and bizarre, and the vertical differences are more prominent than elsewhere in the Canopy. Escher Heights is also a place for observing the city. As Tanner and a Canopist hunter woman called Chanterelle arrive at Escher Heights there are people “peering” at “the rest of the city” with mounted telescopes (CC 398) – the very epitome of de Certeauan birds-eye perspective. This kind of observational power both highlights and strengthens the gap between people in the Mulch and the people in the Canopy, who appear extremely different from the rustic, low-tech people of the lower City:

Everyone, *without exception*, was outlandishly dressed, in billowing capes or overcoats, offset with studiedly bizarre headgear, patterned in a riot of colours and textures which made even the surrounding architecture look a little on the restrained side. People wore masks or hid behind shimmering veils or elegant fans and parasols... There were people who had become centaurs; fully quadrupedal. There were people who, while still basically conforming to the standard-issue human shape, had twisted and stretched it so far that they looked like avant garde statues. (CC 398, italics added)

The people in Escher heights are barely human, and even appear barely individual; despite their extreme reformation of the body, their faces remain hidden. The fact that everyone in Escher Heights is bizarre-looking and elaborately dressed makes standing out of the crowd there a very difficult task. However we must bear in mind that this is Tanner’s focalization – it is Tanner to

whom everyone appears similar in their otherness. It is only later when Tanner learns about his real identity as Sky Haussmann that the faces start to become distinguishable from one another and the masks and shimmering veils start to disappear from his descriptions. The initial contrast to the dirt-faced people in the Mulch is as huge as the contrast with the Mulch people's economic status, and the distance Tanner initially feels between the Escher Heights people and himself is none the less.

There are similarities between the Canopists and the Mulch people, however: hybridity, or the blending of human and animal via technology, is visible in both classes. The blending seems to, albeit arguably so, symbolize a more extreme representation of one's class: whereas the lowest in the Mulch are pig-humans, the people in Canopy have mixed themselves with prestigious animals, such as Zebra, the woman who initially saves Tanner from hunters playing the Game (see section 4.1.2. and below). Zebra has altered her appearance to be zebra-like with black and white stripes covering her entire body. The prestige of various animals is, of course, questionable, but since there are only pigs in the Mulch and no pigs at all in the Canopy it can be said that the animal with whom an individual is blended with also marks their social class and status. After Zebra has later changed her striped markings to a different pattern, Tanner notes that it has changed her "entire mode of behavior" (CC 453). This hints for a connection between bodily appearance and the way in which people act, which actually is the case for Tanner, who acts like Tanner because his body looks like Tanner Mirabel's, even though his identity is someone else's.

Another hunting party that Tanner encounters later consists of two men and two women who have taken their looks from animals as well. The women appear cat-like, complete with synthetic fur and claws, whereas one of the men has a bear's head mask and the other an insect-like head. The men's animal appearance is derived only from their costumes but the women have altered their skin and their teeth, taking the huntress look even further. The hunter/hunted symbolism in the animals can be seen to refer to Tanner's past as the bodyguard of Cahuella in Sky's Edge, where Cahuella was hunting giant jungle snakes. At that time, though, the protagonist acted under the identity of

Cahuella and Tanner was a separate person. Later, as their memories mixed in the protagonist, the hunting scene became confused, as memories of both hunting and being hunted alternate in Tanner's mind.

A distinctive feature in the Canopy is the tendency for its residents to partake in games or other dangerous activities. This is spurred by their immortality through longevity treatments which has made most of the Canopists immortal, that is, they will not die of old age, and therefore need to be reminded of death once in a while, or as one of them says: "What's the point of beating an old enemy if you deny yourself the thrill of ever remembering what it was like in the first place?" (CC 250). Disinterestedness towards life and a consequent apathy can be seen to be the results from immunity to death from old age. Remembrance of death, and what could happen if something went wrong can be found from the Mulch, or from the Chasm; either way, for the Canopy aristocrats the memory of death, it could be argued, triggers from a specific place rather than from other experiences – as discussed in chapter 4, when the aristocrats encounter a man dying of the results of the plague they regard him only with curiosity, as if he were a street performer and not someone dying. This approach is possible because death is absent from most regions of the Canopy. As the novel exhibits other biblical references (Crucified hero, biblical names of officers aboard the flotilla ships, Idlewild as a garden of Eden), the Canopy could also be perceived as a symbolic Heaven with a twist, as it is located above ordinary people and inhabited by near-immortal, extraordinary people. The religious dimension will, however, be left out of this paper for future scholars to study in ampler detail.

There is a restaurant in the Canopy built above the chasm from which the city takes its name, and it is a popular sport to do bungee jumps into the Chasm. However, because there are strong currents of wind and boiling steam in the chasm, this is an extremely dangerous sport which often results in the jumper dying. Those most skilled in the jumping enjoy high respect among the upper class; the one who is given the most applause and appreciation is a man named Voronoff who

appears to be the wealthiest man in the Canopy. A sense of decadence hangs over the sport as the aristocrats watch the jumpers from video screens and with opera glasses while dining. When one of the jumpers falls too deep into the steam and is boiled alive Tanner is horrified, but Sybilline, one of the Canopists sharing a table with Tanner merely shrugs and remarks that “[h]e should have used a shorter line” (CC 252). Immunity to age seems to bring about it an effect similar to the waning of affect that Jameson speaks of, as even horrible deaths of others elicit little comment or reaction from the cynical aristocrats. Jameson’s waning of affect is for him a condition of postmodernity, meaning the “end of the psychopathologies of [the bourgeois ego]” (2000, 200). Feelings that were encased in the self in a modernist identity are no longer feasible. Arguably, the Canopists have moved from a Modern identity to a postmodern one through their immortality to the effects of time; and for Jameson, a movement to “categories of space rather than...time” (ibid.) is one of the hallmark signs of the postmodern era. Showcasing death to the immortals makes the restaurant a heterotopic place in the Canopy, as it is the only place where death is actually visible, although only in the form of streaming video of the jumpers, broadcast on large screens around the restaurant’s walls. Later in the novel during a flashback scene, Sky Haussmann watches row after row of passengers in cryo-sleep dislodge from (at this point) his spaceship, meaning certain death for them. Witnessing death from a screen while immortality is present – in the Sky flashback he is already aware of having received longevity treatments which are the same as the Canopy’s aristocrats – seems to be a recurring event for Tanner/Sky, and the parallel here could be seen as one of the encounters that reinforce the reformation of his identity as Sky Haussmann.

Like the graveyard in Foucault’s own theorization of heterotopias, the restaurant above the chasm’s most important function in the society is to remind people of death’s existence no matter how distant it would otherwise seem. A thought from Baudrillard, although lengthy, is very worth mentioning regarding the disappearance of death from the Canopy: “When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and

signs of reality: of second-hand truth, objectivity, and authenticity. There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience" (1983, 12). "The real" is not what it was, that is, death has vanished. The signs of reality correspond to the fascination toward death, and fatal games become highly important in the high society. The second-hand truth and objectivity could easily here be applied to the video screen, which shows the jumpers as it is, upsetting some diners by close-up shots of the scolded, unfortunate jumpers.

Another sport, already briefly mentioned, is known as the Game. In it, people from the Mulch are captured by the aristocrats to be hunted through the Mulch, and this hunt is always carried out to the death. An organizer explains this to Tanner: "To take another's life is a special kind of thrill, Mirabel. To do it while being immortal elevates the act to an entirely different level of sublimity." (CC 270). As is found out later in the story, Tanner did exactly the same thing in his past as Sky when he murders people aboard the *Santiago* well after finding out that he has received the same immortality treatments as most of their frozen passengers. Some of the Canopists take an additional risk while engaged in the Game – they leave their nano-implants on while in the Mulch, which gives them a chance of contracting the Melding plague virus. A way of seeing both the chasm-jumping and travelling unprotected in the Mulch is to view the upper class as being afraid of being tainted by the lower class, yet somehow they are extremely intrigued by the thrill of such a contagion actually happening – the aristocrats, as mentioned, mix and blend their bodies with other life-forms casually, which may, in conjunction with the very human interest in death, account for the morbid curiosity the Canopists feel toward contact with the Mulch.

There is a group of people, or a social order, in the Canopy known as the Mixmasters, who seem to narrative-wise take an almost metafictional quality to themselves. Dualities, pairs, and oppositions flourish in almost every page of *Chasm City*, be they human/animal, man/machine, high class/low class, indoor/outdoor, leader/servant, etc. The Mixmasters, who are an old "social order"

(CC 407), possess an enormous knowledge in genetics and gene technology, all the way to the point that they want to “*become God*” (ibid, italics original).

In the novel the Mixmasters are largely responsible for the genetic and corporal augmentation that Chasm City’s citizens undergo: they mix genes, bringing together man and animal, or they improve their clients’ natural qualities; either way, the Mixmasters break the dualities that abound in the novel and could, admittedly stretched, be argued to function as postmodern agents of change in the world of *Chasm City* by undermining the inherent binaries found almost everywhere. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that Tanner’s first confirmation of his mixed identity becomes from a gene scan done to him by one of the Mixmasters in the Canopy.

4.2. *Space and spaceships*

The other significant location in *Chasm City* aside the City itself is *space* along with spaceships. Almost the entire Sky flashback narrative takes place inside spaceships in the flotilla, and it is only at the very end that a planet’s surface is reached. The planet, Sky’s Edge, is the same from which the Tanner narrative begins, which creates closure, and a connection for the flashback narrative in spatial terms, despite the fact that a significant amount of time has passed between the end of Sky narrative and the beginning of the Tanner narrative.

4.2.1. The flotilla and *space*

Peter Gould calls space as a no-thing between places (Gould 1997, 128); however, *space* as a space takes an important function in *Chasm City* and could therefore hardly be defined as nothing. The first flashback within the narrative occurs after Tanner has been cast into *space* after a nuclear explosion on a space elevator; this, in my reading, reconnects him with the space where his childhood as Sky Haussmann was spent and triggers the recovery of his memories. The intradiegetic Sky Haussmann narrative takes place within a huge generation spaceship, that is,

aboard a ship that harbors a crew of more than a hundred people and which is making a journey to another star system. This journey lasts over a lifetime, and because of this, new crewmembers are born aboard the ship, and they replace those crewmembers who die of old age. A total of five of these ships are making the interstellar journey, and all of them travel close to the speed of light and are huge machines, measuring over a kilometer in length. Compared to the chaotic, unpredictable layout of Chasm City, the spaceships of the flotilla are very orderly spaces in the novel, perceivable almost as small villages in themselves, and thus functioning as symbols of cosmic order, as well as being places within the massive *space*.

Described as a cramped, steel grey and huge, the *Santiago* aboard which Sky travels is, in essence, a totally technological place within *space*. At first the ship appears as a chaotic maze of corridors, ducts, and tubes, but as Sky is taken outside it, and he sees the vessel for the first time as a whole, his perception of it changes. He tries to visualize his favorite places and where “they would be mapped in this strange, new view” (CC 80-81). The experience is similar to what Kevin Lynch argues of cities in *The Image of the City* – that is, within the city it is difficult to organize its parts into a coherent map or pattern just as in a huge spaceship it is almost impossible to visualize the whole without seeing it from the outside. Once seen like this, the places become tangible and intelligible. Sky reports having seen models and holograms of the ship, but as simulations they are ineffective in the mental mapping of the whole of the ship when compared to actually seeing it from the outside. This kind of disparity between watching the layout from a distance and actually seeing and experiencing the entirety of the ship first-hand seems similar to Michel de Certeau’s comparison between the bird’s eye-view of a city and the pedestrian’s experience of it, albeit with a hologram – a simulation of a view from above – instead of an actual observation. The comparison could be extended to the narration and Tanner’s experience of the Sky Haussmann episodes: he sees the events from a distance, but gradually, as the ship begins to become familiar to him, the narration

moves to a first-person one as Tanner metaphorically descends to the pedestrian's level of the ship, which could be read as a metaphor of Sky Haussmann himself.

Space as a space is contrasted with the claustrophobia that seems to be ever present in spaceships and space-stations in the novel. This is in accordance with Yi-Fu Tuan's distinction between the concepts of space and place. For Tuan, space represents freedom, future, and possibility of change through action. On the other hand, space is also chaotic, as it has no "fixed pattern of established human meaning; it is like a blank sheet on which meaning can be imposed" (Tuan 1977, 54). Places have a fixed meaning; they are "humanized and enclosed spaces" (ibid.). Places represent stability and security against the chaos of space, but also restrictedness and boundaries. Tuan notes that "the claustrophobe sees small, tight spaces as oppressive containment, not as contained spaces where warm fellowship or meditation in solitude is possible" (ibid.). Following Tuan on this argument, as Sky is quite unable to engage in activities of "warm fellowship" or meditation in solitude, the closed spaces induce a claustrophobic reaction in him.

In the main story there is a scene where Tanner, aboard a ship heading for Chasm City, remarks that the corridors seem "dark and claustrophobic" (CC 162) and that the whole experience of moving in a dark, cramped spaceship seems "unpleasantly familiar" (CC 162). The familiarity, it could be argued, stems from Tanner's past as Sky, and from his journeys through the *Santiago's* corridors and air ducts as a child. At an early part of the flotilla's voyage one of the ships explodes accidentally, resulting in Sky's mother's death and a power failure in the *Santiago*, which leaves Sky alone in a dark nursery for several hours. The experience in the dark nursery, and the accompanying anxiety and sense of dislocation is, for Sky, a very traumatizing event that is recollected several times in the book.

Within the nursery, a computerized hologram-nanny named Clown kept company for Sky, who bitterly remarks on this that "his parents had abdicated responsibility to an illusion" (CC 75). Sky's relationship with Clown resembles a master/slave relationship, as the program is unable to

affect Sky's behavior and can only attempt to influence him verbally, whereas for Sky "Clown had become something to be understood...dissected" (CC 50). Throughout Sky's life Clown attains more and more significance and meaning, and ultimately it becomes a metaphor for both the *Santiago* and Sky's will to power. Arguably Sky transposes his conscience on Clown, and Clown becomes a figure from whom Sky can draw strength in times of doubt, and through whom Sky is able to carry out his plans, such as the assassination of Balcazar, the *Santiago*'s old captain: "...until Clown had spoken to him now, it had been enough to entertain the fantasies" (CC 350) – fantasies about killing people, which Sky "had all the time" (CC 349). Clown's persuasion is what ultimately drives Sky to commit murder and to frame it on the medics who attempt to rescue the old captain; symbolically it is Sky's desire for power and dominance that makes him kill Balcazar, but that desire is externalized to Clown's influence.

Clown appears later as a bodiless voice in Sky's headset, as well as a figure in some consoles aboard the ship, but what lends support to reading Clown as a metaphor, or an external psychological scapegoat comes at the end of the novel, in the last stages of the flashback narrative. Vilified by the other settlers from *Santiago* who – rightfully – blame Sky for the war they are engaged in, against settlements the other ships had created, Sky escapes into the jungle, where he has arranged a group of loyal followers to prepare a cryo-sleep chamber for him. During this flight Sky sees a luminous, humanoid-shaped figure among the trees leading him forward and finally recognizes the figure as Clown. This is also the last time Sky ever sees Clown, which is fitting with reading him as a creation sprung by Sky's plan to take control of the flotilla: the cryo-sleep chamber is the last stage of that plan, and after that Clown is no longer needed. Furthermore, Sky comments that Clown "had been the only trusted friend" in his whole life, despite being only a "psychological figment, a subconscious entity...born from memories of the tutelary persona [he] had known in the nursery aboard *Santiago*" (CC 600). Sky's only "friend", then, had been a technological creation which had never had a physical form, and was arguably just a creation he had made to ease his

conscience; other friendships and relationships he forms during the novel are similarly very utilitarian by their nature – both as Sky and later as Tanner/Cahuella. For Sky, other people appear merely as tools to be used in order to advance one’s plans, and Sky has little respect for human life, as is evident from his disposal of half of the cryo-chambers of the *Santiago*.

The *Santiago* carries passengers – almost all of them wealthy, upper class citizens – in cryogenic sleep in chambers attached to the ship’s hull. These passengers have been given longevity treatments before they were put to the cryogenic slumber, which makes them practically immortal in terms of disease or old age. Sky was one of these passengers until Titus Hausmann ended his cryo-sleep after his child had died, as a comfort to his wife. After learning about his past, and his status as a near-immortal aristocrat, Sky’s behavior changes and he begins to seek companionship from a saboteur, who was equally woken mid-sleep with a mission to stop the ship from reaching its destination. As the *Santiago* nears the end of its journey, Sky detaches half of the cryo-chambers (with their passengers still inside) to lighten the ship and to give it more time before it has to start slowing its speed. This gives the *Santiago* a few months’ advantage at the new planet compared to the four other generation ships bound for the same destination. After his promotion, the spaceship gradually becomes, for Sky, a place where he possesses god-like power over lives and deaths.

David Harvey has argued that “any struggle to reconstitute power relations is a struggle to reorganize their spatial bases” (1989, 238); which is what Sky is doing aboard the *Santiago*: the old officers are displaced from their position as higher-ranking officers, and furthermore Sky’s opponents find themselves quickly cast out of the ship into space. Disposing the sleeper berths near the voyage’s end is a reorganization of the ship’s spatial as well as social structure, although the disposed berths are chosen only in relation to their position along the ship’s hull in order to make their detachment look more beautiful and symmetric. By this point Sky has mastered the ship socially and spatially so well that he is able to note that “I could practically run the *Santiago* myself” (CC 589).

The previously mentioned boundary-crossing found in Chasm City can be found on the *Santiago* as well in the form of a sentient dolphin, Sleek, with whom Sky bonds. Unable to speak, however, Sleek communicates mostly by mimicry and gestures, which gradually become more and more hostile, as the creature starts to lose its sanity because of its captivity in a tank. There is a parallel between Sleek's descent into madness and Sky's growing paranoia; the implication is that a prolonged stay aboard a confined space, that is, a spaceship, taxes one's mental health. It is no wonder that Sky forms a deep bond with the animal during the journey – Sleek is unable to challenge Sky's position as the sole master of the space of the *Santiago*. It is significant that Sky's biggest threat to his position, a woman named Constanza, suggests several times that Sky should euthanize Sleek, as to Constanza it seems that the creature is suffering greatly. Sky disregards this advice to the very end, and it is not until the ship has reached Journey's End that Sky puts Sleek out of its misery.

4.2.2. The *Caleuche*

As mentioned, behind the original five flotilla ships there are rumors of, and there actually *is* a sixth ship behind the others, known to the voyagers as the *Caleuche*, according to a legend of a ghost ship off the coast of Chile (CC 487). However, the ship proves to be merely simulacra, as it is, in fact, a copy created by an alien life-form known as the Grub. The grub is on a getaway from a killing machine, which belongs to a group of machines that systemically eradicate sentient life-forms from the universe once they reach a certain level of technological advancement.

The *Caleuche* looks superficially similar to the other vessels of the flotilla, but it is only made to appear similar by the grub in order for it to blend in and avoid detection by the machine that has chased it through incredible distances. Initially Sky and two other persons from the *Santiago*, approach the ghost ship as it were a forgotten or abandoned ship belonging to the flotilla, but the surface soon begins to look weird, its side as “a queasy, leprous mass” and “blistered flesh” (CC

490). The ship's organic surface is very reminiscent of the buildings in Chasm City, although the *Caleuche* was not struck by the melding plague, but appears organic because the grub has used nano-sized organisms which are hinted to be a part of its race to mold the ship's appearance. As a space, it can be perceived as an extension of the novel's constant portrayal of disguised appearances. In addition, this enforces reading the *Caleuche* as a space which reflects Tanner's masked identity, much as Chasm City does in the main narrative as discussed in section 4.1. in this paper.

The *Caleuche* and Chasm City have spatial connections that make them similar in many respects. The inner center of both places is hard to reach (in Chasm City this is achieved via a maintenance tunnel, in *Caleuche* through cutting a hole through the ship's surface), and both have a member of the grub race in the middle. Plot-wise this connection is emphasized by a parallel narration that shifts rapidly from the Sky narrative aboard the *Caleuche* to the Tanner narrative inside the bowels of Chasm City. The symmetry reaches out to other characters travelling with Sky/Tanner as well, as in both cases the acquaintances are under Sky's or Tanner's orders in a strict hierarchy. Also, in both cases Sky/Tanner wants to destroy the grub; Sky because it would mean difficulties in negotiating the situation with other flotilla vessels which could lead to problems regarding his authority, and Tanner because the grub is the source for dream fuel in Chasm City, and thus it symbolically – and practically, to an extent – upholds the status quo between the Mulch and Canopy in Chasm City. In both cases the grub is described as being exceptionally lonely, and suffering because of this, which also makes Sky/Tanner want to “put the thing out of its misery”. However, as the being is sentient and alien, I would argue that the primary reason behind wanting to kill the grub is the need to sustain control over the space(s) of the flotilla, for Sky, and to obtain control over Chasm City, for Tanner. By destroying the grub in Chasm City Tanner effectively destroys the source of power that keeps the criminal organization of the city functional, and the

aristocrats in their power and augmentations – in other words, he rearranges the city’s power by rearranging the city’s spatial and economic base.

4.2.3. Idlewild

Idlewild is a recovery station for travelers suffering from “revival amnesia”, an amnesiac condition caused by decades of cryogenic sleep aboard spaceships. Cryo-sleep is still the only way to reasonably travel between planets in the world of *Chasm City*, as the journeys last decades.

Passengers are frozen so that they do not age during the long voyage, but their revival from that state may take months, depending on how well the individual is able to recover from being frozen nearly to death. Space and time could be said to have frozen for the passengers as well, and, observed from a metaphysical angle, since identities and memories are connected to both space and time, a rupture in the spatiotemporal flow is understandably upsetting to one’s identity.

Idlewild resembles a spinning top in its form; it is a space station that is built elliptically with two cones joined together at their bottoms. Inside, Idlewild has been constructed to look like a garden, complete with grass everywhere, small huts for the patients, and even small waterfalls. The illusion is not a thorough one, however, and it shatters instantly when Tanner steps outside the indoor garden of the station and finds “a corridor walled in burnished steel, eradicating any lingering impression that Idlewild was a place, rather than an engineered human construct” (CC 126). Tanner’s distrust of technology is seen in his perception of Idlewild as well, as the waterfalls begin quickly to sound like machines to him.

Idlewild, as *Chasm City* itself, also bears similarities with Tanner’s identity. It appears superficially coherent and unified, but a closer examination starts to reveal discontinuities, such as the mechanical sound of the waterfalls, the station being totally artificial, and the revelation outside the station’s recovery zone that “eradicates” all sense of having been in a place after Tanner leaves Idlewild. In his perception the fabrication and simulation is so total that after it is uncovered as

such, it becomes impossible to think of the place as having anything in common with the place that it attempted to simulate, even up to the point of its very place-ness. Another interpretation, not out of place with the rest of the novel, due to its numerous religious symbols, is to perceive Idlewild as Eden, and Tanner's departure from there as the Fall.

The very name of the place suggests this, "idle" and "wild" both being aspects easily connected to the Garden of Eden. Furthermore Tanner is tended by a female Mendicant, as the people working in Idlewild are called, with whom he develops an affectionate, although non-sexual, relationship; this would support reading Idlewild as Eden in the time before the Fall, and before the original sin. Idlewild's shape causes lower gravity in the tips of the cone-like shapes, and Amelia comments on this that the elder staff moves there to spend the last of their days, as it is physically easier for them: "...closer to heaven, as we say" (CC 70). This enforces both the religious interpretation and the rest-home quality of Idlewild.

Finally, one could perceive Idlewild as a continuum in the long tradition of stories about finding one's true self after a period of time spent in a natural environment. Idlewild could, in this perspective, be situated in the pastoral tradition, as introduced by Greg Garrard, which in turn can be both a nostalgic as well as a utopic and progressive mode (Garrard 2012, 41-2). Another aspect brought up by Garrard from the pastoral that merits mention here are the tradition's "key contrasts" between the country and the city and between the past and the present. Idlewild appears a timeless place, as a nostalgic space, but in *Chasm City* the pastoral idyll is invaded by technology, which can be said to depict the utopic and progressive qualities of pastoral as argued by Garrard, but with a darker twist to the technological aspect. A sense of nostalgia is present at Idlewild, but, as mentioned above, the illusion of a pastoral idyll is demolished instantly when Tanner leaves the station. This could be read as a critique toward the technologization of nature and natural spaces, although a thorough examination and argumentation for such a claim would demand more space than is available here. After this examination of the spaces of *Chasm City* we will now move to

perceptions on how the spaces and their mapping relate and have affected the restoration of Tanner's identity in the novel.

5. Recreating one identity

After analyzing the spaces in the novel, we will now turn to assess their effect on the recreation of identity within the novel. Firstly, spatial metaphors abound in Tanner's identity in *Chasm City*. His past is described to be as "a foreign country" (CC 335), and restoring his memories in Idlewild is compared to a task of restoring three broken vases without knowing which part is which (ibid.). The three vases, it should be noted, can be seen to be referring to Tanner's three identities as Sky Haussmann, Cahuella, and finally Tanner; of which Cahuella existed only as a fictitious persona developed by Sky after leaving his buried sleeper berth in Sky's Edge. All of their memories are mixed inside a single entity, which makes it difficult to arrange them into a coherent pattern. As the memories start to unwind in Tanner's mind, he describes the experience of "keeping track of these shifting layers of identity and memory" as being like "holding the weave of a complex tapestry in mind" (CC 587). In other words, Tanner perceives his three identities as being spatially arranged. Cahuella, though, is not extensively present in the novel, and is thus left mostly unmentioned throughout this work. At the end of the book, Tanner says that "[he] might have been Cahuella once. Now Cahuella doesn't exist" (CC 606). The statement is ironic, as Cahuella was never a real person, but Sky's creation to mask his past. As Cahuella, Sky tried to do the same by adopting Tanner's identity – as he saw that this was the best way to escape from Sky's Edge – but the result was a failure, as the new persona became prominent and Cahuella vanished underneath Tanner. A new identity in a new place, it seems, does not allow for the old one to reappear until the new place has been cognitively mapped.

As all identities are linked to places, the old "real" identity cannot surface until the new place has been assimilated into the identity-collage that forms the individual; in this case, Tanner/Sky/Cahuella. The old identity was intimately connected to the earlier place – Sky's Edge for Cahuella and partly for Sky, for the latter the flotilla forms the main spatial base for identity. As

Chasm City is spatially closer to the ships of the flotilla, and as Tanner's spatial power within the city increases, the situation becomes similar enough compared to that of the flotilla that Sky's identity is able to resurface. Cahuella, as a jungle-bound identity, is too weak in the strange environment to be able to take control. Cahuella's influence could arguably be seen only in Tanner's initial reaction to the train-station which he perceives as a jungle; on the other hand, this reaction might just as well be attributed to the real Tanner's experiences.

Sky Haussmann's past began, as mentioned earlier, when Titus Haussmann pulled him out of a sleeper berth aboard the *Santiago*. As a high-ranking officer, Titus lives in a position resembling an upper-class, or a ruling-class lifestyle compared to the more working class-like workers on the ship. Consequently, Sky's childhood is spent in more luxury than other children's aboard the ship, and due to his father's role as the head of security, Sky manages to familiarize himself intimately with the ship by venturing through its air-ducts and service tunnels he has learnt about from blueprints, as described in section 4.2.1. This gives Sky mental control over the space of the ship, as he is able to map the whole ship and thus establish control over its space, which later becomes visible also socially as Sky is raised to captaincy. As captain, Sky is the uncontested ruler of the *Santiago*, and when they arrive at the planet at Journey's End, Sky becomes the ruler of the colony they build there.

All in all, then, Sky's identity throughout his childhood, youth, and adulthood is dominated by a position above others and a commanding role, which is also firmly connected to an exhaustive knowledge of the commanded space. Therefore, it is not surprising that the restoration of Tanner's former identity as Sky gains momentum after he has obtained a similar position in Chasm City; both socially, in commanding other people, and spatially, in knowing how to navigate himself through the City. Furthermore, as the City's social structure is similar to the situation of the flotilla, the re-emergence of past life becomes even less avoidable. Both the flotilla and Chasm City lack natural features, which likens them even more. Technology is constantly present everywhere in

Chasm City as it is in the *Santiago*, and this technologized space can be seen to be a continuum in itself that reminds Tanner of his past. Disorderly and chaotic, Chasm City's presentation in the novel initially mirrors Tanner's confusion about his identity.

Plot-wise the recreation of a single identity is achieved through quickening shifts between the Tanner and Sky narratives – between alternations in both space and time. At first there is a clear division between the two, almost chapter-by-chapter, but towards the end the narratives alternate after a few paragraphs of one to the other. In the linguistic level the effect is shown by Tanner gradually starting to refer to Sky and Cahuella in the first person even when he is recollecting the events to others. In the end it is finally Dream Fuel that erases the boundary between Sky and Tanner, allowing him to see clearly the events of the Sky narrative (CC 517). At this point the earlier physical spacing between paragraphs of the alternate narratives has also vanished, which reflects the continuity from one identity to the other.

From the beginning of the book hints to Tanner's past as an aristocrat start to appear, although to a reader not familiar with the ending and following the clue-laying tradition of detective novels, these clues are not initially recognizable as such: at the beginning of the novel, Tanner dons the coat of an aristocrat to disguise himself as one (CC 6); encountering Sky Hausmann's – or supposedly his – body which is crucified on a space station is an unusually distressing event for Tanner (considering his past as a soldier) (CC 29-30); and after the first Sky flashback Tanner begins to have severe doubts about his memories and his identity (CC 55-6). In other words, Tanner's past identity is present from the start of the novel, although absently so, but observable from the narration.

Influence of the past extends even to Tanner's mental condition – as the Sky episodes become more frequent and intense, Sky's paranoia spreads out to Tanner as well. Derived from knowing that his actions aboard the *Santiago* are illegal, Sky gradually becomes extremely paranoid; whereas Tanner, knowing that the hunting party from the Game is after him, and even after the hunt is

finished, feels the same distrust toward others as Sky. As their cognitive mapping of the spaces progresses, this paranoia and distrust seems only to strengthen, as if spatial knowledge would replace trusting others. In a struggle to position oneself in a place of power, to rearrange the spatial base to better suit their goals, other people seem to become a menace. Going through this process again as Tanner in Chasm City is arguably one of the facilitators of the restoration of identity in the novel. Another such point is the annihilation of the grub aboard the *Caleuche* (CC 550) and the subsequent killing of the one at the bottom of Chasm City's chasm. Repeated experiences of similar events and spaces, and a cognitive mapping process undergone in an environment not too foreign to the one in the past can be seen to be the catalysts for the return of the repressed Sky Haussmann identity.

At one point in the novel Zebra asks Tanner: "Who'd choose to be pinned down by one body, one identity?" (CC 332), a call for a Hallian notion of an identity of multitudes. However, despite the celebration of overcoming bodily limitations for identities, Tanner finally returns to his original, singular self, and adopts the name Schyuler Haussmann (CC 591). At the novel's epilogue Schyuler decides to begin to "alter the city totally...to unbalance the unspoken equilibrium between Mulch and Canopy" (CC 632). The circle closes at this point: a rearrangement of the spatio-social base which Sky Haussmann begun and completed in the flotilla begins anew in Chasm City.

6. Conclusions

All in all, *Chasm City*, while exploring various hybrid identities, both bodily and mentally, seems to convey a message of an immutable identity and indestructible memory. The key to wholesomeness in selfhood, according to this approach to the novel, is to situate oneself spatially right, after which identity starts to rebuild itself and a coherent unity is achieved. Furthermore, even the destruction or severe alteration of one's body does not eliminate the existence of an identity as long as the individual remains alive in one form or another. Technology-wise, the novel could be seen as criticizing the abdication of memory to gadgets such as ID cards, and at the same time rejoicing the strength of the human mind with its ability to sustain a permanent identity – at the end of the novel Reivich faces his death after a failed attempt to upload his consciousness into a computer, or as it could also be seen, a failed attempt to become a digital being. Respectful of the SF tradition of warning against technology's adverse effects, Reynolds seems to be sending a message that we are, after all, still analogical and corporeal beings firmly connected to places and social stratification. Physicality, unlike affect, is not waning. Being published at the turn of the century, at the dawn of the Internet era, one could interpret this as a conservative plea for a remembrance of the real, physical world in the oncoming digital age. In *Revelation Space* some humans have successfully uploaded their consciousness into virtual reality, but in *Chasm City* this does not happen. It would not be too far-fetched to argue that at this stage Reynolds has a very skeptical stance towards singularity, a post-human perception of Utopia in which personas are wholly capable of being digitalized, and a seamless fusion between man and machine is possible – the future of Donna Haraway's cyborg bodies and identities. This reading is strengthened by the numerous adverse effects which technology has had in *Chasm City* due to the Melding plague. Inspection of Reynolds's later work might, however, prove this argument wrong.

This thesis, as stated in the introduction, offers an angle of reading the multi-faceted *Chasm City*, and much work remains to be done with the novel. For gender, queer, and ethnic studies the

book offers a fertile ground for analysis, as does the Christian-religious dimension explored in the novel. Spatial analysis could be deepened perhaps with the addition of ecocritical viewpoints, or Reynolds' other novels situated in the Revelation Space universe could be compared and contrasted with *Chasm City*. Either way, SF scholars have plenty of options where to go with Alastair Reynolds; there remains ample space for new discoveries.

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