

“Waking from Dreams of Morning”: *City* as Critical Dystopia

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UPON opening the accompanying booklet to Strapping Young Lad’s 1997 record *City*, readers greet a seemingly dystopian vision: “Stink hot at 5 a.m. when the machine starts up again. / The sky is still pink.”¹ The album belongs to the category of what Laura Taylor calls “cyber metal” records: albums that feature dystopian images of technology and place a sonic emphasis on low-frequency power, repetition, vocal processing, and samplers.² *City*, which *Revolver Magazine* named one of the greatest metal albums of all time, is the creation of frontman Devin Townsend, who wrote all of the music and was inspired by “the ugly nature and relative inconspicuousness of cities.”³ The album warns of the oppressive potential of technology, which, similar to the city’s overbearing architecture, is thought to stifle human vitality. *City* also ruminates on the notion that rampant development results not in interconnectedness but isolation; but it also reflects, in both its musical composition and thematics, the physical and psychological problems faced by humans in a hostile urban environment. In these ways, the album serves as a musical exemplar of the critical dystopia.

Critical dystopias differ from canonical dystopias. According to Chang Hui-chuan, the latter are “bleak, depressing,” and allow “little space for hope,” while the former inspire “hope by resisting closure” and providing “ambiguous, open endings” that can “maintain the utopian impulse within the work.”⁴ Lyman Tower Sargent concurs, asserting that critical dystopias “challenge the distinctions between utopia and dystopia” and, in doing so, identify “the causes of future problems in the mistakes of today.”⁵ Though critical dystopias are generally considered in terms of film and literature, music — particularly metal — can also depict these potential futures, and, as Taylor argues, “the critical dystopia in metal represents one speculative strain of this musical genre’s broader social conscience.”⁶ *City*, surprisingly, has been overlooked in the canon of metal studies; and it is a jarring absence, given the record’s critical acclaim and unique approach to the critical dystopia.⁷

Perhaps it has remained neglected due to its originality. After all, *City*’s critical dystopia differs from those depicted in other cyber metal records most prominently due to its use of humour. Though most metal bands eschew humour, and focus instead on “introspection, the expression of emotional pain, and a limitless exploration of violent fantasy,” Strapping Young Lad uses humour as a utopian impulse.⁸ Numerous humorous elements on the record heighten its levity. The sampled, fourth-wall-shattering voice that opens “Home Nucleonics,” for example, articulates the words “the beat starts here” before the song erupts into one of the most violent, sonically compressed blast beats ever committed to record. This is a quintessential moment of self-ridicule, a knowing comment on the hyperbolic extremity of the music and its message. The album also uses rampant, intentionally excessive profanity throughout, as evident in the chorus of the fittingly titled “Oh My Fucking God,” in which Townsend repeatedly bellows the song title in exaggerated screams so over-the-top as to be ridiculous. This comedic approach compounds humour with the record’s utopian impulse and, as with all critical dystopias, blurs the line between utopia and dystopia.

City focuses on the brutalist architecture of Los Angeles, and the isolation it imposes on humanity in its modern and overbuilt form. Townsend, who wrote the record while living in the “quasi industrial wasteland of Los Angeles,” peppers his lyrics with references to the imposing and planned environments of cities.⁹ *City*’s lone single, “Detox,” compounds the isolation characteristic of urban Los Angeles by describing the disorientation produced by this modern environment, as well as the seclusion that results:

I’m lost... I’m freaking
And everybody knows... everyone’s watching
... So here’s all my hopes and aspirations
Nothing but puke
God, I’m so lonely.

The singer knows that “Everyone’s watching,” and yet he is “so lonely.” And therein lies the paradox of the city, in which human subjects are “lost.” The vision Townsend presents is one of an ultimate dystopia: humans possessing the ability to bear witness to their disintegration yet lacking the agency to resist. This nightmarish scenario is further elucidated later in the track by another sample: “the human brain,” we hear, “[is] an unbelievable complex of nerve cells... the passage of blood will continue even after it has been removed from the body.” The inclusion of this sample cryptically implies that although blood will continue to circulate through them, humans will remain but shells, victims of a technological oppression of their own creation. By outsourcing cognitive faculties and offering endless distractions, technology renders that “unbelievable complex of nerve cells” inert. Townsend is the lone individual crying out to the streets for answers.

Throughout *City*’s runtime, instrumentals and vocals juxtapose to express the theme of machine-imposed isolation. The instrumental tracks are dense, overwhelming, and ridden with samples. Futuristic blips and bleeps shift between speakers, left to right and back again with dizzying speed; mechanical and industrial noises, including jet engines, static electricity, and glitching electronics, are buried in science fiction-tinged *musique concrete* beneath walls of layered

instrumentation. The record's multi-tracked, repetitiously frantic instrumentals — courtesy of drummer Gene Hoglan, bassist Byron Stroud, guitarist Jed Simon, and Devin himself — adhere to cyber metal's mechanical rhythms. In so doing, these rhythmic structures serve as symbols of modern city architecture itself. The instruments, tools of technology, unite in force to construct a monolithic, calculated onslaught, just as technology in a broader sense is used to construct an oppressive city architecture. Crying out over this assault is Townsend, whose hyper-emotive, animalistic vocal performances oppose the calculated, repetitive thrashing behind him. Townsend's vocals represent the human — the human who actively repudiates technological and architectural coercion. The wild animation of the human voice apposes the rigid calculation of the instrumentals: the voice pops from the speakers like a jack-in-the-box emerging from its cube in so ludicrously startling a manner as to prompt laughter. Any digital processing the vocals have undergone represents a command of the technological; vocal effects, including delay and reverb — together with Townsend's infamous and liberal use of multi-tracking — reinforce the authority of the singer's saviour position and, moreover, the irony of his self-effacement.

If the songs are satirical, then their satiric nature is only heightened in the context of contemporary music production, where the act of recording and distributing music necessitates a reliance on technology. For without technological assistance, the music can never be heard. Indeed, the claim made by these songs — that technology is a wholly negative force — sits uncomfortably with the very medium of the music itself, and especially this mode of contemporary popular music. Townsend emphasises this contradictory dependency by using a “brickwalled” production style on *City*. By inflating the volume of the music (and vocals) at the expense of fidelity, Townsend utilises the very technological shift he is denigrating.¹⁰ Loudness aside, the juxtaposition between Townsend's hyper-emotive voice and the dense, repetitious instrumental grooves demonstrates a blurring of utopian and dystopian visions — a blurring that Sargent insists is the crucial component of a critical dystopia.¹¹ If Townsend's human voice rep-

resents the utopian impulse, the dense instrumentals are his dystopic surroundings.

The fifteen-second sequence that begins “Velvet Kevorkian,” the album’s opening song, encapsulates *City*’s approach to the critical dystopia. It begins with a sequence of metronomic beeping before Townsend interrupts the sequence unexpectedly, screaming out a question: “Can you believe this shit, people?” Through humour, expressed here through a combination of profanity and over-the-top delivery, the interjections combat both the overbearing architecture of cities, which stifles human bodies, and the specter of advanced technology, which, for Townsend, oppresses intrinsic human vitality. Townsend’s wild vocals represent a hope for humanity, at least insofar as they represent an ability to maintain vitality amid a utilitarian, overwhelming cityscape. Curiously, the lyrics in the album booklet differ substantially from those on the recording. One of the opening lines recorded on the album is a furious roar: “All I need is this city and this mind and I will get by”; however, in the album’s booklet, readers apprehend a comparatively tame verse: “I want to be where the action is.” The audience confronts these two different expressions as a dialectic. While the expressions expose the human tendency to misinterpret information, they also undermine the coherent presentation of a musical idea; the contrasting materials indicate the potential for creative interpretation, as well as give emphasis to the higher level of intensity denoted by the transition from the word “want” (in the written work) to the word “need” (in the sound recording). Unlike the lyrics, which are interpretive and unstructured — even incoherent, at least insofar as they present a different message to that presented in the textual materials — the instrumental backing track remains rigid and coherent: a singular sonic presentation. The plight of humanity in *City*’s critical dystopia, then, is expressed through this contrast between the rigid instrumental and the interpretive human voice.

The recorded lyrics of “Velvet Kevorkian” are a rallying cry of sorts:

Can you believe this shit, people?

All I need is this city and this mind, and I will get by
Fuck sleep, fuck all of you
Yes... yes!
But we can never look back because we'll never get a second chance
I like people who can take the pressure!
Are you listening? Are you? Fuck you!
A new time has come, ladies and gentlemen... boys and girls...
Welcome the fuck home!

The song demonstrates Townsend's frustration with the incapacitated populace that surrounds him; but it also confirms his isolation, his singularity. The singer is the only one who can perceive the oppressive nature of modernity. *He* alone is the subject of the song; and all *he* needs is the city and his mind and *he* will get by. In this way, Townsend presents himself as an isolated figure from the album's outset. He even goes so far as to partially mask his voice with a distortion effect, lowering its volume to allow crushing guitar chugs and blooping synthesizers to overtake it. This effect, one of few examples where the vocal track on the record is obscured, contrasts with the subsequent songs and suggests that the individual, when temporarily suppressed, may grow to overcome the forces of urbanisation and technology. Similar tropes of self-belief and empowerment are represented in the clearly audible vocals in subsequent tracks, implying the restorative effect of this first song's battle cry. Read in correspondence with the composition's title — a discomfiting reference to plush fabric and Jack Kevorkian, the American pathologist who championed physician-assisted suicide — the effect of Townsend's self-isolationism is to “wake up” a populace who are unable or unwilling to see how advanced technology can sap one's vitality. Though they are slowly killing themselves, humans, Townsend screams, continue to indulge in the short-term, velvety comfort that technology provides.

“Home Nucleonics” is a furious rant against a populace failing to recognise its own entrapment. As Townsend screams: “Hating, burning, waiting, falling / Fucking twisted human cancer / Fuck your bullshit America.” In what follows, Townsend continues to express frustration with his disenfranchised brethren: “Technology will be

the second coming / and it will hit us while we're looking for a man / I warned you." Of course, there is a comedic implication here, as the notoriously self-deprecating Townsend positions himself as an oracular visionary through his shrieked lyrics. The savior is not simply Townsend himself, then, but the eradication of pretense; Townsend calls for a recognition of the absurdity of humanity's dependence on its creations by asserting that, to remedy the scenario, society must stop looking for "a man." Rather, society must recognise the irrationality of any one person asserting they are capable of arbitrating change. The irony is that Townsend appears to be the only one who perceives this reality and, therefore, he is the only one capable of delivering the message. "Spirituality" similarly addresses the singer's frustration with machine-imposed isolation. In that song, the singer laments the meaninglessness of the world atop whirring spaceship samples and chugging, mechanical guitarwork: "And if this all there is /... If this is it / Won't... won't someone tell me." Here, as the singer descends into existential despair, he wonders if his efforts to illuminate humanity's ailments are for naught. But the overbuilt nature of the city is reflected in the crushing brutality of the music, a brutality that emboldens the album's humorous impulse. The more relentless the anticipation, the more jarring — and impactful — the comedic counterpoint.

Townsend's experimentation with critical dystopias began well before the release of *City*. Strapping Young Lad's debut record, *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing*, also engaged with the concept, albeit in a cruder fashion.¹² Although the muddy production of that album was, as Townsend admits, a product of his inexperience rather than of any deliberate artistic statement, it also reflects a grimy, urbanised cityscape. And Townsend's characteristically vibrant vocals serve a similar purpose in that album as in *City*: that is, to represent the revitalisation of a society rendered emotionally lifeless by advanced technology.¹³ Together, *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing* and *City* may be thought to represent manifestations of Kingsley Amis' provocative argument about the specificity of science fiction as a mode of critique:

An often overlooked feature of the [science fiction] medium, and a valuable counterpoise to the heavily moralising tone it often adopts, is its fondness for levity in situations not wholly appropriate to it, which is hopeful, for does not bad taste indicate maturity?¹⁴

To that end, the song “The Filler — Sweet City Jesus” from *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing* depicts a humorous critical utopian impulse in a similarly vulgar manner as the songs in *City*. The song is apparently aware of its own inferiority, as evidenced by its titular derision as “filler,” and the lines, “Call me, I’m your filler / Silly girl, spit it out / We are trying slowly... / Still we try...” The heavy, plodding instrumentation chugs behind Townsend’s eccentric delivery, the lyrics a sad lamentation for the society the singer has been unable to illumine. The pejorative description of the song as filler is not just a musical reference but a description of how the greater populace views Townsend and his warnings: “You can tell me, who’s your filler now? / All I am, helped me, I’m the filler.”

Overall, the lyrics throughout *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing* are decidedly more optimistic than those of *City* — certainly, they are more optimistic about the human ability to overcome their ironic oppression. As the chorus to “S. Y. L.” claims,

I am the coming of a new age
Stained we still stand tall
I am the coming of a new age
And I will never fall
I bear the questions of a new time
Seen but never heard
I’ve seen the comings of a new time, get ready...
Coz here it fucking comes.

The opening allusion to the New Testament’s Revelation 21 indicates some utopian anticipation.¹⁵ The “I” becomes “we” in the second line, implying the ubiquity of the utopian impulse; similarly, the first person becomes plural, indicating a communal feeling of anticipation, and thereby providing fertile ground for Townsend, an enraged

liberator, to implant the seeds of revolution. To suggest a link between *City* and the New Testament is to attest to the timelessness of the revolutionary impulse. *Heavy As a Really Heavy Thing* and *City* were released in the latter half of the twentieth century (1995 and 1997 respectively), at a time when, as Peter G. Stillman notes, “a repressively strong state continued to feature in many dystopias.”¹⁶ While in the early twentieth century most dystopias depicted a “strong, centralized government that meticulously control all aspects of political and social life,” its second half was marked by an optimism that shone through an otherwise overbearing darkness, wherein depictees of dystopias “not only warned of imminent future dangers but also suggested possible utopian futures.”¹⁷ In this sense, Strapping Young Lad’s musical approach is part of a lengthy philosophical tradition that takes cues from earlier traditions; however, the band’s work also reflects their contemporary concerns. As such, *City* draws power and energy from what Werner Von Koppenfels identifies as the “utopian anticipation presented or implied in the text or dawning just beyond it.”¹⁸

City’s “All Hail the New Flesh” elevates the ironic martyr complex, opening with a ferocious blastbeat and the following lyrics:

Hey man, I’m going to fuck this shit up
No fear, no compromise, I want it all
I will never be afraid, and I’ll die for what I believe
All of you assholes can stay rotting here
I do not care, I will not be there
I have got to save myself
And don’t tell me there’s no one else

As before, the singer distinguishes himself from the unwashed masses; but here, he ends the verse with a hopeful yet antagonistic line: “don’t tell me there’s no one else.” The line expresses a belief in the likemindedness of at least some of those around him, although, conversely, it characterises those who question his beliefs as “assholes.” This obscene monologue serves to highlight the distinction between the precise instrumentation of the city and the expressive, unadulterated vitality of the human. The chorus further explores the theme:

And all you are, is all you are...
I'm so sorry (for you) I'm sorry...
So all hail the new flesh,
Because it suits me fine...

Highlighted in the first line is the rigidity of contemporary humanity; the singer mourns the unadaptable human who is “all that they are” in age of advanced technology. The singer suggests that if humans should remain content with the intellectual and physical stultification imposed by technology, then they will always remain all that they already are; and yet, technology, he implies — the “new flesh” — will take their place, co-opting the inherent changes provided by their own humanity. Now deriving contentment from only that which is technologically produced, humans have “rotted,” for inasmuch as these new machines possess certain strengths and intellectual benefits, they also appropriate human *vitality* — that animalistic advantage, and that precursor to contentment. In the song’s third verse, the singer refers to his opponent as a “motherfuck,” a “piece of shit,” and, collectively, as “pigs,” utilising shocking language in an attempt to reclaim the many lost benefits of human vitality.

In the song that follows, titled “Oh My Fucking God,” the grittiest and most gargled scream on the album erupts into the soundscape. The singer delivers the verses in a semi-rapped and semi-choked cacophony:

There is no insanity; rather a super sanity
More suited for life at the end of the 20th century
Where everything is art,
And everything is trying to express it,
Where everything is art,
And everything is trying to communicate it...

The so-called “super sanity” is, in a word, technology, a meaning that is implied in the phrase’s co-ordination with “insanity.” Playing with the double meaning of the morphemes, the singer suggests that sanity is no longer “in” but “out” — as in outside its former home: namely,

the human body. And since “humanity,” as such, has no mind of its own, it can no longer experience insanity but instead must (similar to the displaced human brains described in “Detox”) concede that the flowing of blood — the continuation of life — shall continue unabated, even where agency is denied to the brains’ former hosts. But, in another sense, “super sanity” is not *just* technology; it is also a mechanised life that is “more suited for life at the end of the 20th century” — a life that is thought to be enhanced by myriad technological advantages. By placing unprecedented faith in technology, humans have seemingly imbued it with a will of its own, removing their own brains — at least metaphorically — together with the advantages and disadvantages attending them, including insanity, so as to adopt the “super sanity” of technology.

In the following lines, the singer continues in a similar vein: “In the morning, all their wonder and their / Glory was turned ugly and quite simple / Like a venue when you’re loading in gear.” In unison with the album booklet, the singer equates morning with doom in what is an inversion of an orthodox metonymy of critical dystopia, where night — representing the loss of sight — is usually associated with ignorance and oppression. Indeed, as Werner von Koppenfels argues, sight is the principal faculty with which one might combat “unreason,” and the eradication of sight — or, as he calls it, “the sun of reason” — results in a dystopia that “inverts the course of enlightened progress with a vengeance, creating totalitarian or brutish patterns.”¹⁹ Flipping conventional symbolism, Townsend amplifies the horror of the scenario: the oppression he implies occurs not under a shroud of darkness but in plain sight. “Wonder” and “glory” are reserved for the dark; but, in the morning, human thought is turned “ugly” and “simple” to become merely the “venues” into which “gear” is loaded. Later in the track, the singer cites such brands and products as “Adidas” and “the Arch Deluxe” while asserting that, whether one is “man or woman,” it “makes no difference in the outcome,” all by way of illuminating the vapid, consumerist nature of the “gear” that fills the “venues” of the modern mind. In implicating the band itself in this mental junkyard, Townsend implores listeners to respond to

the humour in this self-deprecation. Of course, this commentary also references the touring experience of the band and ironically reinforces Townsend's position as the frontman — who is thus also the leader and saviour figure. Once again, self-deprecation abounds as Townsend subverts his own vaunted position by deploring the “ugly simplicity” of the venues in which his band performs and, by extension, spread their critical message.

Near the end of *City*, the track “Underneath the Waves” appears; it features a more pessimistic interpretation of the human condition: “no one knows why / A new time, with new ways / New thought, a new age.” By this point in the record, the singer is exhausted: “I'm tired of waiting / I'm tired of fighting / I'm tired of waiting for fucking nothing.” After imploring humans to “wake up” in the six previous tracks, the singer now begins to tire; showing signs of resignation, he screams that his contemporaries are “underneath the waves.” “Waves” is an apt word, as it may refer to both natural and technological phenomena: waves in the ocean, microwaves, radio waves, and so on. In one sense, Townsend may be thought to decry humanity as it falls into a technological trap that is broadly misconceived as a natural progression. The singer laments the current age as “a new time, with new ways” without a reason for being, for “no one knows why” it has arisen. In other words, humans have not stopped to reflect on their shift to “super sanity” but, instead, have understood the change only as an inevitable aspect of the “new time.”

It is at this point of the record that Townsend includes a cover version of Cop Shoot Cop's “Room 429,” an indication that his exhaustion is now so extreme that he is unable to continue his own creative production, either of rage or prophecy.²⁰ The song features the following lines: “I can see you standing / Alone against the winter / I can hear you asking, but the streets, they are not giving.” Here, the city architecture — “the streets” — come alive as they are anthropomorphised (“they are not giving”), although they refuse to acknowledge the request of the song's character. Ironically, the architecture adopts the position of authority; the idea that a human must ask the streets for anything reverses the assumed power dynamic in which infrastructure

will always serve humans passively. However, the human is doubly subordinated: they stand alone while the streets are presented as both a plural and united force. The physical environment is coherent and concerted and governs a disparate field of humans in which individuals remain isolated yet, ironically, near enough to one another to observe their isolation. Townsend's version of the song is largely faithful to the original, although less whimsical in tone and more eclectic in its vocal gymnastics. The reason it is included on the record seems clear. Lyrically, the song certainly relates to the record's themes of isolation and entrapment, and it also provides insight into the frontman's influence; to be sure, Townsend remarked while writing for *City* that he was "compelled by certain albums, including *Cop Shoot Cop*."²¹ It might be thought, then, that the notion of critical dystopia did not arise *ab initio* from Townsend's mind but circulated in the broader culture of popular music before Townsend embraced it. Again, in drawing on the music of others, Townsend undermines his own acerbic positioning as a revolutionary figure.

The album's closing song, "Spirituality," rings finality with its downcast lyrics:

It's getting late
I'm getting old
And every night I just sleep... We never talk
And every night, I look to the sky
And I pray to god they'll hear me...
Because I'm so fucking sick of all you
... Sick
Stupid people

Through both the placement of "god" in the lyrics and the placement of the song as the last on the album, Townsend implies that religion may be embraced when other options are exhausted. The singer "prays to god they'll hear [him]" even though he is so "sick of all [the] sick stupid people"; that is, the singer laments the lack of dialogue between himself and others despite his claim to be sick of people. The "new age" of which Townsend sang on the first record is here substituted

with a request that anyone listen to him at all. In this line there is also a degree of comedic affectation, though, for Townsend's plea that someone should to listen to him is also a literal commentary on the unpopularity of his band. The sardonic commentary on the original pressing of *City* — highlighting the meagre sales of *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing* — covers the same ground: "Hey there, metal brethren! Here we go again... I bet the fourteen of you who bought the last record are stoked!"

It can be seen as a forlorn ending to the album: Townsend remains conflicted despite his impassioned attempt to restore vibrancy to a technology-razed necropolis, a world wherein machinery has supplanted human vitality and the living are now zombified consumers. Or rather, it *might* register as forlorn, were it not for the fact that the album ends with Townsend whispering "I finally found a way out of here," followed by thirty seconds of silence before a monotonous computerised voice unexpectedly intones, "Strapping Young Lad rocks my hairy anus." Humour — presented here in a juvenile form — is that "way out" to which Townsend refers. Laughter is the weapon through which technological oppression might be resisted; after all, laughter is one component of the broader concept of human vitality stifled by technology. Here the mechanised voice is made an object of ridicule; and thus the technological threat is disarmed through Townsend's co-optation of technology to elicit laughter. Spirituality has failed, religion has failed, and other people have failed — but humour still functions as a tool of resistance. Ultimately, this message is what marks *City* as a critical dystopia, one that deserves recognition in both metal studies and dystopian studies more broadly.

Notes

1. Strapping Young Lad, *City* (Los Angeles, CA: Century Media Records, 1997). All subsequent references to this record and its individual tracks are to this edition.

2. Laura Taylor, "Metal Music as Critical Dystopia: Humans, Technology and the Future in 1990s Science Fiction Metal" (PhD diss., Brock University, 2006), 38; a sample is a sound recording, generally brief, that is repurposed or "sampled" for use in another audio recording.

3. "The 69 Greatest Metal Albums of All Time," *Revolver* (September/October 2002); Devin Townsend, "City — Diary," <http://www.hevydevy.com/discography/syl-city>.
4. Hui-chuan Chang, "Critical Dystopia Reconsidered: Octavia Butler's Parable Series and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* as Post-Apocalyptic Dystopias," *Tamkang Review* 41, no. 2 (2011): 4.
5. Lyman Tower Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," *Utopian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1994): 7.
6. Taylor, "Metal Music as Critical Dystopia: Humans, Technology and the Future in 1990s Science Fiction Metal," 3.
7. See, for example, Adam Rafalovich, "Broken and Becoming God-Sized: Contemporary Metal Music and Masculine Individualism," *Symbolic Interaction* 29, no. 1 (2006): 19–32; Joseph Tompkins, "What's the Deal with Soundtrack Albums? Metal Music and the Customized Aesthetics of Contemporary Horror," *Cinema Journal* 49, no. 1 (2009): 65–81.
8. Rafalovich, "Broken and Becoming God-Sized," 22.
9. Townsend, "City — Diary."
10. Brickwalling is marked by extreme volume that pushes digital loudness to its limit, narrowly avoiding audio clipping. See Greg Milner, *Perfecting Sound Forever: An Aural History of Recorded Music* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).
11. Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," 7.
12. Strapping Young Lad, *Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing* (Los Angeles, CA: Century Media Records, 1995). All subsequent references to this record and its individual tracks are to this edition.
13. Devin Townsend, "Heavy as a Really Heavy Thing — Diary," <http://www.hevydevy.com/discography/heavy-as-a-really-heavy-thing/>.
14. Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 117.
15. 21 Rev. 21: 6–8 (New International Version).
16. Peter G. Stillman, "Dystopian Visions and Utopian Anticipations: Terry Bisson's 'Pirates of the Universe' as Critical Dystopia," *Science Fiction Studies* 28, no. 3 (2001): 365.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 367.
19. Werner Von Koppenfels, "'These Irritant Bodies': Blinding and Blindness in Dystopia," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2004): 156.
20. Cop Shoot Cop, "Room 429" in *Ask Questions Later* (Brooklyn, NY: Interscope Records, 1993).
21. Townsend, "City — Diary."

