CHAPTER - III

THE AESTHETIC OF PLURALISM
FRAGMENTS OF ART

An analysis of the culture depicted in a work of fiction requires a study of the aesthetic tendencies referred to in it. Art as it exists now shows promiscuity and multiplicity in the matter of style. At the same time, it bears the marks of the dehumanisation that has pervaded culture. The alienation in the disorientated psyche has given birth to it. The empty multiplicity of the postmodern world finds expression in such art. It is by nature fragmentary; but beneath this fragmentariness lies a tendency to amalgamate disparate, chaotic, and irregular elements. The condition in which it is difficult to distinguish between reality and unreality can be discerned in its realm. The chaotic condition of culture is reflected in such art. Postmodern art has put an end to the distinction between high culture and mass culture.

The urban scenario shows art becoming a spectacle so as to entertain the masses. The spectacle erases all realities other than the one it projects. Thus it forms an excess that persuades the senses and deceives them. Polan points out: "[...] the offer of spectacle is exactly that of a breakdown of coherence, a disordering of orders [...] for the sake of visual show" (Arac, Postmodernism 59). A new series of signifiers is created for the sake of the spectator. The signifiers exceed the meaning, and this results in a mind-boggling explosion of sights and sounds. The images projected seem to convey some meaning, but actually they only distort the reality. Polan further probes into the nature of the spectacle: "The world of spectacle is a world without background, a world in which they only exist or mean in the way they appear" (Arac, Postmodernism 61). Because of the excessive importance given to the impact on the senses, meaning is obscured: "The will-to-spectacle is the assertion that a world of foreground is the only world that matters, or the only world that is" (Arac, Postmodernism 61).
Spectacle is again another strategy of capitalism that relates to its production mechanism. Thus it reduces even art to fetish. In such circumstances art becomes just a spectacular surface having no connection with the world and its reality. John McGowan has analysed this aspect in Postmodernism and Its Critics: "Postmodern culture with its endless projection of disconnected, decontextualised images, breaks down the systematic underpinnings of meaning [. . .]" (156).

The technology of art is very important for the industrialised society. The technological framework is used to project a multiplicity of images to be passively consumed by the masses:

As the French critic Edgar Morin has stressed, the mass communications have their own ways of image-making, their own particular types of truth, their own languages and codes, their own spaces of approach and relationship to audience and environment, their own modes of fantasizing, their own species of polymorphous culture.

(Bradbury, The Social Context 247)

Photography has such a prominent position among postmodern art forms, that it has become a cultural code as well as a form of discourse. In fact, culture has become one saturated with photographic images which seduce the masses. These images are intended to arouse their desire for consumption. Thus it becomes the most effective tool of capitalism. The mass media plays an active role in the dissemination of these images. The power of these images is exploited to the maximum and this results in a sort of politics:
If the postmodern photographer is more the manipulator of signs than the producer of an art object and the viewer is more the active decoder of messages than the passive consumer or contemplator of aesthetic beauty[. . .] the difference is one of the politics of representation. (Hutcheon, The Politics 45)

The fragmentation of culture is implicit in this sort of manipulation of images. However these images are capable of countering all sorts of resistance: "[. . .] photography could be seen as Baudrillard’s perfect industrial simulacrum: it is, by definition, open to copy, to infinite duplication "(Hutcheon, The Politics 120). Since photography is a product of technology, it has an accuracy and finesse that traditional art does not have. Photographic images disregard the continuity of life and instead concentrates on the fleeting moment. Their nature can be understood with reference to the unique mode of functioning of the camera:

It has lenses, angles, shutter speeds; it quotes from reality, renders life as instant; it snaps, magnifies, distorts, frames and excludes, creating, here, a variety of mixed and almost random images from an age of surreal absurdity, when life is already reportage and will soon be history. (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 230)

The electronic mass media as it manifests itself in television, has similarly a sign-system of its own. Television cannot be disregarded as a mere marvel of technology since it now determines the inner logic of culture. Its power comes from its simulation of a situation in which desire and
senses become one. It creates a new culture by creating artificial needs and tastes. The entertainment it provides forms the ideology of this culture. However it does not create any new values for culture, it just disrupts the values that are a part of it. It only blunts the humanism present in culture. Jameson has analysed how the simulacrum conditions human life. This analysis has been quoted in Steven Connor's essay "Aesthetics, pleasure, and value."

The immense culture of the simulacrum whose experience, whether we like it or not, constitutes a whole series of daily ecstasies and punctual fits of jouissance or schizophrenic dissolutions[...]. The value assigned to a work of art on the basis of the price-tag on it: "The exchange value of art has unofficially become its ultimate value, art has taken on the glamor of money. On the black market of thought, art is worth only what it is worth financially" (Kuspit 282). The ultimate degradation of art lies in its use as a kind of money. Thus art is subjugated in various ways by the power of money in capitalist society. Art is also assimilated into the world of advertising, where it has no purpose other than to promote the sale of certain commodities.
with the glamour of advertising is an effective tool for producing an excess of desire. Such commodified art simulates the technical perfection of hyperreality so as to hide the nihilism and emptiness of reality:

The glamour of art and the artist testifies to the hyperreality; they are the simulations of a public narcissism. The capitalist success of art, which is the 'proof' of this glamor, as it were, is the major social instance of the ecstasy of narcissistic consumption, that is, consumption which feeds on the self's sense of its glamor. It is an endless, relentless, restless consumption. Should the rapid consumption of art stop, capitalist authority would be devastated by a sense of blankness: without its artistic glamor the capitalist self would be spontaneously experienced as empty.

(Kuspit 288)

When capitalism manipulates art beyond a limit, it becomes distorted as well as eccentric. Such art reveals the damaged human psyche and becomes symptomatic of the defects inherent in capitalist culture. It feeds the artificial appetites generated by mass culture. Hence the artist faces dehumanization and a separation from his natural hungers. The pressures of capitalist culture further cause art to degenerate to kitsch. A situation is created so as to confuse the masses and make them accept anything as art. Aesthetic criteria is discarded so as to make it "possible and useful to assess the value of works of art according to the profits they yield" (Lyotard 76). Charles Newman hits at the logic of art in capitalist culture when he points out "'The vaunted fragmentation of art is no longer an aesthetic
choice, it is simply a cultural aspect of the economic and social fabric' (qtd. in McHale 220). Connor discusses Eagleton’s concept of the aesthetic in capitalist society:

[...] Eagleton [...] sees the emergence of the self-legitimating realm of the aesthetic after Kant as instructed by the political necessity of mediating experience and authority; the self-governing artefact, which blends together desire and law, sensuous pleasure and abstract structure, submits to no external principle of restraint or regulation, but is all the more effective for that as a model of the interiorization of authority in bourgeois society. (Regan, *The politics* 203)

In *HM*, Bradbury portrays a world filled with noise: "We now live in a hyper-modern world where panic noise [...] appears a kind of affective hologram providing a veneer of coherency for the reality of an imploding culture" (Kroker and Cook V). Music blaring out of the record player forms the background of the party held by the Kirks. This loud music is the after-effect of technology and it erupts as violent vibrations through the site of social interaction. It is meant for arousing the desires of the masses, and thereby prompt them towards erotic and libertarian activities. The mind itself faces the prospect of fragmentation, by being exposed to it. The party held by the Kirks shows the presence of the multi-ethnic generation and this is reflected in an Indian raga that is played during the occasion. Music is also there in boutiques so as to create in the people a state of mind that is necessary for consumption.
In the world of postmodern art, the spectacle called cinema occupies a dominating position. Hence film actors are treated as celebrities. An actor who attends one of the parties and who has dressed himself in an exotic way, has the unique distinction of having touched Glenda Jackson in a Ken Russell film. A trivial fact confers glamour on him because of the stress that cinema lays on the element of superficiality, or more specifically what Polan calls the "virtual condensation of sense into sight" (Arac, Postmodernism 62).

Culture now faces the continuous onslaught of photographic images. They seduce and thereby enslave the human mind. There is the instance of Barbara who is waiting for a train to London, being captivated by the bright photographs on a magazine display. These images compel her to buy it:

> Representations are productive: photographs, far from merely reproducing a pre-existing world, constitute a highly coded discourse which, among other things construct whatever is in the image as object of consumption--consumption by looking, as well as often quite literally by purchase. (Annette Kuhn qtd. in Hutcheon, The Politics 22)

The image of the woman is one that photography most exploits. Photography "constructs 'woman' as a set of meanings which then enter cultural and economic circulation on their own account" (Kuhn qtd. in Hutcheon, The Politics 22). The magazine projects female faces with simulated emotions and female bodies with added eroticism, and thus enamours the female mind. Without doubt, the photographic image "promotes the commodity most forcefully in bourgeois culture through the image of woman" (Jones 164). It can be further elaborated that the photograph is simultaneously a commodity
as well as an instrument of commodification. The photographic image pervades the entire society by undergoing infinite duplication as a part of the strategies of advertising.

The novel contains numerous references to different artistic productions, and they show the expanding avenues of art as well as its ideological biases. While on one hand there is the Marxist adaptation of "King Lear" (HM 65), on the other there is the capitalist adaptation of "The Good Woman of Setzuan" (HM 65). Both these adaptations show an aesthetic sense that mixes the art of one culture with the ideology of a different one. It is the product of the pluralism that is seen in this world as far as culture and ideology are concerned. Art is also used as propaganda for different ideologies and the universities become venues for it. The venues of art in a way show the spirit of internationalism that now colours it. There is the reference to Leon, an actor who belongs to the cast of the touring production of "Much Ado about Nothing" (HM 196), which is going to Australia and the United States.

The avant-garde is there in the novel as represented by the cast of "Puss in Boots" (HM 217). It is the product of an aesthetic sensibility that is chaotic. Such a sensibility has given birth to the abstract painting showing panic and frenzy, placed inside the Durkheim Room in the University of Watermouth. Eagleton has made clear how postmodernism has borrowed from modernism in "Capitalism, modernism and postmodernism:"

From modernism proper, postmodernism inherits the fragmentary or schizoid self, but eradicates all critical distance from it, countering this with a poker-faced presentation of 'bizarre' experiences which resembles certain
avant-garde gestures. From the avant-garde, postmodernism takes the dissolution of art into social life, the rejection of tradition, an opposition to 'high' culture as such, but crosses this with the unpolitical impulses of modernism. (Lodge, *Modern Criticism* 397)

The nude touring production of "The Importance of Being Earnest" (*HM* 81), whose cast and production staff are among those who attend the party of the Kirks, show to what extent the penchant for the celebration of the body has affected the realm of art. Here the aesthetic interest is derived from the instinct for exhibitionism. The extent of nudity determines the value of such art.

The aesthetic sense in Slaka as portrayed in *RLe* is one which shows the heavy influence of ideology. Since Slaka is a socialist country, the stress is on realism as opposed to the capitalist stress on fantasy. The art of the capitalist world is considered as decadent and hence the artist committed to socialism shuns it. However there are some who wish to balance their own view of art in relation to the socialist view and the capitalist view. For instance, the academician Plitplov, tries to relate Covent Garden and Bolshoi as well as Marxist aesthetics and capitalist aesthetics. Here aesthetics is seen to submit to the ideological set-up that in turn determines the economic framework. This again becomes an instance of the influence of money power in the realm of art. Capitalism exploits art for commercial ends, whereas Marxism does so for the sake of propagating ideology. In both cases, art deviates into excess.
In Slaka, martial music which symbolises the power of ideology is heard everywhere. The procession on the day of National Culture marches forward to its accompaniment. The music and the procession combine to form a spectacle that celebrates ideology. The medium of the cinema is also used to project ideologies. Hence they show stark realism; and they deal with heroes of labour, factories with streaming chimneys, nuclear power stations, and campaigns for teaching deaf children. As Polan points out, the cinematic spectacle becomes an effective tool for the state, since "it frames a world and banishes into non-existence everything beyond that frame" (Arac, *Postmodernism* 61). Thus the state is able to give the masses a vision of reality that excludes everything that does not confirm to the principles of socialism. Ideology exerts a totalising influence over art and hence the various movements in the field like Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and so on are subjected to the discipline of socialist realism. Only art that is politically correct is accepted by the state. Photographic images are also put to the service of ideology. The enlarged and stylised photo-portraits of Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Marx, Gregoric, and Wanko are hung everywhere in Slaka. These images help to give the people a constant awareness of the power of ideology. In other words, they strengthen the impression that ideology is present everywhere. Thus ideology is propagated through the infinite multiplication and dissemination of images. These images are a source of ideological mystification, and they form part of a politics of representation that makes it impossible for the aesthetic to exist free of ideology: "[...] all cultural forms of representation -- literary, visual, aural -- in high art or the mass media are ideologically grounded, that they cannot avoid involvement with social and political relations and apparatuses" (Hutcheon, *The Politics* 3).
In spite of the all pervading influence of ideology, the art of Slaka shows signs of the decadence and the commodification that characterises the art of the capitalist world. Slaka has several traditional art forms. However they are now being used to lure the tourist. Slaka is well known as a metropolis of gypsy music and hence such music is artificially created to satisfy the expectations of the tourist who visits this country. The chandeliered dining room of Hotel Slaka where Petworth stays, is made exotic by the presence of gypsies who are there to sing and entertain. Though they wear traditional dresses, their gesture of looking at the watch makes it clear that the entire programme is done for commercial reasons. A female folkloric singer is also there, whose fanciful and decorative traditional dress has been made erotic to tantalise the tourist. Her dress reveals more than it conceals, and she makes sexually suggestive gestures while she sings about vacancy and emptiness. It is an art form nihilistic in its spirit, though meant to arouse the desire of the spectator:

Now if art is the privileged sight for the appearance of desire, it is at its best when it is decadent. That is, art -- or rather, the aesthetic -- always implies the essential decay and self-destruction of meaning, the collapse of every meaning into dissolute ambiguity and uncertainty, or, as one might say, the reabsorption of meaning into desire, the overwhelming of meaning by the force of desire. (Kuspit 146-47)

Similarly there is the striptease performed in the cellar of a night club. It is an erotic spectacle that capitalises on the voyeuristic pleasure derived from the gradual unravelling of female nudity. Thus it is art that
centres on the celebration of the human body. It just arouses desire without bringing satisfaction. The diaphanous harem costume and the large earthenware pot of the striptease artist serve to give the erotic spectacle a touch of traditional art. They serve to mystify the body and thus make it a site for the free play of desire. This desire causes the eventual decay and destruction of aesthetic meaning.

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer look upon such play with desire as a characteristic of mass culture. It is the lack of gratification of desire that gives the aesthetic its value. Adorno and Horkheimer perceive the dangerous intensity as well as emptiness that underlies such art:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu. (qtd. in Regan, *The Politics* 209)

The maximum play of desire is seen in the opera “Vedontakal Vrop” (*RI* 229) performed at the state opera house in Slaka. The characters appear on the stage wearing exotic and extravagant costumes. The plot shows a proliferation of characters who have dressed themselves in a way that obscures their identity, i.e. boys as girls, young men as old men, and so on. Petworth enters an unreal, phantasmagoric world while watching the opera:

*Shards and fragments, chaos and Babel. Petworth sits in his plush seat in the great auditorium, where from the circle of*
boxes the audience in their costumes of bland civility
stare down onto the stage, and looks at the spectacle. Above
him the faces move, painted and prettified, the cosmetics
and the false beards gleam, the cadenced words, in the language he still
does not know, spill out in their mysterious series, high sound
that flows out erotically over him as if his body is being
washed in a shower of noise. The operatic confusion seems
entirely in tune with that tumultuous exhaustion, that waning of
utterance, that fading of self into contingent event that comes
over a man in the midst of a difficult journey. Yet the mind, even
when worn, still seeks order; lost in the garden of forking paths,
where the narratives divide and multiply, he struggles to find
a law of series, a system of signification, discover a story. [. . .] Only
impersonation seems true, the charade itself, the falsehood
that is being created, the codes that proliferate and turn into
counter-code. (RE 238)

This opera shares the characteristics of another of the performing
arts and hence an analysis of the Russian ballet will give a better understanding
of its nature:

Over and over, the adjectives used to describe the Russian Ballet
are 'barbaric', 'frenzied', 'voluptuous.' What the critics really meant
was that the ballet eroticised the body and flooded the stage with
colour and movement [. . .].

The Russian ballet was both 'ultra-natural' (wild, untamed,
passionate, chaotic, animal) and 'ultra-artificical' (fantastic,
androgynous, bejewelled, decorative, decadent). It was
represented as both barbaric and civilized, both wild and refined,
both loose and disciplined. (Wollen 26-27)
Such a domain of decadence and excess can be perceived in the opera "Vedontakat Vrop" (RI: 229).

DC unravels a world which derives inspiration from pop songs, radio commercials, television programmes, cyberpunk, and other sources of depthless art. The situation is such that anything can be marketed as art. Even the pieces of the Berlin wall are being regarded as artwork. It happens so because certain historical factors as in the case of the Berlin wall, make even ordinary objects fetishistically attractive. The aesthetic sense has broadened and it makes use of every possibility to generate new art. Thus the influences from the different constituents of culture form art. Art in turn becomes self-reflexive and parodic. Eagleton has analysed this aspect: "What is parodied by postmodernist culture, with its dissolution of art into the prevailing forms of commodity production, is nothing less than the revolutionary art of the twentieth-century avant-garde" (Lodge, Modern Criticism 385).

This is the age of the random mixing of forms and genres. Jay has to travel from Vienna to Budapest in a train as a part of his quest and during this journey he reads in the Kurier, a news item about the end of the era of Margaret Thatcher. The title of the item itself sounds like that of one of the Wagner operas. The names of the people involved have also been laid out like those of the cast of an opera. The names of Michael Heseltine, Douglas Hurd, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and John Major are there. They are supposed to act out the roles of the Opportunists, the Wise Old Hand, the Gravedigger, and the Vertical Take-off Aircraft in the opera, "The Struggle for the Succession" (DC'85). This news item also mentions some constituents that can make an opera more appealing in the postmodern age: "Add book by
Martin Amis, celestial-sounding music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Oedipal dreams by Freud, a chorus or two of 'Don't Cry for Me, Argentina,' and Vienna's newest musical extravaganza was plainly all ready to play" (JC'85).

An opera is an art form that represents, the multiplicity and pluralism of this world. In *Parody: ancient, modern and postmodern*, Margaret A. Rose has referred to Ihab Hassan's concept of parody:

Hassan's 1971 list of modernist and 'postmodernist' characteristics[...] gives[...] description of parody as a 'postmodernist' form which opposes 'Modernist Experimentalism' and places it in the category of 'Postmodernism' together with a mixture of modern and late-modern forms which include 'open, discontinuous, improvisational, indeterminate, or aleatory structures,' 'simultaneism, fantasy, play, humour, happening,' and 'increasing self-reflexiveness, intermedia, the fusion of forms, the confusion of realms.' (Rose 208-09)

Parody has become an essential constituent of postmodern art. It helps to reveal the irrationality and chaos in this world. Hence as Bradbury has pointed out, it has moved from the borders of art to occupy the central position:

"'An essential part of our art is an art of mirrorings and quotations, of inward self-reference and mock-mimesis, of figural violation and aesthetic self-presence, which has displaced and estranged the naive-mimetic prototypes we associate with much nineteenth-century writing [...]" (qtd. in Rose 270). Discontinuous and discordant elements acquire continuity and
coherence in the realm of the opera. The novel also refers to the opera "The Gondoliers" (DC 91) by W.S Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, which came out in 1889 and hence occupies an important place in literary history. It is also a mixture of fantastic dreams and celestial sounding music.

The very fact that the aesthetic sense has taken a penchant for the spectacular is evident in the celebrations held in Vienna in memory of the great masters of music. As a part of the celebrations, string quartets in evening dress stand in side-streets and play the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. We can see here, as Polan points out how "awareness of any realities other than the spectacular gives way to a pervading image of sense as something that simply happens, shows forth, but that cannot be told" (Arac, Postmodernism 56). Another spectacle that is more extravagant has been described in DC:

So, that July, lit by lasers and beamed worldwide (courtesy the transmission facilities of the Eiffel Tower), an international soprano sang the Marseillaise, and in the Champs-Elysees, Egyptian belly dancers gyrated with Carribean limbo dancers, gays danced with lesbians, Structuralist philosophers bunny-hopped with feminist gynocritics, Hungarian security men tangoed with French riot cops, in a great multiplication of images and styles and cultures and genders, so that everything was everything and nothing at the same time.

(DC: 88-89)

Such spectacles unravel an age in which the only reality is hyperreality. As Polan points out, it is motivated by "a force that exceeds the denotational signification of the scene" (Arac, Postmodernism 55). The signifiers that
constitutes the spectacle create a new fictional world. It gives importance to the surface, and not to any underlying truth or value. It provides for a restructuring of the fragmented entities that constitute postmodern culture. Thus it offers the hope of some kind of unity in heterogeneity. Beyond all, it expresses the emptiness behind the excess that is present in culture. Because of the hold the spectacle has on the masses, many art forms now show a tendency to assume its characteristics. A play written by Criminale, "The Women Behind Martin Luther" (DC 25), is referred to as an epic spectacle and this shows the influence exerted on even a great philosopher.

The novel also contains evidence of the use of photography to eroticize the female body. Criminale, himself, is shown as a person with a passion for celebrating female nudity. He has taken nude photographs of his wives and mistresses. He has also adorned his room with these photographs, thus reifying them as objects of desire and as signs of his power. The photograph subverts femininity through excess: "While the photograph itself acts as a fetish, images of female faces and bodies also fulfill the Freudian scenario of fetishism" (Jones 165-66). The impact that photography has on culture is revealed in conferences like the one on 'Erotics in Postmodern Photography.' This conference concentrates on the analysis and discussion of the erotic and non-erotic aspects of the nude. The novel also provides the instance of a Malaysian bride who is photographed while sitting astride a Henry Moore statue. This photograph aspires to give the bride the same value
as the object on which she sits, both being sources of male power and pleasure. All the conferences mentioned in the novel show the dominating presence of photographers, who are there to capture the event and later present it through photographic images that exaggerate and distort the reality.

Television occupies a central position in the postmodern world of entertainment. The television screen projects commodified art forms:

TV is information society to the hyper, just though where information means the liquidation of the social, the exterminism of memory (in the sense of human remembrance as aesthetic judgement), and the substitution of the simulacrum [. . . ] for actual historical contexts. (Kroker and Cook 275)

Hence to understand something as reality, it has to be seen on the television screen: "So she was wrapped up in all the modern technics [. . . ] that we need to turn real life into technological fiction so that we can perceive it as reality again [. . . ]" (DC 1). Jay feels that "the searching, sucking lens of the television camera" (DC 3) is the most erotic thing in the world. At the same time he finds himself alienated by it, as his thoughts during the Booker Prize ceremony make clear:

Thanks to modern technology I had become a long green banana, rocking on my heels and talking interminable tosh. My body was transformed, my thoughts rendered outrageous, my manner gross, nothing was quite as I understood it to be in so-called real life. (DC 14)
Baudrillard sees in such simulation the elements of parody. But here the parody is not at all intentional and hence it is empty. Baudrillard has discussed this matter in *Simulations*:

Today when the real and the imaginary are confused in the same operational totality, the esthetic fascination is everywhere. [...] A kind of non-international parody hovers over everything, of technical simulation, of indefinable fame to which is attached an esthetic pleasure, that very one of reading and of the rules of the game (Waugh, *Postmodernism: A Reader* 187-88).

Baudrillard looks upon art and reality only in terms of the hyperreal. In fact, he subjugates them to the hyperreal. Hence he points out: "[...] hyperrealism is the limit of art, and of the real, by respective exchange, on the level of the simulacrum, of the privileges and the prejudices which are their basis" (Waugh, *Postmodernism* 186). People now live in the realm of the hyperreal, and hence they need not concern themselves with the boundaries of art and reality. They are satisfied with the totality offered by hyperreality. When the distinctions between reality and art are gone, art can be perceived everywhere. According to Baudrillard, it integrates itself into the reproducing machines of capitalism: "[...] art enters into its indefinite reproduction: all that reduplicates itself, even if it be the everyday and banal reality, falls by the token under the sign of art, and becomes esthetic" (Waugh, *Postmodernism* 188).
The entire novel revolves round a television programme that deals with the life of Criminale. Lavinia and Ros of the company Nada Productions, want Jay to research and prepare this programme as part of a huge arts feature for Eldorado Television called 'Great Thinkers of the Age of Glasnost.' The aesthetic sense of the producers is motivated by commercial factors and hence they want the programme to be one that ferrets out the sensational secrets in Criminale's life. This is clear when Lavinia says:

And I expect if you turn over a Modern Master, you'll probably find a Modern Mistress. Honey, I want life and loves. I want friends and enemies. I want flesh and bones. I want peaks and troughs, failures and successes. I want locations, cities, houses, churches, parks. I want some people we can get our teeth into. I don't want quarrels with Schmeidegger on being and non-being. [...] Just give me ten pages: life, loves, family, sex, money, politics. [...] Find something we can use on television. It's a fleshy human medium, with great stories. (DC 28)

Jay experiences during his travels the pluralism in the realm of art. At Stuttgart, Jay visits the postmodern Staatsgalerie which exhibits the new aesthetic sense in all its plenitude:

Inside, where I hovered for a while in front of the frantic moderns, Nolde and Kirschner, wealth and art sat easily side by side. I talked to a reverential guide who explained to me that everything in the building was the quotation of a quotation, the pastiche of a pastiche [...]. (DC 319)
Jameson considers pastiche as an essentially postmodern form:

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motives, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. (qtd. in Rose 222)

Thus pastiche is borne out of the postmodern tendency to subvert everything that is normal. It also reflects the lack of faith in ideologies.

The passion for collecting art objects is seen among the characters in this novel. Their aesthetic sense is associated with possession and consumption. The Villa Barolo as well as the hacienda of Gertla Riviero has walls, adorned with paintings. Professor Monza has a good collection of South American art. It is an urban fashion to decorate the walls of penthouse apartments with Impressionist and Modernist paintings. Behind this trend lies the desire to have an "idiosyncratic collection of 'visually interesting' materials" (Kuspit 149). This desire nullifies the aesthetic with fetishistic adoration. Eagleton has discussed the self-referentiality of such art objects:

To say that social reality is pervasively commodified is to say that it is always already 'aesthetic'--textured, packaged, fetishized, libidinalized; and for art to reflect reality is then for it to do no more than mirror itself, in a cryptic self-referentiality which is indeed one of the inmost
structures of the commodity fetish. [. . .] If the unreality of
the artistic image mirrors the unreality of its society as a
whole, then this is to say that it mirrors nothing real and so
does not really mirror at all. (Lodge, Modern Criticism 387)

Works of art have been completely and systematically commodified. The
good of art is now identified with its price which is multiplied many times
by the auctioneer in the art market. Thus a painting by Vincent van Gogh can
fetch as much as fifteen million when sold at an auction:

We live in a special age of art, special not because of its stylistic revolution or because of its new sense of artistic truth, or even because of a new sense of the irony of art's existence, but because it is the age of the capitalist understanding and dominance of art. The simplest sign of this is that art has been completely commodified.

(Kuspit 282)

Criminale's own ideas regarding art are revealed in the novel. He
analyses art contrasting it with power: "Power manages, and art decreates.
Power seeks a monologue and art is a dialogue. Art destroys, what power has
constructed. So these two can never discuss properly with each other [. . .]"
(DC 147). Criminale also criticises Georg Lukacs's view of art: "For him
art was ideas. Ideas construct politics, politics construct reality, and it must
be the correct reality. Only if the idea was correct was the art correct."(DC
147-48). The collapse of Marxism has proved that Lukacs's viewpoint is
wrong. Criminale certainly believes in keeping the aesthetic free from the
excesses of ideology. At the same time, he falls a victim to the seductive
strategies of the postmodern aesthetic.
The world of literature is today experiencing a lot of borrowing, assimilating, and intertextualising. Literature has become a product of what Pound calls the "paideuma, the cultural distillation the artist needs to create his work" (Ruland and Bradbury XVI). It cannot help reflecting the new facilities for communication, and the cultural assimilation that has resulted. New literary styles and forms are proliferating across the world. A multiplicity of historical, personal, political, and aesthetic codes are now employed in works of fiction. The pluralization of cultures and meanings, becomes implicit in every novel. Very often real and fictional worlds occupy the same space, once more breaking the barriers between reality and unreality. Christopher Nash explains the nature of intertextuality thus in World Postmodern Fiction:

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\text{Intertextual indeterminacy pivots on the conception that all utterances, all signs, are texts whose meanings--produced by the reader are merely 'nodes' in the total text, the network of the language of signs in operation in human experience. Books, traffic signals, advertisements, facial expressions, bottle caps […] all belong to this […]}. \quad (150)
\]

Their interrelationship is not stable, thus providing the opportunity for the infinite play of the signifier. The constituents of the text modify each other to show that there are many possibilities that lead towards textual meaning. The multiplicity in the interrelationship between the signs that permeate the textual fabric, paves way for indeterminacy of meaning:
The crises it seeks to evoke is that a text appears to 'give us' too many 'things,' which melt into further signs, which signify other 'things,' which in their turn [. . .] ad infinitum; signs participate in a constant condition of flux, of becoming, their definite individual identity forever displaced. (Nash 151)

The references in the text relate to the material in the text as well as to that outside it. Intertextual allusions to the author's own works make fiction gravitate towards its own core. Excess becomes a characteristic of such texts: "It moves towards plenitude and through this towards the exhaustion of possibilities (as Barth would describe it) or through a growing anarchy of possibilities towards entropy as (Pyncheon would say)" (Nash 152). No text can exist free from history, and this results in another kind of intertextuality, because history itself consists of a body of texts. Often the author uses an excess of historical reference to make the text dense and powerful. The author's attempts to give greater authority to his voice, make the text interweaved with historical data. The fictional world and the historical world always exist in a state of tension. The television and the cinema also function as inner worlds within the fictional world of the literary text. Through this strategy the text is in fact reflecting a world coloured and motivated by hyperreality. Such inner worlds make the reality as it is represented in the text, unstable. These worlds also contribute to the element of the carnival within the text: "Representations of circuses, fairs, sideshows, and amusement parks often function as residual indicators of the carnival context in postmodernist fiction" (McHale 174). Such texts are a reaction against texts which come from centres of power and which
contain only one fictional world projecting the point of view of the authority. Carnivalised literature interweaves together disparate styles and voices. Bakhtin looks upon the text as a site where a plurality of meanings exist in a state of conflict. Out of this plurality and variety, dialogue originates and this in turn can be looked upon as a sort textual carnival. In other words, different discourses are put to play in the novel. No one discourse or voice is allowed to dominate the others.

The narrative in the text is affected by the information explosion that has taken over culture. Such excess of information exhausts the possibilities of the text. Barth first regarded such literature as that of exhaustion, but later redefined it as one of replenishment. To truly express the contemporary cultural experience, the writer should incorporate a lot of data in the text. Such texts are a product of "the 'maximalist' impulse Hassan speaks of [. . .] "(Nash 215). The information that is inserted into the text does not have any order. Hence there is no possibility of it leading to any resolution. The text remains in the condition of open-endedness. There is an excess of signifiers in the text, but no signification. The various elements that constitute the text remain separate thereby fragmenting it. Thus the excess of data creates anarchy within the text. The literary work becomes a collage just like the cultural environment in which it has been generated. It inevitably portrays a world that is filled with a dehumanising energy that is hurling everything towards entropy. As far as the reader is concerned, his consciousness is overloaded by such texts and as a result he faces confusion. The reader becomes the site where the multiplicity that is projected by the text converges.

In the postmodern world, reality has become unreal. This instability is represented by the literary text which shows real and fictional worlds occupying
the same space. By subverting and destroying reality, the postmodern text exposes the strategies that went into its making. Metafiction is the term given to a text showing this characteristic. In metafiction, the author himself declares that the text is based on his imagination and has no connection with the real world. Metafiction exhibits extreme self-consciousness about language. The metafictional text contains discussions about the very act of writing. It exposes and questions conventions of the literary craft. Metafiction concerns itself with "a parodic, playful, excessive, or deceptively naive style of writing" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 2). Fiction is not considered as something limited to the text. The possibility of it existing in the world outside or the concept of the outside world as fiction, is also considered. Thus it exaggerates the instability of the real world. It offers "extremely accurate models for understanding the contemporary experience of the world as a construction, an artifice, a web of independent semiotic systems" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 9). Now metafiction has evolved into extravagant forms like magic realism.

Metafiction exhausts the text by making use of all its possibilities. One way of responding to "the sense of oppression by the endless systems and structures of present day society--with its technologies, bureaucracies, ideologies, institutions and traditions--is the construction of a playworld which consists of similar endless systems and structures" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 38). Metafictional strategies problematise reality through the subversion of such systems and structures.

The postmodern text is also characterised by the author who is dead. Once the task of creating the text has been completed the author is as good as dead, and hence there is no reason to look for traces of him in the text. The notion that writing proceeds from a unified source called the author is no longer relevant.
A text is pluralistic, multidimensional; and the site of the interaction of many writings, discourses, ideologies, and points of view. What is meant by the writer's death is that his writing has taken precedence over him. Barthes has analysed the process of writing: "Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (Lodge, Modern Criticism 168). The death of the author does not mean that the author has been completely eliminated. It is only that he has been displaced. Sometimes there results the ambiguous situation in which he oscillates between presence and absence.

The chaotic condition of culture has contributed to the indeterminacy that characterises literature. This condition of literature has in turn generated critical philosophies like deconstruction and poststructuralism. While deconstruction is concerned with the slippages of meaning in the text, poststructuralism reduces the text to a series of signs. In "Ezra Pound and the 'Economy' of Anti-Semitism," Andrew Parker discusses the presuppositions that a deconstructionist has with regard to the text: "As thematized by deconstruction, for example, excess would be a property of all written texts, a product of the structural incapacity of any form of discourse to master fully its own rhetorical mode" (Arac, Postmodernism 80). Such critical philosophies are a result of an excess of theorisation. The age of critical hyperactivity has only created "a situation of plurality without resolution" (Ruland and Bradbury 418).

The text of HM contains intertextual references to the radical works of Howard. One book by Howard is titled "The Defeat of Privacy" (HM 5).
book is an attempt to prove that everything private, including the self has disappeared from society. Cultural revolution has created an atmosphere of openness and has made everything accessible. Everything is now in a state of nudity and availability. Howard's radical ideals are based on Marxism and he uses his books as tools to propagate them in the capitalist society. "The Death of the Bourgeoisie" (HM 52) is another radical text written by Howard. This is again a text that is directed against the capitalist society. Howard's work "The Coming of the New Sex" (HM 37) deals with the radical changes in culture, particularly with reference to sexuality. The book traces the restructuring of sexual mores in Britain. Even the traditional cultural entities called 'man' and 'woman' have become insignificant. There is the need to use new signifiers to denote gender and sex. In fact, the book is a product of Howard's own experiences in the matter of sexual relationships. Hence Howard's wife Barbara tells him that he is "'a kind of self-made fictional character who's got the whole story on his side, just because he happens to be writing it' " (HM 33). According to her, Howard has just written about the emptiness in their life and he is trying to convert the incidents in their life into a grand plot. The book becomes a commercial success. Advanced publicity helps to boost its sales. This shows that it has become a commodity that needs good marketing. In fact even the title of Howard's book has been suggested by the publishers who could sense the mood of the market. It invites criticism from the culturally attuned critics and they regard it as a work that has captured the age. Howard had written the book without much research, but the argument in it makes it powerful. The book is not a result of empty theorising, but something that has come out of Howard's own experience of the sexually permissive society. The book turns Howard into a celebrity and he is interviewed by the Observer. Howard's works
by existing in intertextual relationship with the text of *HM* contributes to the radical content in it: "[. . .] 'every text situates itself at the junction of several texts of which it is at once the rereading, the accentuation, the condensation, the displacement and the inwardness (profondeur)'" (Phillip Sollers qtd. in Nash 150-51).

Several other texts are referred to in the novel. "The Naked Ape" (*HM* 11) appears as a part of a window display. Barbara reads "The Pursuit of the Millennium" (*HM* 71) while lying in the bathtub. There is the instance of Miss Callendar discussing "The Faerie Queen" (*HM* 141) in her class. This is followed by Howard's discussion with her about William Blake's poetry. He interprets Blake's poetry to convey the idea that desires should not be repressed. This interpretation forms a part of his strategy for seducing her. However Miss Callendar interprets Blake's poetry as conveying the opposite meaning so as to resist his strategy. The instability of meaning is revealed in these multiple interpretations. Here we find how "the challenge to interpretative certainty has made each individual consciousness -- each reader or group of readers an active partner in creating the meaning of the object perceived" (Ruland and Bradbury 423). On another occasion, she quotes Henry James's words that the house of fiction has many windows, to make it clear that fiction can be approached from many angles. She here speaks in defence of the freedom to take up different critical positions: "The pluralism of the age has multiplied theories of art, reading and culture: these in turn have led to disputes that for the moment seem unresolvable" (Ruland and Bradbury 418). Then there is the academician Dr. Zachery who frequently refers to texts to exhibit his knowledge. Zachery boasts of having completely read Talcott Parson's "The Social System" (*HM* 153). He proposes to use this text to highlight his micro-sociological scheme
of things. Literary references are made by other characters during academic encounters. During one such occasion, Howard advises Flora that it is better to do research in sex and families than about Christadelphianism in the Wakefield plays. Such research topics are indicative of critical hyperactivity. Thus several texts related to literature and sociology are linked to the text of *HM*. They give a high level of referentiality to the novel. The text of the novel thus assimilates the writings issuing from the various centres of culture.

*HM* can be looked upon as a typical example of British metafiction, since it is self-conscious and realistic at the same time. The novel parodies realism to show that history itself is a fiction. Bradbury exerts complete control over his plot and characters:

> The Kirks are explicitly 'types' who exist in the service of plot: the plot of history/fiction which envelops the plotter Howard through the superior shaping powers of the novelist himself. He, allowing Howard the delusion of freedom, reminds the reader of his ultimate control through the ironic repetition of events at the end. (Waugh, *Metafiction* 49)

Howard is under the impression that he is in control of himself and the historical situation. But really he is a prisoner of the constructs of the language which the author has laid out. His ideas and his style are actually those of Bradbury's. He finds it difficult to accept the various possibilities offered by the historical context.

The text shows a metafictional awareness of the creative strategies that underlie a work of literature. The act of writing fiction is itself in a way integrated into the text. The instability in the relation between fiction and reality gives birth to such self-consciousness:
This fiction is for Beamish [. . .]. It is a total invention with delusory approximations to historical reality, just as is history itself. Not only does the University of Watermouth, which appears here, bear no relation to the real University of Watermouth (which does not exist) or to any other university; the year 1972, which also appears, bears no relation to the real 1972, which was a fiction anyway; and so on. (HM "Author's Note")

The incident dealing within Carmody's accusation against Howard becomes a further instance of the problematisation of the relationship between fiction and reality. Since Miss Callendar disapproves of the literary form called story, she takes up a sceptical attitude in this matter. She hears Carmody's story which is one that portrays Howard as an immoral person who gives good marks to his student Felicity purely on the basis of sexual favours. She reads something different in this story. She says that Howard is really accused of persecuting a student like Carmody who prefers to differ from him in the matter of ideology. Howard gets the impression that Miss Callendar is favouring Carmody's version. Miss Callendar's reply stresses the instability of reality: "I don't know whether his interpretation of what he saw is right at all. I have some reason, don't I, for thinking he saw what he saw" (HM 208). Howard regards Carmody's version as superficial and backed by photographs which distort reality. Miss Callendar sums up Howard's story as one containing enough psychology and emotion. She says:

It's less ironic and detached, more, a piece of late nineteenth-century realism. But his has more plot and event. I mean, in his, Miss Phee needs help quite frequently. And then you have to rip off one evening and help Dr. Beniform and then there's the little episode with me, not treated in your version at all, though I found it quite significant. (HM 209).
Miss Callendar further points out that Carmody's story has the advantage of having an ending. Then Howard responds to the effect that his would have a different one. This is enough for Miss Callendar to strike at the logic of the whole argument: "It shows how different a story can be if you change the point d'appui, the angle of vision" (HM 209). Thus the question as to which story is true cannot be answered. Howard points out that Carmody has spied upon him. Miss Callendar contradicts him again: "[...] as Henry James says, the house of fiction has many windows. Your trouble is you seem to have stood in front of most of them" (HM 210). The relationship between fiction and reality is problematized here.

A metafictional strategy appears right at the beginning of the text of RE: "This is a book, and what it says is not true. You will not find Slaka, Glit, or Nogod on any map, and so you will probably never make the trip there" (RE: "Author's Note"). Thus the setting of the novel itself is problematised. In Salman Rushdie's Shame, there is a similar technique that creates in the reader a vagueness about the setting: "The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space. My story, my fictional country exists. like myself at a slight angle to reality" (qtd. in Hutcheon, The Politics 77). Bradbury has discussed this aspect regarding the setting of a novel: "[...] how do you write about the place where you live? I almost never do, not anymore. I used to. Instead, I find myself writing about foreign places, invented places, about the past and stories that come from other cultures" (Ramnarayan interviews Bradbury in The Hindu Magazine Literary Review 2 Nov. 1997 X). Bradbury continues his metafictional strategies beyond the text of RE, by referring to it in another text titled Why Come to Slaka?. In it there is a section that supposed to have been written by Princip, one of the characters in RE:
the novellum of Bradburyim is not to be commended. It is not a useful story, and alludes to events that did not happen particularly a language revolution, the so-called 'Revolution of the UUU's,' when liberal elements sought to change the language. [. . .] we are proud to say that these events which did not occur afford decisive proof that free and frank discussion, dissent, and criticism are always permitted in my country. (28)

In RE, Princip's life as a dissident writers in ideology-oriented Slaka, is portrayed. It is one that shows the intersection of real and fictional worlds. The writer is always spied upon and hence has no privacy. The writer's consciousness itself is conditioned by the act of spying. Continuous exposure to spying makes it schizophrenic and divided. The writer is forced to hide her real identity under a mask. The spies and agents in turn construct another self for the writer. Princip refers to this terrible situation when she says: "They have made your story, a 'bad novel,' and you are in it for ever" (RE 211). Here the text constructed by the interrogators attains greater credibility than the real life of the writer. Actually Princip became a writer by revolting against ideological oppression, as represented by her husband. Princip describes her transformation:

I was somewhere else, with someone else, and already I was writer. I could not live in a world where you think words you cannot speak. Of course, if people made of reality a prison, then others will wish to escape from it. I wrote down my words, the nonsense and the not nonsense, the words I could speak and the words I was trying to learn to speak, the words that were not yet words. I learned then a certain sense of existence. (RE 221)
Princip believes that a writer should link his or her spirit to history, and thus become a part of the process of evolution. A writer should not become a slave to the state. The intersection of the fictional and the real in Princip's life is reflected also in the magical realism in her work. She has adopted this mode since this is the age of "fabulatory extravaganzas" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 9). In her works, Princip combines the conventional elements of the fairy tale with the realities of the political set-up in Slaka. They are characterised by narrative indeterminacy and hence subject to multiple interpretations. Princip's conversation with Petworth itself shows the influence of magical realism. Princip declares that she is a good witch and thus she transforms herself into a fairy tale character. Princip claims that she has changed the weather, has made Petworth disappear, and has brought him to her room. All these form part of Princip's strategy to transport Petworth to another world. She makes clear to him that he has to obey the rules of the fairy tale which he has entered: "In a fairy story, you do not eat a cake. Or talk at all to the people with the red hairs. Or open a locked door, or go inside a room that is forbidden. If you do, things will change for you, and perhaps it will not always be nice" (RE 214). Thus the conventions of the art of fiction are laid bare here to problematize the relationship between fiction and reality. Princip here exploits "the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 2). Princip uses the language of fiction in a real-life situation to show that the real world is as unstable as the world inside a text: "Contemporary metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 7).
Later Princip breaks the very illusion that she creates, by telling Petworth that he is not in a fairy story. What has been enacted here is "the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 6). Princip then tries another strategy on him. She knows that he will not able to read her texts written in a foreign language. However there is something she possesses that he can read and that is her body. So she tells him: "'Now you know I have a body that you can read, it has been your book and you have read it in a certain way for the pleasure' " (*RE* 218). Thus the body is here seen as a text which can be interpreted according to one's will. The body itself becomes a part of "the seamless fabric of possible utterances which the text draws into the open" (Nash 150). The body functions as a text that gives sensuous pleasure to the one who interprets it. Princip wants to create a story in which Petworth is a character, so as to escape from the unpleasant reality, which is the political set-up of Slaka. But reality always comes back. Princip exploits to the maximum the unstable relationship between fiction and reality. This is a way of coping with "'the kind of unreal reality that modern reality has become' " (Gerald Graff qtd. in McHale 219-20). Princip continues with the strategies of magic realism so as to seduce Petworth. She attributes magical qualities to the sexual attraction that exists between them. Even physical objects like the bed on which they are going to make love, are considered as things not belonging to the real world. Princip does so as to give existence some meaning. Fiction raises life to a plane that is superior to reality. Princip once more intensifies Petworth's feeling that he is going to enter a magical world. She tells him that she is "magicking" (*RE* 222) him. Again she narrates the conventions of the fairy tale:
Do you remember Stupid. do you think you know how he climbed the tower, perhaps he did what you do, perhaps he found the witch was the princess also. Well, I am your sex princess, I am witching you, I am taking you where you cannot go, think of a word you do not know, I am that word, try to understand it [...]. (RE 222)

Princip tries to annihilate Petworth’s awareness of the real world. She also tries to obliterate his memories including that regarding his wife. Thus she seduces Petworth and when the act of lovemaking is over, she calls it her best story. In this way, she demonstrates the magical side of reality to Petworth. In Princip’s world, everything real is subject to transformation into fiction. Her language is the language of fiction that merges with the instabilities that characterise the real world in the postmodern age. The logic of extravagant modes like magic realism lies in this sort of extreme reaction to reality. In fact, Princip’s words create an excess in Petworth’s mind. He is left confused as to what is real and what is unreal. The disorientation in Petworth’s mind makes him regard the journey to Slaka itself as a fictional sentence, within which his own self faces deconstruction.

There are two references that further contribute to the metafictional aspect of RE. One is the reference to a campus writer Brodge famous for the work "Changing Westward" (RE 269). It is obvious that the writer referred to is Bradbury himself. The second reference is to HM, as one among the texts displayed at a shop in the airport. Thus the text of RE refers to the author as well as to his work.

In an age of stylistic pluralism, a literary text parodies different styles. At the beginning of RE, Bradbury adopts the mode of a tourist guide book:
If you should ever happen to make the trip to Slaka, that fine flower of middle European cites, capital of commerce and art, wide streets and gipsy music, then, whatever else you plan to do there, do not, as the travel texts say, neglect to visit the Cathedral of Saint Valdopin a little outside the town, at the end of the tramway route, near to the power station, down by the slow, marshy, mosquito breeding waters of the great River Niyt. (Rus 1)

Since this novel deals with a person who visits a foreign country, the style parodied is that of the tourist guide book: "Postmodern parody is both deconstructively critical and constructively creative, paradoxically making aware of both the limits and the power of representation in any medium" (Hutcheon, The Politics 98). Parody creates an intense awareness of the instability of text. Parody in a text is the result of the work done upon other texts. The parody of the travel guide is also there in Why Come To Slaka?:

You will not regret. For holiday-making there are fine modern hotels, where your room will often have balcony with W.C. For the sun-loafer, there are our fine beeches. For the glutton, Slaka is a lasting festival of oat cuisine. The dionysian disciple cannot fail to become delirious with our fine local vintages. (32)

Parody as used by Bradbury is an outcome of the philosophical revolution brought about by poststructuralism. Since the signifier has become an entity that floats freely, devices like parody tend to dominate the field of fiction. Parody itself partakes of the free-floating nature of the signifier:

"Bradbury had also described parody itself as a 'floating signifier' in the second version of his 1980 essay An Age of Parody. Style in the Modern Arts' [...] and Lodge's suggestion, in
his 'Afterword' to Mensonge, that 'Bradbury/Bunbury' has himself become 'a free floating signifier' has extended Bradbury's humorous treatment [...] even further" (Rose 266).

Bradbury's awareness of the history of parody and its relevance for the present age, facilitates the extensive use of this device in his works. In support of this practice he says: "So it seems clear that in our century parodic activity has vastly increased, moved, in art and literature, in practice and theory, from the margins to the centre, and become a primary level of textual or painterly representation" (Rose 270). For him, it is the ultimate postmodern device that helps to expose the gaps in the text, thereby paving way for the play of meaning.

Then there is the intertextual reference to a text related to travel and tourism, i.e. "Helpful Hints for British Businessmen" (RE 17). It contains descriptions in a style that is typical of such texts:

The airport at Slaka is in open countryside, situated 8km/5mi to the east of the city [...] Buses to the Central Comflug office, Wodjimutu 217 (no check-in facilities), are available. Tickets must be purchased in advance from the airport tobacco kiosk, marked Litti and are not available on board. (RE 17)

Numerous references to the history of Slaka are there in the text of RE. They function also at a level of intertextuality, since history itself is now regarded as constituted of texts. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has pointed out in "Literary Criticism and The Politics of the New Historicism:" "Contemporary critics tend to insist disproportionately on history as the ways in which authors have written about the past at the expense of what might actually have happened, insist that history consists primarily of a body of texts and a strategy of reading
or interpreting them" (Veeser, *The New Historicism* 216). The narrative of the invasions of Slaka by the Swedes, Medes, Prussians, Russians, Asians, Thracians, Tartars, Cassocks, Mortars, and Turds are mentioned in the text. These invasions added several new elements to the cultural fabric of Slaka. In fact the fluctuations in its history has been such that, it has been turned into a metafictional entity which sometimes exists and sometimes does not. The reality of its size is also unstable since its territories expand and contract frequently. Hence it is said that "so confused is its past that the country could now be in a place quite different from that in which it started" (*RE* 2). The text of Slaka's history shows a complex mixture of races, languages, and cultures. Uncountable emperors, princelings, thains, margraves, bishop-krakators, and mamelukes have ruled over Slaka. The history of Slaka is an obscure and contorted text:

As a result, in Slaka history is a mystery, and it is not surprising that the nation's past has been very variously recorded and the facts much disputed, for everyone has a story to tell. Perplexities abound, accounts contradict, and accurate details are wanting. But there is no doubt that the history goes back into the deepest mists of ancient Europe, back into the dark and virgin forest, where all history is supposed to begin, all stories to start. (*RE* 2)

Hutcheon recognises historicity in such intertexts. She points out in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*:

[... ] the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the 'world'
and literature. The textual incorporation of these intertextual pasts as a constitutive structural element of postmodernist fiction functions as a formal marking of historicity -- both literary and 'worldly.' (124)

There is a paragraph relating to the history of Slaka, supposed to be taken from an encyclopedia. It gives the following information:

No certain historical data exists for the period prior to the Xth. An obscure passage in a chronic by Nostrum, Monk of Kiev, suggests a possible origin for these people somewhere in the region of the Bosphorus, but even this much is disputed. [. . .] Long periods of outside occupation depressed the people, until the national awakening of the XIXth, led by Prince Bohumil the Shy, and celebrated by the poet Hrovdat, killed on his horse in 1848 as he declaimed epic verse in battle. (RE 2-3)

The information regarding history given here is based on obscure texts from the past. Hayden White points out in "New Historicism: A Comment:" "[. . .] historical accounts of the past are themselves based upon the presumed adequacy of a written representation or textualisation of the events of the past to the reality of these events themselves" (Veeser, The New Historicism 297).

In Slaka, history has covered two world wars and has reached the present socialist phase. Here onwards the text of Slaka's history becomes coloured with socialist ideology. Hence it is perceived as a dialectical progress. Jack Lindsay has discussed historical materialism in his work The Crisis in Marxism: "Historical materialism meant a philosophy and science of history which grasped the essential forces and structures at work in human development, indeed in all process" (3). However ideology will never be completely able to explain the complex and rich text. It will only serve to distort and falsify it.
A large part of the history to Slaka is embedded in the Cathedral of Saint Valdopin. Its structure serves as another text that reveals the different periods in its history. There are many stories associated with Valdopin, the patron saint of the church. There is no definite information regarding the place from where Valdopin came. However, he was able to convert the prince who ruled Slaka at that time, and thus enable the transformation of the tribe into a nation. He set up his own alphabet and translated the Holy Texts, so that the common man could read them. Thus, the story of Valdopin shows textuality. Valdopin moved on to other territories with his mission, but was killed and thus became a martyr. Thereafter the story takes on the elements of magic. The people of Slaka tried to recover the body of Valdopin from the pagans. According to the arrangement, the body would be traded for an equal weight of gold. But no amount of gold could balance it. However, the problem was solved by an old woman with magical powers, who balanced it with a tiny gold coin. Thus here we see history turning into a fairy tale. Now the tomb of Valdopin has become a place where miracles happen all the time. This story has been interpreted in many different ways:

Like all good stories, it can be read in many fashions. For the romantic nationalist historians, it is of course a tale about the emergence of a people. For Christian theologians, it is a miraculous fable of divine intercession. For the Marxist aestheticians, it is a classic socialist realist allegory displaying that power lies not with princes and their capital but with the combined power of the common people. For the folklorists, it is -- with its contract, delay, magical intervention and happy outcome -- a perfect example of the morphology of folktale.
And for more fashionable thinkers of the structuralist persuasion, debating these matters [...] well is it not a perfect example of [...] Lévi-Strauss's the raw and the cooked? (RE 7)

The multiplicity and pluralism in the matter of critical theories and their interpretations are seen here. This has only contributed to the instability in meaning in the matter of fiction as well as history. Now history is being studied from new angles and the inherent contradictions are being closely analysed. Such intense study has led some historians to announce the end of history as such.

The intertextuality in RE is not limited to historical references. Many other texts find mention in it. There is the reference to the books displayed at the airport. They include thrillers like "Airport," campus novels like "HM," and serious works like "Ulysses" (RE 22). All these books appear in a situation that shows the commodification of literature. Mass culture has erased the distinction between the highbrow and the lowbrow.

The texts written in the language of Slaka find mention in RE. Their titles in Cyrillic and Latin alphabets appear as just signs for him. Petworth feels that they form certain codes from which the meaning cannot be deciphered. There is an excess of signs here, but meaning is absent. The text in a foreign language becomes a labyrinth which does not offer any clues. A reader like Petworth can see in this text only "a function of the multiplicity of relations between signs" (Nash 151). When Petworth opens the novel "Nodu Hug" (RE 111) written by Princip, he sees only blocks of mysterious words, which are organised into paragraphs and chapters. He is able to perceive only the structure and not the meaning. The illustration of an expressionist dark castle on the cover functions
as another sign for Petworth. A story narrated by Princip also forms a part of the text of RE. It looks like a simple fairy tale, but is really a sort of political allegory that expresses the power equations in Slaka. The main character in it is called Stupid and the story deals with his adventures. It has conventional characters like the giant, the witch, and the princess. The story contains Stupid's journey to another land, where he falls in love with a princess. The giant appears as the villain, whom Stupid kills so as to marry the princess. The Utopian magical land in the story in fact represents a socialist state. The story is an open-ended one in that Princip declares at the end of her narration that Stupid partakes in more adventures. The instability of meaning in fiction is implied by the image of the pumpkin in the story, which may turn into a ladder or a coach. Thus a condition of indeterminacy is created here. The pumpkin also represents the continually fluctuating political set-up in Slaka. Thus the political scenario which is real is presented through the unreal mode of a fairy tale.

Other stories also appear in the text of RE. In Slaka stories exist to a large extent in the primitive oral form. Because of this rich tradition, fiction and reality show a tendency to mingle together. During Petworth's visit to the university at Glit, some ladies offer to tell him stories. While one tells the story of the tailor, another tells that of a king. The context in the text actually generates these stories. Here as Barthes has pointed out, the text becomes "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Lodge, Modern Criticism 170). The story Petworth hears at the university deals with a king's encounter with a wizard who promises to satisfy all his desires. For that he has to answer an ambiguous question and if he does not, the wizard will take away his wife. The king fails to answer and thus loses his wife. This story is interlaced with a discussion about the deceptions of the free market. The wizard
symbolises the market with its temptations and deceptions. An individual who succumbs to them often loses what he has. Here a fairy tale points towards the truth regarding matters related to the economy. The story is marked by deliberate ambiguity.

RI: gives us a picture of the critical hyperactivity in the capitalist world as well as in the socialist world. In the capitalist world, over-interpretation has created a situation in which critics write about other critics. The writings on Transformational Grammar and Socio-Linguistics all become instances of a waste of metacritical energy. Meanwhile in the socialist world as represented by Slaka, criticism is ruled by Marxian aesthetics. There is the academican Mr. Picnic who praises the critical tradition as well as the freedom for criticism in Slaka. Miss Bancic studies the proletarian novels of Allan Sillitoe, placing stress on the anarchistic nihilism in the capitalist society. Miss Chernovna studies the plays of J. Orton, putting stress on the image of corruption in them. She claims to employ a new concept of tragi-comedy in this study. Miss Mamorian meanwhile compares the political poems of William Wordsworth and Hrovdat. In the midst of such ideologically oriented critical viewpoints, there are those with conventional ideas, like Miss Goko who is working on gold and silver imagery in the work which she calls "Faerie Queeni" (RI 187). At the faculty seminar at the university at Glit, the possibility of reconciling the reception-aesthetic of Wolfgang Iser with the Hegelianism of Lucas is discussed. The chaos arising out of the excess of theories has created the necessity to make such connections. Globalisation requires a filling up of the gaps that exist between the critical philosophies of different cultures. "This constantly renewing search, this constructing and defacing of literary monuments, this borrowing and assimilating and intertextualizing" (Ruland and
Bradbury Xvi), results in the construction of new literary traditions. The discussion between Lubijova and Plitplov shows the influence of Feminism. Lubijova admires him but Plitplov criticises him for his anti-feminist stand. According to Plitplov, Hemingway glorifies male power though hairy-chested heroes. At the same time, he denigrates women by presenting treacherous female characters. Thus Hemingway functions as an advocate of the cult of the masculine. Lubijova subverts Plitplov's point of view by asserting that Hemingway's works reflect his desire to be a woman. Petworth's point of view is that there is something androgynous about his work. The different critical attitudes put forward during the discussion only serve to distort the image of Hemingway as a writer. Such attitudes are the products of excessive theorising. Professor Vlic of the University at Gilit emerges as the strongest proponent of ideology dominated criticism in the novel. Vlic considers Tennessee Williams's works as decadent since they deal with bourgeois culture. The characters in them are portrayed as indulging in various sorts of excesses. Such is the influence of ideals on him that he believes that Maxim Gorky founded modern writing. The state promotes such views. In fact, criticism is a sort of politics in Slaka. It classifies literature into the correct and the not correct. The criteria for correctness is the extent of adherence to ideology. The state favours socialist realism and looks down upon postmodern trends like magic realism. The narrow point of view advocated by ideology finds it difficult to appreciate the complexity of such trends. There is a Writer's Union that serves only as a tool for surveillance over the writers. Those who write in favour of the party are given rewards. Under this system, writers lose their creativity and become mere servants of the state.
Cultural and ideological differences as they exist across the world has made the value of writing indeterminate:

The written word, it occurs to him, does not simply have a different meaning in a different culture, because of its changed relation to the total vocabulary of that culture; it also has a different weight or status. So in some cultures--like, for example, Petworth's own--words are expended very freely, readily spoken and fairly easily published; they have a low weight on the market. In other cultures--like, for example, this one now--words are traded more selectively and carefully; hence, according to a familiar economic principle, they have a high value on the market. (RE 42-43)

In the capitalist world, words have lost their value through sheer excess; whereas in the socialist world, the excess of ideology exaggerates their value. Such a situation has resulted in an erosion of credibility as far as writing is concerned.

At the same time, there is a new kind of language that is coming up in the world, about which Petworth gives a lecture at Slaka. According to him, this language has universality and hence "newspapers and novels were constructed in its terms, from African polyglot fictions to Finnegans Wake" (RE 193). Petworth projects this language as the only force capable of knitting together a fragmented world. Such a language erases the difference between the language of the fictional text and that used for other purposes. It is again a language that gives a picture of a world pervaded by an excess of signs.

DC contains many international events that promote literature for commercial reasons. The novel opens with the Booker Prize ceremony:
"...there was no better indicator of the way the spirit of British fiction was changing in style, mood and generation, at the start of the Eighties than the Booker Prize for Fiction" (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 416). This is an event dominated by media people, publishers, bankers, businessmen, and politicians. The writer becomes insignificant in this world. Though Bragg, Vidal, and Eco are present there, it is an occasion during which "the glitterati are not the literati at all" (DC 6). Interviews, speeches, presentation of extracts, and the announcement of the names of the prize winners all take place in a mechanical way. The entire event is turned into a television show by the cameras held by the representatives of the media. Thus the Booker Prize ceremony becomes what can be termed "technological fiction" (DC 1). The "mad fiction of economic reality" (DC 12) underlies such events.

The network of world communication, which is the result of the progress in technology, has bred a number of international conferences. The Barlo Congress shows the presence of literary diplomats and serious critics from all over the world. American postmodernists, American feminists, British multi-ethnic writers, French academicians, German writers, Eastern European dissident writers, Japanese writers, Black African writers, South Californian academics, and theoretical critics from Yale arrive for the congress. Among the delegates are also the President of the Indian Writers' Union, a Nobel Prize winner from a small North African country, and a literary editor from Paris doing work in the field of semiotics. The congress is marked by the presence of Amis, Sontag, Günter Grass, and Hans Magnus Enzensberger. The conference is chaired by Professor Monza, who is an Italian experimental novelist, an editor, and the
owner of an arts programme on Radio Italiana. The guest of honour is Doctor Criminale himself. Thus it is a conference that balances the West and the East, Europe and Asia, the United States and the South Pacific, and above all literature and power. Such a congress reflects a world which has become a global village or more precisely a high-tech international conglomerate: "We live in an age of rapid communication and vast, indeed parodic, cultural assimilation, where the boundaries of nations are no longer the boundaries of taste, perception, or ideas" (Ruland and Bradbury XVIII). This sort of interaction among writers and critics in the postmodern world has led to a proliferation of critical theories. However they serve to confuse rather than enlighten. The congress also has all the trappings of a spectacle.

The Buenos Aires Book Fair is an event for which all the readers and writers of South America come together. Borges is used as a cultural signifier to promote this book fair. The writers and intellectuals present there, try to relate Borges to their own critical conceptions:

The British crime novelist spoke about crime and Borges, the British campus novelist-critic spoke about European experimental fiction and Borges, the Argentine writers talked about Latin American writing and Borges, and the mistress of Borges talked about herself occasionally mentioning her relationship with Borges. (DC 268)

This becomes another instance of the critical hyperactivity that distorts texts and authors through excess. Here many diverging points of view are presented, but no unified point of view is arrived at. In such circumstances only"a pluralistic, perceiver-shaped reality" (Ruland and Bradbury 418) is got. The multiplicity that is seen in the matter of critical viewpoints makes interpretation difficult.
Such criticism just mystifies and obscures literature. The discourses of the critics, the writers, and the mistresses assembled there can be considered as fictions or Borgesian tales. There are many women there claiming to be the mistresses of Borges. It is difficult to find out whether this is true or not. Fact and fiction have blended together here as in a novel that exhibits magic realism. Above all, this book fair shows the commodification of literature. It is promoted like any other commodity through such events.

The exhaustion of postmodernism itself is discussed at the conference titled 'The Death of Postmodernism: New Beginnings.' The overuse of postmodern theories has resulted in this situation. Hence there is the need to construct new critical traditions:

[... ] our critical philosophies of structuralism and deconstruction were not just explorations but revelations of our awareness both of philosophical and historical indeterminacy -- ambiguous, half-destructing products of an age that needed to replenish itself by turning towards the future while re-creating what was salvageable from the past. (Ruland and Bradbury 392-93)

The conference implies that the process will be repeated. This is inevitable because of the indeterminacy that plagues the postmodern world. In fact, this is "the age of literary confusion" (DC 10). The theoretical framework of postmodernism finds itself overloaded with its many concepts and hence it is on the decline. The conference covers concepts like parody, pastiche, blank irony, narrative indeterminacy, new history, chaos theory, late modern depthlessness, and so on. American postmodern writers like Barth, Hassan, William Gass, and Raymond Federman are all attending the conference. The deconstructive thinker Henri Mensonge is supposed to mark his presence or absence in a truly postmodern way during the occasion. This is again a mega event sponsored by the industrial foundations, Mercedes and Bosch. Thus JX shows a world in which critical and literary activities are concentrated in conferences conducted with a commercial motive.
Above all, DC throws light on the "age of Postmodern deconstructions, in which more energy has been put into demythologizing interpretative myths than constructing them" (Ruland and Bradbury XV). All concepts are questioned and challenged by the deconstructionist. In DC, Jay acknowledges the importance of deconstruction:

Junior interrogators, literary commissars, we deconstructed everything: author, text, reader, language, discourse, life itself. No task was too small, no piece of writing below suspicion. We demythologized, we demystified. We dehegemonised, we decanonized. We dephallicized, we depatriarchalized; we decoded, we de-canted, we defamed, we de-manned. (DC 8-9)

Jay's quest for Criminale itself becomes a deconstructive activity. He considers Criminale as a text full of obscure signs and codes. And it is Jay's duty to unravel their meaning or lack of meaning. Jay is the reader who should look for slippages and gaps. Criminale becomes simultaneously an author and a text for him. At the same time, there is a text about the life of Criminale whose author is absent. The subject has also disappeared. The text is "Bazlo Criminale: Life and Thought." (DC 285). It is a text that Jay reads several times. He relates it to the history of Europe. He looks with deconstructive scepticism at this twisted and convoluted history. The nature of what he finds is made clear in the words: "The familiar if not entirely companionable past had turned into an ugly, twisted growth hung about with deceits, obscurities and betrayals" (DC 283). Jay also takes in account Gertla's account of Criminale. Hence Jay feels that the Criminale in the text is not the real Criminale. Nor is it the Criminale that suits Jay's concept of him. Thus the real Criminale has slipped out of the text. In fact, Jay had read the text at the beginning of his quest for Criminale. He reads it again at the end. The text now appears different to him. Jay, the reader, has also changed. Jay reads the text for what it does not say. Thus he implements the strategy of deconstruction:
Now I indeed deconstructed: read for the omissions and elisions, the obscurities and absences, the spaces and the fractures, the linguistic and ideological contradictions. I read it, in fact, as a fiction, which of course is what I should really have done in the first place. But now I read it with the benefit of alternative facts, which of course were also, as it were, fictions, to set against 'its' fiction. I had alternative authors to try out on it, alternative Criminales to poke into its pages. This was a text I could work on. (DC 285).

Deconstruction involves the point of view that individuals as well as the institutions or structures with which they are associated, are unstable. Everything exists among shifting cultural codes. They signify only impermanence and chaos:

For deconstructors, the boundaries between any given text and that larger text we call language are always shifting. It was this larger text that Derrida was referring to in *Of Grammatology* when he made his famous statement "there is nothing outside the text." In making this statement, Derrida refused to categorically distinguish world and text, simultaneously asserting that every human (worldly) product can be viewed as a text and that every text reflects and shapes the world we perceive. (Murfin and Ray, The Bedford Glossary 80)

Hence a text will appear to have a different meaning every time it is read. Thus there is no one ultimate meaning for any text. Words themselves are only arbitrarily associated with things, and hence have meaning only because they differ from other words. Thus deconstructors can only "demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole" (Murfin and Ray, The Bedford 75).
Criminale himself is an excess of signs and this contributes to his obscurity. Thus Criminale's personality has been problematized in the novel. There is no way to ascertain whether the facts concerning Criminale's life constitute reality or fiction. This shows the nature of contemporary reality: "Contemporary reality, in particular, is continually being reappraised and resynthesised. It is no longer experienced as an ordered and fixed hierarchy, but as a web of interrelating, multiple realities" (Waugh, Metafiction 51). The codes and possibilities are innumerable, and hence the tools for interpretation look upon history and fiction as discourses. In fact, both of them derive their major claim to truth from this identity. The text about Criminale attempts to hide the bad aspects of his life and character. The text while dealing with Criminale's life deals also with European history. Thus it is a text that is linked with the texts of European history. Hiroshima, the Holocaust, the collapse of old philosophies, the birth of new ones, the dreams of anti-fascist Utopias, Adidas, IBM, the wonders of technology, the economic miracles, the death of the proletarian dream, the bourgeois revolution, and the rise of the multinationals: all become codes in this text. Jay, the reader, loses his way among the anarchy of data about Criminale. The text seems to offer a number of clues. But they only lead to redundancy. The reader finds his capacities overloaded and is unable to offer any interpretation. In fact, "the avalanche of its information represents that anarchic aspect of totality which makes it untotizable" (Nash 218).

The inconsistent, irreconcilable, and contradictory aspects of Criminale's personality reflect the culture of this age. The text shows the appearance and disappearance of people as well as ideologies. At one time, Criminale had a relationship with Pia who was an anti-nazi as well as a Marxist. But they later separate over ideological disagreement. Criminale's books were banned in
Marxist countries, but printed in the West. Here Ildiko appears in the text, as an undercover operator. Some historical events related to Hungary, consisting of Imre Nagy's democratic reform government, the Russian invasion, the suppression, the mass arrests, and the imprisonment of Nagy have been left out. Criminale's ideological position is obscure regarding these matters. His presence or absence as far as the historical context is concerned, also is not made clear in the text. At the same time, the text contains information about Criminale's social and intellectual life. He is portrayed as a world traveller and a detached philosopher. The text does not provide enough information about Criminale's love life. Gerlita is presented in a plurality of roles like that of the loyal wife, the intellectual helpmeet, the supporter, and the brave companion. Then Sepulchra appears in the text in the perfunctory role of a wife. The traces or signs of the other women in Criminale's life are not there in the text. Thus it is a text with many fissures and gaps, and hence an apt one on which to practise the strategies of deconstruction. The dates given in it are not based on accurate information. The text is ambiguous as well as discontinuous. Realities are constituted as fictions within the text. Even historical events assume the status of fiction. There is an excess of historical material in the text, as the details of Criminale's life centre round the facts or fictions of history. This condition is inevitable in the postmodern world where history has been problematised: " [. . . ] the problematic concept of historical knowledge and the semiotic notion of language as a social contract are reinscribed in the metafictionally self-conscious and self-regulating signifying system of literature" (Hutchcon, A Poetics 99). Jay's strategy for analysing the text takes into consideration these factors.

Jay also belongs to the generation which acknowledges the death of the author. Writers do not write in this age. Instead, texts evolve by virtue of the
language and the world outside it. Barthes removes the author from his former powerful position, and instead talks about the scriptor in "The Death of the Author:"

Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred. (Lodge, Modern Criticism 170-71)

The text, that relates to the life of Criminale, is characterized by an author who is absent. Jay feels that the problems of the text can be solved only if he finds the absent author. Jay suspects a number of people like Otto Codicil, Sandor Hollo, Sepulchra, Ildiko, Gertla, and Criminale himself of being the author of the book. However Jay's search for the author is bound to be futile, if we take into account the concept projected by Barthes:

To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing [...] Hence there is no surprise in the fact that, historically, the reign of the Author has also been that of the Critic, nor again in the fact that criticism (be it new) is today undermined along with the Author. In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered [...] (Lodge, Modern Criticism 171)

The book comes from the time that history is being rewritten. Marxism is becoming obsolete, and glasnost and perestroika are acquiring prominence. As a result, philosophers are acquiring new masks.

The disappearance of the author coincides with the reduction of the philosopher to a theoretical nothing. He becomes one who has only ideas and
theories that are unstable and hence changes according to the times. Criminale admits that the philosopher is a mere pawn in the hands of history. The author has only a nominal role in the creation of the text, since he also is a product of history. Historical events lead to the creation of new texts or the re-writing of old texts: "Postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 110). However it is wrong to call a philosopher a betrayer just because he misunderstood history and wrote something fallacious. One cannot take back what has already been put into writing. This is Criminale's justification for his ideological transition. The problematisation of the author with regard to the text should be understood in this context. The novel provides some other instances of texts which show uncertainty in the matter of the author. Jay feels that Codicil's books are written by his assistant. Jay points towards literary history and says that it is alleged that Dante Alighieri's assistant wrote "*Divine Comedy*" and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's pupil wrote "*Faust*" (*DC* 80). Coming back to Criminale, it is said that Sepulcra wrote some of his works like "*Homeless: A Tale of the Modern Age*" (*DC* 244). All such controversies point towards the concept of the death of the author. According to him, the author is absent at all levels of the text. Writing is no longer considered as originating from a single source. The writing which constitutes the text takes precedence over the writer.

The text of *DC* exhibits intertextuality at various levels:

[... ] intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text, one that situates the locus of
textual meaning within the history of discourse itself. A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance. (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 126).

While on his quest in search of Criminale, Jay has to undertake a railway journey from Vienna to Budapest. At that time he reads Thomas Mann's "*The Magic Mountain*" (*DC* 82) which contains a similar journey by a young man, Hans Castorp, with whom Jay identifies himself. The novel contains a portrait of a philosopher called Naphta. This philosopher is modelled on Lukacs, who in turn has a great influence over Criminale. Thus there are so many links between the text of *Magic Mountain* and that of *DC*. Hans Castorp's journey takes place in a world that is about to change completely. He acquires a new point of view from this journey:

[... ] he is going far, from north to south, work to leisure, Puritan and Prussian order to disorder, culture to nature, and from the world of normal health to the world of disease and death. [... ]

His train trip is taking him out of the flatlands and into the uplands, out of the normal world of time into a new kind of time, out of daily duties into a place of abstract thought, and out of mediocrity into self-knowledge. (Bradbury, *The Modern World: Ten Great Writers* 104)

It is a novel that explores the conflict of ideas that underlies the modern movement. Jay's journey in search of Doctor Criminale is in many ways similar to that of Castorp, but the conflict Jay experiences is that of the ideas of the postmodern world.
The text of the novel contains references to a series of texts published in 1889, and which played a role in ushering in the modern world. There is the reference to Henri Bergson's "Time and Free Will" (DC 89) which contains revolutionary ideas about human consciousness and its experience of time. This text separates historical time from the time that is related to the consciousness. This text influenced Marcel Proust. It can also be related to the thoughts of Freud. The text that laid the foundation of the modern, was "The Twilight of the False Gods" (DC 90) by Nietzsche. His thoughts bordered on fatalism and nihilism. He believed in the destruction of entire races. The concept of philosophising with a hammer which he had advocated in the text inspired Adolph Hitler. Jerome K. Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat" (DC 91) was also a work that contributed to modern thought. George Bernard Shaw should be noted for ushering in the Decadence through his "Fabian Essays" (DC 91). Half a century later James Joyce published the text which brought modernism to its climax. The text was "Finnegan's Wake" (DC 91):

Finnegan's Wake was the book that spoke abstractly to the great Modernist task both of breaking down an old language and myth, and constructing a new and self-made one that made the art of fiction the art of language itself. To that we owe much, including a good many new literary experiments, and much of our modern linguistic anxiety. (Bradbury, The Modern World 176)

Ideological anxiety as well as the rapidly changing human consciousness are visible in the above mentioned texts associated with modernism. These texts
are linked to *DC*, because it is another text set in an age that is witnessing great changes: "[. . . ] modernism's 'nightmare of history' is precisely what postmodernism has chosen to face straight on" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 88). The postmodern age is again one of political and cultural upheaval. The events that mark the text of its history are the end of the Cold War, the toppling of the Berlin Wall, the fall of Marxism, the rise of glasnost and perestroika, the Yugoslavian conflict, and the Gulf Crisis. Thus it is evident that the text of *DC* which is set in the postmodern world makes an attempt to relate itself with certain key texts of modernism. However the intersection of modernist thought in a postmodernist text, contributes to intertextual indeterminacy. Here "'the absence of an ultimate meaning opens an unbounded space for the play of signification'" (Derrida qtd. in Nash 151).

Other world famous texts find mention in the novel. "Das Kapital" (*DC* 206) is referred to in the light of the collapse of Marxism. The ideas contained in it have never really been made practical. Hence it is a text that has lost relevance in the postmodern market centred world. "The Communist Manifesto" (*DC* 149) is also mentioned in the novel. In fact, Criminale refers to it during his speech at the Barolo Congress:

150 years ago *The Communist Manifesto* appeared, and the first sentence read, you all remember, 'A spectre haunts Europe -- the spectre of Communism.' Well, no more I think. But what spectre does haunt Europe, or the rest of the world? The spectre that haunts us is the spectre of too much and too little.

(*DC* 149)

Thus it becomes another text that has become outdated. Edward Gibbon's "*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*" (*DC* 238) is mentioned giving emphasis
to its status of being the first modern re-interpretation of history. The book shows that to all historical epochs, there is a finite cycle. In all senses, this text is a grand project of modernity.

Nash has pointed out: "'Intertextualist fiction' is genuinely pluralistic in its orientation, with reference to utterances outside it and to material within it." (152). Thus the works which are supposed to be written by Criminale find mention in the novel. Criminale has written a historical drama called "The Women Behind Martin Luther" (DC: 24). It can be called an epic spectacle. It is a work that has provoked comparison between Criminale and Bertolt Brecht. Then there is "Homeless: A Tale of the Modern Age" (DC: 24), the small but perfect novella that has been praised by Graham Greene. Greene called it the finest single work of the latter half of this century. "Goethe: The German Shakespeare," (DC: 24-25) his three-volume biography of the writer, gives a coherent picture of Goethe and relates him to history. Criminale's text argues that the German Reich has its foundations in the thoughts of Goethe. Criminale has also to his credit, a work about economic theory called "Is Money Necessary?" (DC 25). This text made an impact in Russia where money has little value. "The Psycho-Pathology of the Postmodern Masses" (DC: 25) probes into the dark side of the human mind that is conditioned by this society. It is a text that is relevant for social psychologists as well as police chiefs. Criminale's works also include vast illustrated tomes on Graeco-Roman civilization and small paperback works on Marxist philosophy. Thus Criminale is truly a writer who belongs to an age characterised by pluralism and multiplicity.
There are also several texts which are supposed to contain information about Criminale. These texts have been mentioned to give greater credibility to the personality of Criminale:

In fact if you want to find out more about him as I did you only need turn to the small volume on him (by Roger Scruton) in the Modern Masters series, edited by Frank Kermode, published by Fontana Books. Here he appears in the list between Chomsky and Derrida -- a fate to be fair, not of his own choosing, but simply deriving from the random lottery of the alphabet.

In what the blurb aptly defines as 'a truly exhilarating examination of Criminale's work,' Scruton warmly compares him with Marx and Nietzsche, Lukacs and Rosa Luxemburg, Gorky and Adam Smith [...] and sees him as the modern Goethe.

(\textit{DC} 26)

Several other well known texts that are supposed to contain references about Criminale are mentioned in the novel:

According to one source (\textit{The Dictionary of Modern Thought}), he came from Lithuania; look at another (\textit{Ramparts} magazine) and he came from Moldavia. As for his citizenship, he was Hungarian, German, Austrian, Bulgarian, even American. There were other basic disagreements. For instance, good old \textit{Modern Hermeneutics} had him down as a hardline marxist, but \textit{Critical Practice} described him as a dissident and revisionist who had spent time in prison (but where?). (\textit{DC} 29-30)
The contradictory information given by these texts again contribute to the intertextual indeterminacy in the novel.

Bradbury also makes a part of the fictional world of DC, the character Mensonge from his work My Strange Quest for Mensonge. Structuralism's Hidden Hero. He is supposed to attend a conference on the death of postmodernism. McHale has analysed this device in Postmodernist Fiction.

[... ] an intertextual space is constituted whenever we recognize the relations among two or more texts, or between specific texts and large categories such as genre, school, period. There are a number of ways of foregrounding this intertextual space and integrating it in the text's structure, but none is more effective than the device of 'borrowing' a character from another text--'transworld identity,' Umberto Eco has called this, the transmigration of characters from one fictional universe to another. (qtd. in Rose 263)

Thus the text of DC shows a proliferation of intertextual references. It becomes an intertextual space that allows the contents of other texts to exist in a new relationship. Thus the text becomes one that can be subjected to infinite interpretation. There is the free play of signifiers within the text. The proliferation of data in turn leads towards a condition of anarchy. The information conveyed through intertextual strategies is devoid of closure. The text becomes a labyrinth of signs that lead nowhere: "What makes for indeterminacy--in this in--some--respects 'positive,' constructive' notion of indeterminacy--is a function of the multiplicity of relations between signs" (Nash 151). Meaning gets lost among a crowd of signifiers. Charles Jencks has pointed out that "'where there are too many texts there is no author' " (qtd. in Rose 265). The
text suffers from overload and redundancy results. But only such texts can adequately portray the chaotic condition of the postmodern culture that is submerged in excess.

This is an age which has seen the evolution of the work of literature into a commodity at the market place. The commodification of literature has turned novelists into celebrities. Their status as writers depends on their value in the market. Criminale is a successful writer according to the standards of this market-oriented literary world. His books have good sales in places as distant as New York, Budapest, Moscow, and Stuttgart. According to the statistics, his books sell more than those of Lenin in Russia, Confucius in China, and Jacqueline Susann in the United States. Criminale writes in German or English, and his works are translated into other languages. His books appear in western hardback as well as in East European bindings. Criminale became rich through the royalties got from his books. His ideological position often made them run into trouble. Many of them were banned in Russia. The Stalinist critics attacked them. The banned books were secretly transported to other parts of the world. They were used as a cover for many illegal activities.

Criminale's ideas regarding literature are expressed in the novel. According to him, the problem of literature after the cold war is the same as that of literature during the cold war. The only thing is that it should remain literature, and not politics or journalism. He also speaks defining the relationship of literature and power: "There is no proper relationship of literature and power. Power manages and art decretes. Power seeks a monologue and art is a dialogue" (DC 147). Thus Criminale interprets the relationship as one of opposition. Hence literature works against power and seeks to undermine it. He also criticises many writers for falling victim to the charms of ideology. Nietzsche,
Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre fell under the influence of fascist ideologies for a period. Lukacs was one who blindly believed in Communism. At the same time, Criminale believes that ideology has its significance. Some thought should always be there to guide people, to make them humane. Hence he is against those critics who speak about the end of humanism. However he knows that postmodern culture is one that has bred an attitude of nihilism. Criminale is well aware of the death of the subject, the loss of the great meta-narratives, the disappearance of the self, the depthlessness of history, the slippage of the referent, the culture of pastiche, and the departure of reality. Accordingly to Criminale the postmodern condition is "some thing more than a post-technological situation, a phenomenon of late capitalism, a loss of narratives or whatever the interpreters called it" (JC 323).

Hence Criminale is recognised as the Great Thinker of the Age of Glasnost. He has tried to explain the problems that underlie thought in the present age. This in turn is reflected as a crisis in his writing. Criminale's irony itself is a product of the gap between thought and historical need. Since Criminale is a part of a culture pervaded by chaos, he writes about chaos. Criminale has no certainties to hold on to and hence he concentrates on nothingness. Criminale is supposed to have had debates with philosophers like Marx, Nietzsche, Adorno, and Heidegger. He has interpreted phenomenology, techno-centrism, history, and above all modernity in his own way. Such intense and persistent intellectual activities certainly make him fit for the title "The Philosopher King" (JC 25). However Criminale is aware of the pitiable condition of the postmodern philosopher who is "jet-lagged, culture-shocked, stuffed with too much inflight food and too much vacant inflight entertainment, mind disordered, body gross, thoughts hectic and hypertense, spirits dislodged from space and time,
baggageless, without normal possessions" (*DC* 323). He is a philosopher who has perceived the nothingness that lies underneath the material excess of the capitalist culture. Hence he deconstructs his own glorified image by stating that he is just a container for this nothingness. In a way he has exhausted himself through an excess of intellectual activity. Criminale knows that he lives in a post-philosophical age, where the masses only believe in hyperreality. The philosopher has no relevance for them. Life itself has become as unreal as fiction for them and hence they want only violent illusions. Criminale considers himself a victim of this unreality and hence he says: "'Life is a movie, death is a plot ending, no stories are real. And even the philosophers think in unrealities, they describe a world of no ethics, no humanism, no self'" (*DC* 330).
CURVES AND SPACES

Architecture in the postmodern world tends to stimulate the senses. Jameson has studied this aspect of architecture in "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." "The newer architecture [...] stands as something like an imperative to grow new organs to expand our sensorium and our body to some new, as yet unimaginable, perhaps ultimately impossible, dimensions" (Kaplan, Postmodernism 21). The spaces inside a building are geared to meet the demands of mass culture. They give people the freedom to move as well as to group together. Thus they satisfy the crowd's instinct for social interaction. Jameson further clarifies:

We know in any case that recent architectural theory has begun to borrow from narrative analysis in other fields, and to attempt to see our physical trajectories through such buildings as virtual narratives or stores, as dynamic paths and narrative paradigms which we as visitors are asked to fulfil and to complete with our own bodies and movements. (Kaplan, Postmodernism 23).

The elevators and escalators become signs of new forms of movement. What we find inside the building is not movement that is natural, but that which is artificial and mechanical. Movement is reduced by such architectural structures to the order of the sign. This becomes one more instance of the tendency of postmodern culture to turn back upon itself, to implode through an excess of signifying patterns. The postmodern industrial towers constitute a fiction. The structure as well as the sign-system of the city itself forms a text. It constitutes another visual simulacrum. Michel de Certeau points out in "Practices of Space": "[...] rationalising the city involves mythifying it through strategic modes of discourse" (Blonsky, On Signs 127).
The architectural structures also reflect the heightened sense of unreality that has pervaded society. They show glass surfaces which exaggerate and distort the surrounding reality. At the same time, these surfaces obscure the structures which contain them. The alienation within the human psyche is aggravated by these surfaces.

Similarly the mirror is an important constituent of many architectural forms. The morbid pleasure got from the vision of the multiple reflections of the human form, lies behind the tendency to install the mirror everywhere. The mirror, in fact, is an emblem of mimesis. The mirror image deceives by excluding all that lies beyond its frame. Thus it just projects illusions. No mirror is free from distortion, and hence it always falsifies reality. The mirror does not merely reflect a person's image. It, in fact, displaces him from himself. At the same time, the mirror can also be considered as reflecting the infinitely varying patterns of reality: "Thus the mirror brings both replication and contradiction, in infinite multiplication and an unremitting displacement and alienation, estrangement" (Nash 184).

Mike Davis points out in "Urban Renaissance and the Spirit of Postmodernism:" "It is [...] architecture 'the privileged aesthetic language,' that reveals the most systematic, virtually 'unmediated' relationship between postmodern experience and the structures of late capitalism" (Kaplan, Postmodernism 79). Urban architecture is now guided by the motivations of multinational capital. The glass and steel structures are all part of the strategies of capitalism. Again architecture has become a commodity meant to lure the consumer. Here it is space that is gift-wrapped. Architecture has become multi-block and multi-purpose to satisfy the requirements of the urban masses. At the same time, it requires extravagant forms to suit their fantasies.
This accounts for the prevalence of extravagant and glitzy architecture. However nothing can hide the fact that structures like the skyscraper point towards the collapse of all humanistic values.

The manipulation of images and motifs taken from a variety of sources has become a major architectural trend. This process intends to confer to architecture, the pluralism and multiplicity that has become a part of postmodern culture. What should be noted is "the complacent eclecticism of the postmodern architect, which randomly and without principle but with gusto cannibalizes all the architectural styles of the past and combines them in oversimulating ensembles" (Jameson 18-19). Such a play with the styles of the past is rather ironic. It aims at creating a visual effect, that is capable of entralling and enslaving the senses. It becomes another instance of the excess that has affected culture. Extravagance in architecture is the product of unabashed materialism.

Modern architecture with its unity and functionalism has been discarded in favour of postmodern styles:

The social failure of the great modernist housing projects and the inevitable economic association of 'heroic' modernism with large corporations combined to create a demand for new architectural forms that would reflect a changed and changing social awareness. These new forms were not, by any means, monolithic. They did, however, mark a shared return to such rejected forms as the vernacular (that is, to local needs and local architectural traditions), to decoration and a certain individualism in design, and, most importantly, to the past, to history. (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 26).
Postmodern architects parody the styles of the past. In fact, here parody is a re-examination keeping a distance that endorses the critical viewpoint. This re-examination stresses the similarities as well as the differences. Hutcheon makes clear the importance of parody in the realm of postmodern architecture:

And just as modernism [...] had to reject historicism and to pretend to a parthenogenetic birth fit for the new machine age, so postmodernism, in reaction, returned to history, to that what I have been calling 'parody,' to give architecture back its traditional social and historical dimension, though with a new twist this time. (*A Poetics* 26)

Modernist architecture shows a finished totality, whereas the postmodernist one shows one that is fragmented. Simple and easily recognizable geometrical forms have been replaced by complex and exotic ones. Such architecture disrupts the sensibilities through its sheer excess. Nick Kaye has made in clear in *Postmodernism and Performance*, how architectural structure itself becomes one subject to multiple interpretations: "In turn the various readings which may be made of the building tend themselves be qualified and declared as 'games', for none of them can effectively resolve these conflicts [...]" (7). Thus architecture also shows the disappearance of meaning amidst an excess of signs.

The discussion about architecture inevitably leads to the role it plays in a text. Spatial poetics for a novel depends upon the use of space as a formal construct in the text. The text should be analysed taking this space into consideration. Architectural space is self-contained and yet it reflects the world surrounding it. The world thus reflected is an illusory one. It can be
called a virtual environment. Studies about the spatiality of the novel point towards the existence of the novel as a book or as an object. Thus the book becomes something that is constructed like a work of architecture. Here the act of writing becomes an act of construction.

_HM_ gives a picture of the town of Watermouth made of concrete and metal. Boutiques, supermarkets, high-rise council flats, multi-storey cararks, high buildings, glass facades, supermarkets, delicatessens, multiple stores, fountains, hotels, office blocks, luxury flats, expensive bars, gift shops, and pink washed Georgian homes constitute the structural framework of the town. Some shops show architectural designs that highlight the inner symmetry of commodities and thereby seduce the consumer. Bright spotlights and anti-theft mirrors form part of their structure. There are luxury flats with their convenience kitchens and wall to wall carpeting which cater to the needs of the consumer. On the other side, there are flats which are identical and devoid of such luxuries. In fact, the reality of urban demolition and deprivation lies behind the surface of luxury. There are the torn spaces where the motorway and the new housing project are being completed. When new architectural structures come up, the old ones are demolished. There are vast structures of waste as well as transitional areas of devastation. Concrete tower blocks and new precincts co-exist with rubble and rubbish. All these constitute an apocalyptic landscape. This landscape just reflects the condition of the postmodern mind: "It is a topography of the mind; and his mind makes an intellectual contrast out of it, an image of conflict and opposition" (_HM_ 14). The patterns of architecture show the relationship between people and their environment. The postmodern urban scenario is marked by fragmentation and discord. In fact, it is a concrete jungle. However it has got its own codes.
There are arrows and marks that point to different directions amidst the structures that constitute Watermouth. Thus the entire city has a system of signs that its inhabitants like Howard can interpret.

The Kirks live in an old house in a slum clearance area. They converted its bleak spaces into a social space through much hard work. They reconstructed it from its condition of filth and chaos. So as to create a free and livable open space, they used transient furniture which can be accommodated and moved easily. Howard specially rearranges the house for parties: "He moves furniture, to produce good conversation areas, open significant action spaces, create corners of privacy" (HM 71). The space inside the house is thus made accessible to all. Thus the architectural structure has become one that can be modified to suit the needs of the crowd. It facilitates maximum socialising: "[...] the code is one of possibility, not denial. Chairs and cushions and beds suggest multiple forms of companionship. Thresholds are abolished. room leads into room. There are speakers for music, special angles for lighting, rooms for dancing and talking and smoking and sexualizing" (HM 71). Such arrangements promote the spontaneity of the party. In fact, his house becomes a world by itself, a world without boundaries symbolising a social condition without restrictions. In other words, space here becomes a self-contained entity and it ultimately comes to constitute a virtual environment.

The University of Watermouth described in the novel shows architectural free form. Its tall buildings contrast with the rural countryside. Since it has been designed by an architect called Jop Kaakinen, it is referred to as "the Kaakinen wonderland" (HM 57). New structures come up in the university every year. As the number of functions increases, the number of buildings also increases. In fact, these structures contain within themselves the entire history of the process of industrialisation that has slowly taken
over society. The green pastures and turreted Elizabethan mansions have disappeared, and the new massive constructions have taken their place. The first building that came into being is called Hobbes; and it has round porthole windows, transparent Finnish curtaining, and signs in lowercase lettering. The new buildings show simple geometric shapes. The construction of these buildings coincided with certain historical events: "The bourgeoisie rose (Humanities and Natural Science opened their doors); the industrial revolution took place (the Business Building and the Engineering Building were opened); the era of the crowd and the factory arrived (the glass tower of Social Science came into use)" (HM 64). But ultimately all these architectural structures point towards the dehumanisation that has affected society:

And now the campus is massive, one of those dominant modern environments of multifunctionality that modern man creates: close it down as a university, a prospect that seemed to become increasingly possible, as the students came to hate the world and the world the university, and you could open it again as a factory, a prison, a shopping precinct. (HM 65)

The entire university campus, in fact, looks like a futuristic city. It becomes the practical manifestation of the philosophy of glass and concrete that has gained influence throughout the world.

In RE there is the picture of Hotel Slaka which has been constructed in a grand manner. The interior shows cut-glass chandeliers, erotic statuary, grand staircases, and discreetly contained alcoves. There is a fresco of raucous nymphs
decorating the ceiling. The cellars of the hotel have been converted into an exotic bar. The narrow stone passageway is lit with dim red lights. There is a scrolled ironwork declaring the name *Barr'ii Tzigane*. The bar is designed in the gipsy style. Here traditional art is presented in a new context. The rough whitewashed walls contain images related to the life of gipsies. The exotic aspects visible in the architecture of the hotel, only serve to heighten Petworth's feeling of being trapped in an unfamiliar environment.

Several of the architectural structures in Slaka are characterised by the dominating presence of mirrors. The room occupied by Petworth in Hotel Slaka shows this feature. They give forth multiple reflections of Petworth. He gets the feeling that they are staring at or rather spying upon him. There is mystery and terror associated with the mirror because it multiplies the human image: "At root there is a sort of metaphysical terror, the same as assails the primitive man when he realizes that his soul is being taken away from him along with his image" (Eco, *Apocalypse* 41). The mirror presents the viewer's self in a particular context displacing it from the rest of the environment. The small tiled door in Princip's apartment has great green mirrors. The green colour makes the reflected image more unreal. They also give it an erotic appearance. The mirror which once reflects and highlights the image of Petworth's naked body, later blurs and distorts it. When the steam fades off, the mirror reflects an empty image of Petworth. It is in fact, an image that lacks of life and depth. Petworth's own image becomes something alien to him. The cloakrooms at the state opera house are mirrored. The mirrors there help to satisfy the narcissistic desires. Even the ceilings and the corridors are mirrored, and a profusion of images is created. Such an excess of reflecting surfaces results in the maximum distortion of reality:
The mirror is the instrument of self-regard. Yet in the very act of so 'seeing directly' ourselves, we see not our self but our 'double,' someone outside this someone we are. And someone who is the 'reverse' of ourself, a negative double whom we shall never 'positively' see in the form that is actually us unless we once again double our mirror, looking through mirror to mirror, ever distancing ourselves from ourselves. (Nash 184)

Thus the mirror functions as a sign of excess in an architectural structure.

The novel provides instances of alienating architectural space. Petworth experiences this space during his stay in Hotel Slaka. There he is given a vast room with a high-ceiling: "It seems strange under a new and egalitarian ideology, to be granted such space, more than he has ever had in a hotel before, more even than his ego can fill [ . . . ]" (RE: 86). Petworth relates his state of mind to the architectural structure: "[ . . . ] Petworth looks round the room and recognizes in it for all its space and grandeur, a true hotel room, a fitting landscape for solitude and misery, an appropriate outward architecture for the psychic world within" (RE 89). All the material splendour in the room just alienates Petworth. The room represents the other for him. His experience of space in the room numbs his senses. His mind becomes disoriented in this situation. He starts to identify the hotel room, with songs that convey only sadness, loneliness, fear, and guilt. The room is cold and inhuman as far as Petworth is concerned. Hence he longs for the inextricably friendly, domestic space of his home. This happens because human feelings are inextricably linked with architectural space. The vast chandeliered dining-room adds to Petworth's dejection. The space of this room is centred round a small podium, meant for an orchestra. This space shows the ambition to convert the hotel into a world by itself. It is
space meant for the crowd that would gather there to celebrate. Space in architecture is now related to "a new collective practice, a new mode in which individuals move and congregate, something like the practice of a new and historically original kind of hypercrowd" (Jameson 40). The great central square is again another venue where the presence of space is experienced. It contains a monument and stalls of flower sellers: "[...] but the square still looks empty, so large are its spaces, so big its surrounding buildings, which are square, and white, and colonnaded" (RE 113). Slaka, on the whole thus presents "the Eastern European spectacle of much vacant open space" (RE 76).

The elevator in Hotel Slaka shows the extent to which technology has become part of an architectural structure. It has a code of its own, as is evident from the series of buttons that control its motion. During the journey in the elevator, Petworth gets fragmentary glimpses of different parts of the hotel. He sees for a moment "a technological room, like a recording studio; tape recorders reel, and video monitors flicker, showing blue images of hotel corridors, moving figures, rooms just like his own" (RE 101). A surveillance system that shows the operation of the power of ideology is here interfused with the architectural structure. Technology thus reduces the architectural structure to fragmentary images. The ornate style is present in the elevator. Its interior is decorated with mirrors. Its copper doors are embossed with modern reliefs showing peasants and factory workers engaged in their activities. The architect who designed this elevator has evidently taken the history of the nation into account. Hence the nation's baroque past is seen in the elevator: "[...] the elevator: its decor evidently in excess of its technology, begins to bump and grind upward through the building" (RE 85). This is how postmodern
architecture comes to terms with "the entire historical series of its past experiences" (Paolo Portoghesi qtd. in Hutcheon, A Poetics 29). Thus postmodernism re-contextualizes and inverts the architectural styles of the past. Coming to the architectural significance of elevators, it can be found that they now govern the inner space of buildings. Jameson perceives narratives and allegories in their movement:

Now I want to say a few words about escalators and elevators [. . .] which certainly account for much of the spectacle and the excitement of the hotel interior [. . .]. Here the narrative stroll has become underscored, symbolized, reified and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own: and this is a dialectical intensification of the auto-referentiality of all modern culture, which tends to turn upon itself and designate its own cultural production as its constant. (Kaplan, Postmodernism 23).

The works of architecture referred to in DC reflect the postmodern tendency to experiment with new styles and forms. There is the Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart in Germany, which is a sandstone building with a slope, constructed by JamesSterling. Its peculiarity lies in its being what can be called "a tease of hidden entrances and shifted hierarchies" (DC 319). Bradbury has made a close analysis of these features: "Our postmodern buildings declare themselves as constructs of random, eclectic quotation, where any reference can be relevant, form not following function, but building fancy into it" (qtd. in Rose 268). It is a structure that is aimed at shocking and confusing the viewer. It exposes the senses to entirely new experiences. It contains within it the chaos that
underlies postmodern culture. It is a sort of ironic play with conventions and styles. Architecture here becomes open-ended and prone to infinite interpretation.

However, the greatest architectural wonder of all is the Eiffel Tower, whose real worth has been understood only in the postmodern age. It was built in 1889 as an edifice for the French by Gustave Eiffel. The French had thought that he would build a bridge. But Eiffel subverted the traditional concepts of architecture by making a strange tower. It can be regarded as a bridge built upwards. It is again a structure showing open-endedness. Hence different meanings can be assigned to it:

This radiant position in the order of perception gives it a prodigious propensity to meaning: the Tower attracts meaning, the way a lighting rod attracts thunderbolts; for all lovers of signification, it plays a glamorous part, that of a pure signifier, i.e., of a form in which men unceasingly put meaning [. . .]. Glance, object, symbol, such is the infinite circuit of functions which permits it always to be something other and something much more than the Eiffel Tower. (Sontag, A Barthes Reader 238)

At the time that it was built no one could understand what it exactly was or what its use was. It resembled the spire of a cathedral as well as a skyscraper. But it was not possible to place it in any particular category of architecture. The Eiffel Tower has often been compared to the Statue of Liberty, whose interior ironwork has been done by Eiffel. But the Statue of Liberty clearly conveys a message whereas the Eiffel Tower has none. Thus the Eiffel Tower becomes for many "the ironwork without the statue, the engineering without the sculpture, the torch without the liberty, the bones without the flesh" (Ihde 87)
However the postmodern sensibility rediscovered the Eiffel Tower. It regards the Eiffel Tower as a spectacle. It is just something meant to give pleasure to the senses. It offers a spectacular view not merely of itself, but also one of Paris. Thus it expands and excites the mind of the viewer. Finally with the invention of the radio transmitter, the tower acquired utilitarian value.

A hundred years after the Eiffel came up, the French decided to celebrate again. They decided to put up another edifice as a part of this. Since this is the age of multi-culturalism, a Chinese American architect, I. M. Pei was asked to construct it. His imagination gave birth to a small crystal pyramid of latticed precision. It was built over the labyrinths, the catacombs, the dungeons, and the foundations of the Louvre. This structure can be said to contain a code, if we take into account Jencks's concept of architecture: "Jencks has used the term 'code' to describe the styles of architecture because he sees them as sending out meanings or messages in a manner similar to the messages send out in language or in other such communications between human subjects [...]" (Rose 237). Such architectural forms are inevitable in the postmodern age which is that of pluristyle. The postmodern architect's tendency is "to disarm and disrupt particular readings of style, figure and form" (Kaye 7).

The trends in the field of art, literature, and architecture as discussed in this chapter reflect the excessive and all-pervasive commodification of culture. In fact, commodification has created a culture characterised by superficiality. The following chapter undertakes a study of the surfaces of culture.