It's Not the End of the World: An Analysis of the Similarities in Dystopian Literature and Their Shared Reflection of the Innate Fears of Humanity

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzed common aspects of six major works of dystopian literature to assess their commonalities, as well as their authors' motivations in writing. Dystopian literature explores the major flaws of humanity, as well as the extent to which society could descend into chaos while simultaneously believing it is creating a better world. This thesis did not argue that within the studied works are all the same dystopian characteristics. Instead, it analyzed select dystopian qualities and made comparisons between the dystopian novels that share them, all of which were impacted by the utopian goals modeled in Plato's *The Republic*, Thomas More's Utopia, Sir Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, and H. G. Wells's A Modern Utopia. These shared characteristics demonstrate that humanity has been fearing the end of the world for several thousand years. As such, this thesis suggests that the prevalence of dystopian literature may not necessarily signal the result of the coming end times but instead may be the result of the natural human fears of chaos, abused power, and the end of the world.

Keywords: Dystopia, utopia, *Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Fahrenheit 451, The Handmaid's Tale, The Giver, The Hunger Games, Catching Fire, Mockingjay*

INTRODUCTION

In its Greek etymology, "utopia" is derived from the prefix οὐ-, meaning "not," and the root τόπος, meaning "place." The construction of the word already implies the farfetched nature of the society it describes: one free of any political or social strife and where all members thrive, uninhibited. But, regardless of how desperately humanity may strive for a perfect society, the word itself demonstrates that a utopia is not possible. Universally, working towards a utopia is the goal of society—most communities dream of being one without political problems, social problems, economic problems, and any other issue which threatens the well-being of its people—but some authors use their writing to take a stance of skepticism regarding what could go wrong on the journey to a perfect world. These are known as anti-utopian novels or, more commonly, dystopian novels, a term which was "coined for its overtones of disease and malfunction, making it an accurate label for the genre's depictions of human foibles, weaknesses, and messiness that defeats attempts to create a perfect society" (Burnett and Rollin 77-78). Each work of dystopian literature addresses humanity's potential for reaching too far and tipping the balance in the wrong direction, away from the society of equality and perfection and towards one of abusive methods of societal control and neglect of its citizens. In *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, Krishan Kumar describes the relationship between utopia and anti-utopia, saying, "As nightmare to its dream, like a malevolent and grimacing doppelganger, anti-utopia has stalked utopia from the very beginning" and anti-utopia is the "mirror-image of utopia—but a distorted image, seen in a cracked mirror" (99-100). Each dystopian novel conveys a distinct vision of fear for the future, warped from humanity's longing for a stable society.

Regardless of when the authors are writing or how they portray their concern—be it through children fighting to the death or the burning of books—patterns of bureaucratic structures, relational exploitation, and sociological adjustments can be detected in

aspects of all these visions. These are representative of the pattern of fear emulated in the fictional societies. This thesis will explore three common characteristics that often appear within dystopias and how these characteristics are shared in key pieces of literature in the dystopian genre. This is illustrated first by introducing four foundational utopian works and the major themes that will reappear within the dystopian novels, followed by summaries of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, and Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games*, which were chosen for their coverage throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, therefore demonstrating the recurrent nature of these dystopian characteristics across time. These novels will be analyzed to assess the similarities they share with regards to the three characteristics. The first characteristic discussed is political structures, specifically the leaders of dystopian societies and the methods of control they employed. The second characteristic is interpersonal relationships and how sexual, familial, and friendly relationships are distorted in dystopian societies. The final characteristic is the way unity is achieved. Not all six dystopian novels will be discussed to the same extent in each section, as the three characteristics manifest themselves to different levels in the various texts. One text will be chosen as the best illustration of the dystopian characteristics and will, therefore, be more fully developed. It will be followed by several other textual examples that also illustrate the characteristics, but not to the same degree. After examining the characteristics in the texts, biographical and environmental factors in each author's life are explored to show to what extent these novels may act as representatives of innate human fears that are omnipresent rather than localized, regardless of the characteristics exhibited within the texts.

HISTORY OF UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Foundations of utopian literature

Utopian literature and the concept of a utopia has deep roots in early religious stories and myths, which describe "an unrecovered earthly paradise or golden age of the past" (Sargent 8). Generally, the focus of such writings assesses perfect communities that do not come about through the effort of humans. Places such as the Garden of Eden and Paradise are known for their serenity and for being places of "abundance, unity, and ease" where there is "security, expressed negatively as an absence of conflict and positively in images of abundance" (8). In the following pieces of literature that explore how a utopic society could theoretically exist, the authors no longer consider the utopia as a place given to humans but instead as a place that requires communal collaboration and effort. The ideas explored in these utopian societies later contribute greatly to the dystopian genre, where abundance, unity, and ease are either abused or completely dismissed.

Plato's Republic

Plato's *Republic*, written in 380 BC, does not focus on the elements that would destroy a functioning society but instead develops the image of an ideal—a utopia. In his work, Plato outlines how social harmony can be created, beginning with a clear division of classes. The first and highest class is a philosopher-king, the second, auxiliaries who support and sustain, and the third are the producers who utilize their skills and follow

the ruler and auxiliaries. The goal of utopia is truly the creation of roles where everyone fits into a position to contribute what he or she has and is content with those roles. Plato writes of the value of unity for a city-state, saying, "Does not the worst evil for a state arise from anything that tends to rend it asunder and destroy its unity, while nothing does it more good than whatever tends to bind it together and make it one?" (163). The development of the society must focus on all members participating in the creation of the society by doing their share and feeling like each is a part of a whole. Plato explains this by saying, "The best ordered state will be the one in which the largest number of persons use [mine, not mine, another's, and not another's] in the same sense, and which accordingly most nearly resembles a single person" (163). In this way, all members should see themselves not just as members of the state, but as a part of a collective.

Thomas More's Utopia

Thomas More's *Utopia* was written in Latin in 1516, and through the work More explores the concept of a utopia not as an idea but as an existing place: the island Utopia. It is the island's values and structure that make it stand apart for More; he writes about the society's lack of social classes, its disinclination towards war, its communal property, and its collective productivity as just some of the qualities that make it a state that thrives. One vital point that allows the society to flourish is the following:

> The Utopians' opinion is that not only covenants and bargains made between private men ought to be well and faithfully fulfilled, observed, and kept; but also common laws, which either a good prince has justly published, or else the people, neither oppressed with tyranny nor deceived by fraud and guile, have by their common consent constituted and ratified, concerning the partition of the comfort of life, that is to say, the materials of pleasure. (112-13)

This belief is basic. The simplicity of all members accepting and upholding both informal covenants and common laws is dramatic in comparison to real life, where deals between individuals are not kept and laws are not upheld. This makes the belief much more radical than it would appear initially. Throughout *Utopia,* More also explores other radical and controversial topics that allow the society to function, such as euthanasia and slavery. It is unclear whether *Utopia* was written to encourage work towards achieving the peace like More's fictional island or, rather, to act as a warning against the socialist society to which More was opposed.

Francis Bacon's New Atlantis

Sir Francis Bacon's portrayal of a utopian future lay in an unfinished novel titled *New Atlantis*, published in 1627. Its plot, which focuses on the crew of a ship which discovers the island of Bensalem after being lost at sea, serves as a vehicle for Bacon to discuss the culture of its inhabitants and the state-sponsored institution for research called Solomon's House. The "generosity and enlightenment, the dignity and splendor, the piety and public spirit, of the inhabitants of Bensalem represent the ideal qualities" which Bacon explores as the desired state for a society (Bacon). Bensalem also acts as Bacon's "prophetic vision of the future of human knowledge" (Bacon). Within the society, science and religion coexist peacefully, and the goal is "finding out of the true nature of all things, (whereby God mought [sic] have the more glory in the workmanship of them, and insert the more

fruit in the use of them)" (Bacon). Within *New Atlantis*, Bacon demonstrated that a goal and acceptance of others can be a practical, as well as meaningful, way of creating unity within a utopia.

H. G. Wells's A Modern Utopia

H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, published in 1905, is told by a narrator known only as "The Owner of the Voice." The book is told as the Voice and his companion learn about the utopia chapter by chapter, discovering its topography, economy, and the presence of their utopian selves, which are exact replicas of themselves. Common to utopian societies, but only recognizable to an observer, "their common fault is to be comprehensively jejune. That which is the blood and warmth and reality of life is largely absent; there are no individualities, but only generalized people" (9). Wells's own description of *A Modern Utopia* is "a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other" (xxxii). As a result, Wells creates a literary bridge between the early utopian philosophers and the more fictionally-focused authors to come. Peter Fitting explains this when he writes, "The 'novelization' of utopia involves a significant transformation: from the positioning of the reader as the addressee in a philosophic dialogue… to the process of identification with a fiction character where the reader is implicated on an emotional and experimental level" (30). Such novelization implies less intent by the author to convince the reader and more to engage the reader by giving the reader a character with which to identify.

In their more general ideas, these four early utopian works have a great deal in common. They demonstrate that the basis for a perfect society lies in the unity created, the governments founded, and the thought processes of its members. By introducing these three structures into a community, each believed in a theoretical perfect society which replaced conflict with peace, scarcity with abundance, and hardship with ease. These authors create foundational literary works that continue to influence the genre because each began with a vision and an idea of something better than the world they knew.

Recent dystopian literature

The turn from utopia towards dystopia near the end of the nineteenth century took place because of two developments, according to Gregory Claeys: eugenics and socialism (111). Dystopian novels became "dominated by the promises of these two, often interwoven, ideals of social and individual improvement" (111). Dystopian novels are a means of exploring utopias under different lighting. Utopias follow "the social engineer's blueprints [which] are merely revised editions of the ancient text" and focus on the values within the works of Plato, More, Bacon, and Wells, encouraging its citizens to be happy, free, and fulfilled without oppression of their natural humanity or individuality (Koestler 16). However, dystopias take the same blueprints and emphasize the potential downsides and defects in such attempts in creating a perfect world.

Aldous Huxley and Brave New World

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, published in 1932, contains most aspects of a dystopian society. The World State creates a genetically engineered society with an intelligence-based hierarchy within which every individual fits. Following the cataclysmic Nine Years' War and the Great Economic Collapse, a global government

is created known as the World State—the same name of the society in H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*. Though several characters express their disdain for the World's culture, only one person—a "savage" named John—challenges the dystopic methods and meaninglessness of life.

When he wrote *Brave New World,* Aldous Huxley believed that the future would hold a revolution in five or six hundred years, though he later discussed this as being "excessive" in estimation and believed that George Orwell's writing—which was "made from a vantage point considerably further down the descending spiral of modern history than mine"—was closer in estimating when this revolution might take place (Huxley, "Variations on a Philosopher" 109). In his essays, Huxley frequently referenced the potential for revolutions, as well as the power of freedom. In an interview, Huxley discussed freedom and noted that it is not always a deliberate person who is trying to rob people of their freedom but instead that people are pushing in the direction of less and less freedom, imposing control on existing freedoms (Wallace). A witness to Hitler's rise, Huxley noted that Hitler was deliberately taking freedoms from people, using similar means as he discussed in his interview to rob people of freedom by doing so gradually and then with propaganda and brute force. In the same interview, Huxley also stated that Hitler "was using every modern device at that time … to the fullest extent and was able to impose his will on an immense mass of people" (Wallace). The use of propaganda, violence, and restricted freedoms are repeatedly visited within *Brave New World*.

George Orwell and Nineteen Eighty-Four
George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, written in 1949, also contains many of the qualities that can be seen in a dystopian world. The Party is led by the infamous Big Brother and threatens with violence and propaganda, creating a world where no one has privacy. The protagonist Winston Smith secretly opposes the Party and dreams of rebelling against them. This internal desire makes him a "thoughtcriminal," a crime which leads to his capture and torture. The Party does not care for the people it governs, only for power. This power holds everything in its wake, spying through two-way televisions and rewriting historical documents to fit new truths until there is no opportunity for dissention.

In a letter to Francis A. Henson, Orwell wrote, "Totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences" (quoted in Howe 287). Many of the significant ideas that he explores in his dystopian work—as well as fears that inspired it—were rooted in his experiences as a Talks Assistant for BBC. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Room 101, where Winston acquires his complete understanding of Big Brother and the Party, was inspired by Orwell's work at BBC. Room 101 is different for every person, encompassing their deepest fear; for some, it may be a way of death, or for others, "it is some quite trivial thing, not even fatal" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 293). For Orwell, Room 101 included deathly boredom in meetings at BBC. As he worked with BBC during the war, he was always aware of propaganda and the diligent use of words. Orwell was an enthusiast for the artificial language of Basic English, which was an attempt at "a codified, error-proof version of English with an easily mastered, limited vocabulary," created by C.K. Ogden (Gordon 338-39). While Orwell endorsed Basic English, he understood that in order to use it in

translating, there were radically different ways of understanding what was being said. Newspeak in Nineteen Eighty-Four is a reflection of this communication method in the real world. Where there was the Ministry of Information in Britain, there was the Ministry of Truth in Oceania. Orwell's experiences during the war and his mastery of language allowed him to create a parallel world to address his fears: manipulation, totalitarianism, and war.

Ray Bradbury and Fahrenheit 451

Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 was written in 1953. Its main character is a fireman named Guy Montag, though his profession is the opposite of what it once had been: instead of obliterating flames, he creates them, lighting up books and the houses that conceal them, maintaining constant censorship of the works people are allowed to consume. After his wife's suicide attempt and his meeting of an intelligent, though "queer," young woman, he begins questioning his work and the words that hide between the covers of the books he ignites.

For $9.80, Ray Bradbury wrote in the library of UCLA, paying $0.10 per half hour to type. "What a place for a Fahrenheit 451 to be written," he had noted, "in a library, of all places, where it wasn't being burned!" ("A Conversation"). Censorship is largely the quality which defines Fahrenheit 451's dystopic attributes, and Bradbury said that "we should learn from history about the destruction of books. When I was fifteen years old, Hitler burned books in the streets of Berlin, so I learned then how dangerous it all was" ("A Conversation"). His fears were rooted in the problems of World War II, as well as the tyrannical government of Germany. He first explored these fears in other stories, before Fahrenheit 451, such as "The Pedestrian," where he writes about unconventional people acting out of line with their society, just as Clarisse in Fahrenheit 451 would. In the uncompleted novel Where Ignorant Armies Clash by Night, Bradbury writes of persuasion and conditioning, as an old man tells a child, "Everything is futile, all effort is in the end worthless… If you can't fight the meaningless with a religion, then slide along down the chute with it into oblivion. Make a religion of Meaninglessness. Make a sect of cruelty" (Match to Flame). Bradbury explored many topics in his writing. Eventually, common themes and early writings would converge at his writing of Fahrenheit 451, where he would explore fearful topics of censorship, conformity, meaninglessness, and dissatisfaction.

Margaret Atwood and The Handmaid's Tale

Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, written in 1985, revolves around a woman called "Offred," referring to the man she serves, as she is "of fred." Offred is a handmaid, one of a few select women who are responsible for repopulating the earth following an ecological disaster. Brainwashed into acquiring many of the core beliefs of The Republic of Gilead—the government established after the disaster—but still unable to forget the husband, daughter, and life she left behind, she struggles to assimilate to her role.

The Handmaid's Tale's themes have roots in various fears and concerns for Margaret Atwood. Huxley's Brave New World made a deep impression on her. As a result, there are many similarities in the uses of power in both novels. The most potent reason for her writing, however, was her concerns regarding women's rights. In an interview, she

commented that "it does seem to be every totalitarian government on the planet has always taken a very great interest in women's reproductive rights," and the same can be said for novels with totalitarian leaders or dystopian themes (Oyler). When writing, she drew from current society the ways that women could be forced back into the home with no rights or opinions, noting, "You don't write those books because you hope those things will happen. You write those books because those things *might* happen" (Oyler).

When *The Handmaid's Tale* was published, there were critics who commented that it must have been written in response to particular societies in existence or to a specific country. In rebuttal, Atwood states, "It's about everybody. I took examples from all around the world and all you have to do is go back in our history maybe a hundred years and you're going to find very similar things" (quoted in Satalia). Atwood compiled these human experiences and fears into a novel that made people question: could it happen here?

Lois Lowry and The Giver

Lois Lowry's *The Giver,* written in 1993, chronicles the experiences of a young boy named Jonas as he begins training for the role of the Giver, an elder in the Community who carries the weight of history so that the society does not have to. Initially, Lowry stated she wanted readers to feel drawn into the community as a welcoming and safe place to live, only revealing later the sacrifices that were made ("Lois Lowry"). By depriving the community members of the sight of color, the memories of history, and the depth of feeling, the community is safer and at peace, but it is also devoid of meaning.

Lowry expresses that she never intended to create a work of science fiction but simply a book based in the future. The basis of *The Giver* arose when her father began losing his memory with age, and she noticed that he had forgotten the death of Lowry's older sister as well as the war he had fought in. Initially, Lowry commented, "Maybe that's a good thing if we could just obliterate the things that had ever been a source of pain to us, but then I began to think [...] what else would we lose?" and "what would happen if we could manipulate human memory?" ("Lois Lowry on 'The Giver'"; "Lois Lowry: THE GIVER"). These questions were the seeds from which *The Giver* grew. For the plot of this book to occur as she imagined, she knew the book would have to be placed outside of the current world. Then she began removing the causes of problems in current society, beginning with poverty. Then she eradicated homelessness, traffic, crime, divorce, prejudice, pollution, and so on so that the world would "seem close to perfect" ("The Giver: A Conversation"). She admits that even she did not know where the story would go as she was writing, but she could feel the Community had been warped in some very dramatic ways, noting that "with the eradication of memory, feeling has been destroyed as well" and that "there's an emptiness there … that's kind of chilling" ("What if You Could Control Memory"; "Lois Lowry: THE GIVER"). As the book develops, she learned exactly what this would entail, writing a book that she knew would be different from any other book she had penned before. Her vision was not one of complete devastation for the world, as Huxley and Orwell might have envisioned, but one of a warning against a path to be avoided.

Suzanne Collins and The Hunger Games

Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* trilogy, written from 2008 to 2010, follows a young woman named Katniss Everdeen through her life-altering struggle in her home of District 12 of Panem, a new nation formed from the post-apocalyptic remains of North America following a devastating world war. Named after the Latin phrase *Panem et Circenses*, translating to 'bread and circuses,' it is an early suggestion of the Capitol's use of entertainment to distract civilians from rallying politically. As a means of controlling its citizens following a rebellion, the Capitol introduces an annual event named the Hunger Games in which two children—one boy and one girl—are randomly selected to represent their home district in a fight-to-the-death. In a demonstration of rebellion, Katniss acts as an icon and encourages defiance against the Capitol.

Similar to Lowry, whose father went to war following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Suzanne Collins was also impacted by her father and his time in battle while she was young. She cited an experience of looking at the television when she heard the word "Vietnam," where she knew her father was, and seeing the graphic images of war and feeling deep fear as influencing her writing ("Suzanne Collins on the Vietnam War").

From her early impression of television, the roots of *The Hunger Games* continued to take hold from the contemporary obsession with consumption of entertainment and television. Collins described the initial experience that ignited the idea, saying, "I was flipping [channels] and I was seeing footage from the Iraq war and these two things began to sort of fuse together in a very unsettling way and that is when I really, think was the moment where I got the idea for Katniss's story" ("Suzanne Collins Part 2"). The juxtaposition of consumable material on television—violence and entertainment—resonated deeply with her. Its impact can be seen in the required public viewing of many aspects of the Hunger Games: the choosing of tributes, the opening ceremony, the games themselves, and the victory tour. To the Capitol, the games are purely an entertainment spectacle. In one particular comment, Collins references the potentially indistinguishable aspect of entertainment when she says, "You see so many images that do they all begin to have a sameness to them? Are you really distinguishing between the different things that you see on different channels? Are you really distinguishing if you're flipping through quickly?" ("Suzanne Collins on the Vietnam War"). Capitol inhabitants exemplify this in their obsessions regarding the tributes, such as referencing the outfits of the tributes and asking questions about the relationship between Peeta and Katniss. Collins plays out her fears for society within *The Hunger Games*, accentuated by violence, distorted entertainment, and propaganda.

These six novels were chosen as representatives for the dystopian genre in this thesis because of their unique reiterations of anti-utopia, as well as the time span that they cover. Each book examines dystopia with a distinctive vision by applying a select variation of dystopian characteristics, therefore creating a dystopian world that exists entirely separately from any other. Though these books create new and unique worlds, considerable similarities exist in the ways political structures are used to acquire and keep power, interpersonal relationships are exploited and corrupted, and unity is formed to better assimilate inhabitants into the society.

The authors of these six dystopian novels share more in common than just the way they write their dystopian novels. Each author recognizes a concern he or she sees in the world and, hoping to warn the world around them or to demonstrate what could happen if humanity's course is not adjusted, they write. They write to express concerns about power struggles, gender inequality, war, mindless consumption of entertainment, and lack of knowledge of the happenings in the world. Often, their fears are shared, but that does not prove the validity of such fears. Instead, each dystopian work "makes its objections not in generalized reflections about human nature but by taking us on a journey through hell, in all its vivid particulars. It makes us live utopia, as an experience so painful and nightmarish that we lose all desire for it" (Kumar *Utopia and Anti-Utopia* 103). These fears are reflected throughout each novel and are warped distortions of the utopic models that came before them as a means of expressing human fears and, ultimately, their humanity. Utopian societies are "a timeless and unchanging constant, an ur-type or archetype of the human social imagination" (Kumar *Utopianism* 43). The dystopian worlds explored by these authors may simply be at opposing ends of this same timeless, unchanging spectrum of human imagination.

A SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

The expression of a dystopian society can differ widely, depending on the point the author wishes to make, as well as the impression intended to be made on the reader. As such, the qualities of dystopian literature can vary widely, but it is the "oppositional and critical energy" that they share which binds them into the same genre (Booker 3). M. Keith Booker describes these qualities that lend a work to a dystopian nature when he writes that dystopian literature

> constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. (3)

It can be difficult to assert exactly what quality or characteristic makes a dystopian novel, because they show a utopia system take to the extreme. In this way, dystopian critiques can result from the implementation of any system that attempts to remove conflict, pacify citizens, or create universal contentment.

The dystopian characteristics which will be analyzed and compared within this thesis are the leaders of dystopian societies and their methods of control employed, specifically violence, drugs, censorship, and propaganda; the distorted sexual, familial, friendly relationships; and the ways that unity is achieved.

The rulers of dystopian societies can come in many different forms, as well as with different intentions in mind. While the Party and Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* maintain power for the sake of power, the World Controllers of the World State in *Brave New World* truly believe in the world they are creating. Because of the power required to attain and maintain a peaceful and cohesive society, the rulers frequently are forced to turn to violence and aggressive methods.

Control is exercised in dystopian literature through a number of different channels. Without strong discipline to govern what is and what is not allowed in the dystopian society, the structure of the society would collapse. To prevent this from occurring, "discipline is utilized to control people's everyday lives in the form of a strictly regimented routine where people's actions are prescribed by the government-instituted schedule" (Gerhard 24). This control both works as a means of overseeing the functioning of the community and as a means of demanding conformity. This is because "dystopian citizens do not have a choice in what they can or cannot do, have lost the control over their own bodies and minds, and have become 'imprisoned' in the state's disciplinary system" (Gerhard 24). Every dystopian novel requires some method of control, though often several methods are utilized to maintain the dystopian populace.

Violence is a simple and absolute means of keeping the population in line. In dystopian novels like *The Hunger Games* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* the constant threat of violence is what keeps citizens in line, petrified of the harm that will come upon them for not following the society's norms.

Drug dystopias are defined as "near future societies where pharmacology produces or reinforces a dystopian social order" (Hickman 141). As a tool of control, using psychopharmacology is a particularly easy method. In dystopias as seen in *Brave New World*, the drug usage has so permeated the culture that citizens are hardly able to function without it. In other dystopias, such as Panem in *The Hunger Games*, drugs are simply a way to cope with the world.

Propaganda takes largely the same form in each dystopian novel, but the execution varies widely. The propaganda used by Gilead in *The Handmaid's Tale* is intended to degrade the value of former life and encourage handmaids to agree with their mission. Within Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, propaganda changes with the purposes it is supposed to fulfill. The Party continues to change the truth according to how it needs to sway its citizens.

Censorship is a noninvasive means of control but one which is used deliberately to monitor what is and is not known by the general population. In "Fictional Futures vs. Historical Reflections: How Utopian Ideals Can Lead to Dystopian Results," Lauren Hayhurst explains the power of censorship in a dystopian society, writing, "Historical knowledge is fictionally portrayed both as a means to establish a ruling power and as a liberating force, suggesting that the key to control lies in the ability to inhibit historical truth; freedom of the masses depends on the access to or denial of such knowledge" (53). Without access to knowledge, as well as historical truth, as opposed to what the governing authority provides as history, the masses cannot be free.

Relationships may appear normatively in dystopian literature, but more commonly they are warped into poor facsimiles of what they once had been. In some societies, they are abolished altogether in favor of diverting citizen's energies to loyalty towards the rulers. Lynn Williams expands on this, writing, "Prejudice against emotional closeness is common … writers have often played down not only those personal relationships—mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, husbands, wives, lovers —...but also those

institutions like marriage and the family which encourage possessiveness and the selfish pursuit of private happiness" (123). In dystopian societies, families and friendships are threats because of the society's intention to remove any sources of possessiveness and selfishness. Therefore, relationships that encourage such feelings are eliminated.

In any society, emphasizing a reason for unity and camaraderie can prove vital; without a reason to remain united to their fellow man, the society would crumble. This very issue is what threatens the viability of large utopian communities. However, dystopias can overcome this problem because of the tether between the individual and the community. Hayhurst explains,

> Large-scale utopia requires the use of dystopian methods… but utopia cannot be forced upon an external cultural reality...The only way around this enigma is to increase the boundaries of cultural reality. Dystopian fiction has the power to achieve this: by equating personal struggles to global disharmony, cultural barriers preventing such success can be transgressed (61).

In this manner, dystopian societies create indelible relationships between the world at large and the personal life of each individual. In order to create what the society hopes would be a utopia, however, the use of dystopian methods must be applied. This creates a kind of collectivism which unites all member of the society.

None of the six dystopian novels approach these characteristics from quite the same direction; however, they all "critically examine both existing conditions and the potential abuses that might result from the institution of supposedly utopian alternatives" (Booker 3). These examinations are in part the result of the authors' environment, but also may be the result of innate fears that rest in each person.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Within utopias, power exists and though it may be favorable to the rulers, the general public is neither ignored nor oppressed, as can be seen in Plato's *Republic*. Dystopian communities tend to evolve from their more hopeful and idealistic counterpart: the utopia. No community sets out to oppress its members, nor does a community intend to subject them to needless violence, fear, or destructive social structures. Instead, dystopias tend to evolve from utopian aspirations because "the desire to create a much-improved society in which human behavior [is] dramatically superior to the norm implies an intrinsic drift towards punitive methods of controlling behavior which inexorably results in some form of police state" (Claeys 108). Dystopias in literature never come about through the equal desire of the controllers and the controlled. Instead, there is a clear imbalance that harms those who are silenced or ignored. This chapter will explore political structures and how—by use of violence, drugs, propaganda, censorship, and the firm hand of a ruler—dystopian societies go to great lengths to keep their members in line.

Rulers
Dystopian societies are united and governed by someone; communities are told they would be unable to maintain the necessary levels of control and composure without

having a figurehead or a group of individuals in charge. Dystopian rulers typically rule with an iron fist, without mercy for the deviants and with dangerous consequences for insubordinate actions. For those who are not convinced of the society's ways, these rulers can strike fear into their hearts, but those who believe in the ruler and his or her mission are supporters that allow the society to keep running. Without someone to fear, nothing would be strong enough to keep members in their place for the community to continue.

The epitome of the dystopian rulers can be seen in Big Brother, the antagonist of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Following a third world war, the Party took over governing the newly formed superpower Oceania. The protagonist notes that he cannot quite remember when he first heard of the Party or of Big Brother, but "in the Party histories, of course, Big Brother figured as the leader and guardian of the Revolution since its very earliest days" (37). It is unclear whether Big Brother is a fictional fiend that was introduced by the Party to manipulate the population into compliance or is, in fact, an actual being who is running the world from behind the scenes. The descriptions of Big Brother capture his foreboding and omniscience: "The poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 1). Though the image is not innately frightening, it demonstrates the surveillance that governs the society. As such, the image does not need to frighten its civilians but only remind them that Big Brother sees all and knows all. According to Mark Miller, the image is a reminder that "in Oceania there is no possible escape from Oceania, but only continual rediscoveries of Oceania where one least expects it" (184). This is an irrelevant reminder for conformists, but for the outcasts, the thoughtcriminals, for those like Winston who are in violation, this is a constant looming threat.

One of the most unique characteristics of Big Brother is that the Party exhibits its strength through Big Brother. His presence is palpable for the citizens, gazing at them from posters, screens, and the like, and he is designed to exist everywhere, including in their minds. This lifts him into the realm of the supernatural, having grown from the status of a mortal to a god of the people. O'Brien, an inner Party member who abducted Winston for his thoughtcrimes, dismisses Winston's question, "Does Big Brother exist?" as both insignificant and nonsensical, answering "Of course he exists. The Party exists. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 267). This response offers little to expand upon who Big Brother is beyond that of a Party-sponsored symbol. Yet, that is enough. When Winston asks if Big Brother will ever die, O'Brien responds curtly, saying, "Of course not. How could he die? Next question" (267). In this way, Big Brother is beyond the existence of a mere mortal; he is the essence of the Party, and as long as the Party exists, so does Big Brother.

For those unlike Winston, rulers such as Big Brother are figureheads of almost religious fervor. Those who are wholly assimilated in their culture do not struggle with the rulers of a dystopia because the control techniques have been adequate enough for them to internalize the governing power's message. In one instance, following the Two Minute Hate, one woman is shown to be the ideal follower for the Party because of her evident

love of Big Brother: "The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 16). These are the people that are easy for the Party to control because they are already intrinsically tied to the values of the Party and crave the beliefs that are held. Religion of any other kind is strictly banned, and "the Party actively works to appropriate the energies traditionally associated with religious belief and to use those energies for its own purposes, giving the Party itself a quasi-religious air" (Booker 209). This internal desire for societal fellowship is a vicious circle for those like this woman. As they already desire it, they are pulled in, exacerbating the desire, pulling them further into their passion for Big Brother. The passion for him continues to be demonstrated in actions such as the one that possessed the group after the Two Minute Hate: "It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 17). It is the desire of these individuals to feel connected to Big Brother. They do not feel punished by the totalitarian government that watches their every move. Instead, they deny themselves in favor of praising Big Brother, choosing the route so delicately and deliberately designed for them by the Party.

The goal of the Party is for all members to feel connected and loving towards Big Brother. This is not to create a peaceful and idealistic society but instead because "the absolute power of this oppressive system is threatened by the presence of even a single dissident, someone who can laugh at its pretentiousness, energized by remembering when life was different and better, and by imagining future realities, future possible selves, with meaningful options and viable choices" (Zimbardo 127). Until the end of the book, Winston is this dissident and resists the pull and threats. By the end, however, "he had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 308). The framing of this quote illustrates that Winston had taken the least desirable route: he had not loved Big Brother. As a result of this, he was forced into battle with himself to learn the version of him that the Party wanted him to know. Because this ultimate battle is what forced him to be an outcast in his society, this greatly demonstrates that the Party wants a unified love in Big Brother to create and maintain order and control over the people. Furthermore, by demanding this kind of control over all its members, "people lose the ability to relate to each other as human beings and eventually lose their own identities," thereby creating a culture of complete loyalty (Griffin 58).

In Huxley's *Brave New World*, there are ten World Controllers for each of the ten zones of the World State. In Western Europe, "His Fordship" Mustapha Mond takes control as a result of actions that defied his society. Once a young and talented scientist, he performed illicit experiments that were eventually discovered, and he was given a choice: be exiled or trained to be a World Controller. His position is one of maintenance: to prevent any distancing from the world as it is, to continue it on its path, and to dismiss anyone who gets in the way. When it comes to social deviants, he reminds them that the world came to be this way for the sake of stability, saying, "The world's stable now. People are happy;

they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get... And if anything should go wrong, there's soma" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 220). The reason no revolution has come about is that every member wants to retain stability.

Though Mond did not create the society he resides in, he is still an active member in its function. Though intelligent enough to succeed in the World State and illegally perform experiments, he is still influenced enough by the dogma of the World State leadership to agree with their methods. He recognizes the value of separating the classes and assigning work to each group based on their function. He understands the destruction of emotion, the use of sexual activities, and maintenance via drugs. He continues to defend these means as the primary reason that the World State is able to function as it does, making him more than just a "yes-[man] for [his] sinister governments… it is the seeming reasonableness of [his] arguments that makes the slippery slope so dangerous" (McGiveron 125). He was forced to choose between powers of two kinds: powers to obliterate or power to create. With the conducting of science on an island, the scientific discoveries would be of no value: no one would be able to use the knowledge, nor would he be able to share them. Power to obliterate forces Mond to destroy the very thing he values and to "serve happiness" of other people (Huxley, Brave New World 229). Mond may have been given a position of value and respect, but he is forced into his role by the fear and conformity that permeates all citizens and manipulates their actions.

President Snow in *The Hunger Games* trilogy is another ruler with the power and control to create a society entirely as he envisions. He came to power by poisoning any person who threatened his rise, drinking from the same poisoned cup to draw away suspicion and taking an antidote to counter its effects. In *Catching Fire*, he arrives at Katniss's home to inform her that removing the people she loves from this earth would be easy for him and in order to secure their lives, she needs to convince not only the Districts, but also the President himself, that her act of rebellion with Peeta during the games had been the result of only hopeless, foolhardy love.

President Coin, however, came to power through other, but perhaps equally wicked, means. Hers is a gradual takeover which likely would have been successful if not for the violence she performs against her own people and blames on President Snow. By taking President Snow's methods and applying them in her own leadership, she becomes like those she wished to defeat. Katniss, still holding onto hope of the rebellion, struggles to accept the death of her sister, especially after her conversation with President Snow regarding Coin's role in the bombing that killed Primrose. President Snow, awaiting his execution, explains, saying:

> My failure… was being so slow to grasp Coin's plan. To let the Capitol and districts destroy one another, and then step in to take power with Thirteen barely scratched. Make no mistake, she was intending to take my place right from the beginning. I shouldn't be surprised. After all, it was Thirteen that started the rebellion that led to the Dark Days, and then abandoned the rest of the districts when the tide turned against it. But I wasn't watching Coin. I was watching you, Mockingjay. And you were watching me. I'm afraid we have both been played for fools. (Collins, *Mockingjay* 357)

Coin utilizes the tool of distraction to veil her real aims, fooling not only her enemies, but her allies as well. By keeping everyone's focus on the violence, the anger, and by directing it, Coin takes advantage of those she is supposed to lead. The betrayal of trust and her use of the fight against Snow's dictatorship for her own aims are the key factors that lead to her demise at Katniss's hands.

Rulers in dystopian societies keep everyone in line in the world of intense pressure for conformity. Maintaining stability is based on the rulers and their ability to govern with a strict hand of totalitarian nature. Dystopian rulers maintain stability with harshness, implementing a world where the unbalance between the ruler and the ruled remains in favor of those in charge.

Control techniques

Humans can be unpredictable, especially in the presence of other humans. When placed under oppressive rule in a dystopic environment, that unpredictability only continues to increase. Without having a stable society, rulers would be unable to prevent social deviants from uprooting the entire established order. On guard against such attacks, rulers use techniques—most commonly violence, drugs, propaganda, and censorship—that allow them to contain the masses and shape individuals to meet the society's criteria. The use of control techniques by the rulers is central to the part of humanity that wishes to exert order upon the chaos.

Violence

Violence is often the result of final efforts to eliminate individuality. When citizens have drifted too far from the norms or have, in more extreme cases, even acted rebelliously, violence allows for flexibility in how to rectify the unbalance. As a result, the violence can often be framed as a mistake made by the offending parties; if they had not diverged from social norms, then violence would not be necessary. Only offenders will be blamed for the violence bestowed upon them, and, for fear that they might incur such a punishment, individuals may keep their wavering from society's norms to a minimum or work even harder to assimilate as much as possible.

In *The Hunger Games*, violence is the annual reminder to the members of the twelve districts of Panem that they are wholly at the mercy of the powers that be. These games are a result of the "Dark Days," when the districts rose against the Capitol. After the Capitol defeated twelve of the districts and destroyed the thirteenth, they implemented the games, providing the clear and devastating message to all districts: "Look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there's nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 19). Each year, Panem's people are reminded that they brought the Hunger Games upon themselves; if they had accepted the ruling hand, their children never would have been at stake.

While holding its members hostage is already a concrete enough punishment, the government encourages its members to make the impossible choice between starving and increasing their children's chances of fighting to the death in the Hunger Games. In exchange for food, a family may add a child's name an additional time. In fact, a child may carry the weight of his or her whole family, each year adding his or her name into

the lottery pool as many times as the number of members in the household. This issue particularly impacts the poor in Panem; for those who have enough money to purchase food, there is no motivation to increase one's likelihood for certain death. Katniss describes this dichotomy as "a way to plant hatred between the starving workers of the Seam and those who can generally count on supper and thereby ensure we will never trust one another" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 14). Year after year, this hatred is continually sustained as some families must fear the reaping—and the violence that follows it—more than others.

Through the series, violence is constantly brewing. The friction between government and governed sparks riots and an increased need to stifle the flame Katniss had sparked. In *Catching Fire*, Gale is punished for his illegal hunting outside the boundaries of the district by a new Peacekeeper—a Capitol-sanctioned security keeper for the districts, especially those predisposed to rebellion. Though hunting was once a common and systematically ignored practice, Gale is beaten with a whip until "his back is a raw, bloody slab of meat" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 105). This monumental increase in punishment indicates that, though there had been a perceived understanding between the civilians and security officers, the officers always held the power; now, it is simply being used.

While the Capitol's physical abuses could be considered largely expected—as the governing rulers of a dystopia, using it as a method to keep others in line—the rebels are evidence that violence begets violence. President Alma Coin, who leads the rebellion out of the remains of District 13, is initially an ally to Katniss. Though she leads with a strong hand, it is one that opposes the Capitol and encourages District 13 to operate democratically, with fair trials, justice, and hope.

In *Mockingjay,* President Coin's true essence is revealed when she orders bombs be dropped on rebel medics and Capitol children under the guise that it was the work of President Snow, hoping to arouse the last ounce of rebellion against the Capitol. Her capacity for violence is realized after the capture of the Capitol when she proposes one final Hunger Games composed only of children of the Capitol. The path to power can be paved with violence, and that is even more so when dystopian power is, itself, corrupt and toxic. Coin craved power, and perhaps the exposure to decades of unrelenting violence warped her into the very ruler she wished to overthrow. Within a dystopian society, it is difficult to think of anything beyond the violence which they are constantly exposed to.

Violence is perhaps the most prevalent means of control in dystopian narratives, though it is not always as prevalent as it is in *The Hunger Games*. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, violence is uncommon, though the threat of violence and death always hangs over the heads of the handmaids, as well as anyone not following the rules of Gilead. For the handmaids, infractions that demonstrate noncompliance are met with swift and damaging punishment. After Moira attacked a Martha, the Angels began by injuring her feet until "they did not look like feet at all. They looked like drowned feet, swollen and boneless, except for the color. They looked like lungs" (Atwood 91). By using frayed steel cable, the Angels are free to injure the hands and feet of the handmaids because, as Aunt Lydia said curtly, "For our purposes your feet and your hands are

not essential" (91). Although it is rare for the handmaids to be permitted to dole out violence, violence is common at the Salvaging, where violators of Gilead's rules are executed for their crimes. A political rebel, under the guise of having raped one of them and killed her baby, is presented to the handmaids for their judgments. Offred describes the collective rage of the handmaids when they hear this, saying, "A sigh goes up from us; despite myself I feel my hands clench. It is too much, this violation. The baby too, after what we go through. It's true, there is a bloodlust; I want to tear, gouge, rend" (Atwood 279). They are allowed to kill him for his supposed actions against them. Through their violence, Gilead's rules are reinforced in the minds of the citizens: the handmaids only need their wombs, and any misalignment with Gilead's cause will be dealt with swiftly and with no mercy.

Similarly to *The Hunger Games*, violence is a frequent control technique in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is used as a form of punishment and as a means of brainwashing. Winston cannot see as the Party demands that he see; when they hold up four fingers, he tells them there are only four fingers when he is supposed to see five. This is a violation for which he is punished. His inability to accept the Party and see things with their prescribed mindset places him face-to-face with O'Brien for re-education. His perceptions—like those of any other "flaw in the pattern"—must be forced into the Party line with violence, and only once he accepts them wholly as truth will they execute him (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 263). O'Brien explains, "We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 263). Endless torture and, ultimately death, awaits any member of Oceania who does not see what the Party wants them to see. Their conversion does not save them from the final act of murder by the Party. They have already committed the thoughtcrime and though they have been rectified of their insanity, they must pay.

Violence in all of its forms is also a kind of anxious fear for those who suffer its consequences. It is always a worthy option to control those who cannot be kept in their place by any other means. The threat of injury, death, and the harm of loved ones consistently keeps the socially deviant in line.

Psychopharmacology

In these dystopian novels, the use of chemicals to influence the mental state of citizens is not as common as some other means of control, but it still has considerable power. In some cases, drugs are an escape, strictly chosen by the individual, which simultaneously allows them to be more easily controlled. However, in most cases, drugs are used as a self-maintaining system, implemented by leadership, where citizens perform the control on themselves with the choice to take the pills. It is especially uncommon for people to choose against taking pills. The chemical maintenance creates predictability in ways that other control techniques cannot by creating a bridge between the physical and the mental.

Soma is the emotion-manipulating drug common in *Brave New World*. This is a tool that is especially valuable for the government in the World State, because its citizens— like all human beings—innately desire avoiding pain, embarrassment, and discomfort

in favor of bliss. This desire is warped to encourage people to distance themselves from their emotions and choose to take soma at the earliest sign of negative emotions. World Controller Mustapha Mond describes soma and its power, saying, "There's always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 238). Soma carries with it all the properties required to function in the World State. Should civilians find themselves lacking, they need look no further than to consume the drugs provided to them. Encouraged to consume for any emotionally challenging moment, they are effectively addicted to the stability soma grants them.

This stability, though, comes at a cost. Jeanie Griffin addresses this, writing, "In theory, the society is supposed to bring happiness to individuals because they have no physical or emotional hardships; however, in reality, the totalitarian society has generated a civilization filled with spiritually comatose individuals obediently fulfilling their predestined role in society while living in a slave-like blissful state of ignorance" (54). John is the only civilian who can see through the guise of stability and recognize it for what it is: an inferior version of humanity. In a discussion regarding emotions in the World State and John's disagreement with the maintenance of emotion and the removal of many inconveniences presented in the New World, Mond comments that he is "claiming the right to be unhappy," to which John agrees, claiming that he is (Huxley, *Brave New World* 240). This is a right that the entire society has gladly sacrificed, but John has lived in a world of suffering and humanity. His world held humanity in all of its flaws of nature, and it held "the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind," to which John confirms, "I claim them all" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 240).

These rights that John confirms are inherently a part of being human which the World State has destroyed to better humanity. The World State's citizens' need to be free of these problems is best seen in Linda, who was once a member of the New World but who was left behind on the Reservation. Believing deeply in the values of her society, she was ashamed of becoming pregnant and did not try to return. Without the soma or resources of the New World, she became old and medicated with alcohol instead. Once she finally returns to the society she once knew, she attempts to escape on a soma-holiday and remains in a drug-induced stupor until she dies. The values that drugs induce are so deeply ingrained in the civilians, and the need to feel nothing so innate in the society, that removing this resource can be detrimental, creating a "dystopian picture of the use of psychoactive drugs. In it, soma stands for alienation, de-humanization and superficial mind-numbing pleasure" (Schermer 121).

The community within Lois Lowry's *The Giver* prioritizes the strict span of emotional developmental as well, but emotional maintenance is not what they correct with pills. Because families are artificially constructed in this society through careful consideration and without any physical requirements of those who raise the children, the elders choose to regulate the hormonal balances of every person who resides within

the society. This is done easily with pills, given to each individual once they begin experiencing "Stirrings," a veiled reference to puberty. In a society where sex is not mentioned, and Birthmothers are not held in high esteem, the regulation of physical desires is a necessary component to keep the society functioning properly.

While the use of drugs as control is less common in other dystopian works, it still can be seen, primarily as a means for individuals to numb themselves from their society. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Montag's wife Mildred overdoses but vehemently denies taking thirty sleeping pills in one sitting. This, however, is not a strange occurrence. Overdoses are so widespread—often nine or ten a night—that doctors are no longer sent to the houses to revive people. Instead, a machine was created to filter the blood, making it a more efficient option. Critic Kingsley Amis says the regularity of these incidents creates a dangerous demonstration to show "how far the devolution of individuality might go if the environment were to be modified in a direction favorable to this devolution" (111). If the society were to continue in this same direction, one could be easily assured that the rate of chemical dependency and subsequent overdose would escalate accordingly.

In *The Hunger Games*, drugs are uncommon but alcohol still exists as a means of escaping the downtrodden society. Haymitch Abernathy, one of only three victors of the games from District 12, is rarely sober. For the twenty-three years following his own victory, he mentors the tributes from district 12 and half-heartedly tries to keep them alive. His experiences in the arena, the killings of his mother, brother, and girlfriend by President Snow, and his failed mentorships lead him to erase the memories with alcohol, paranoid and alone. Though Haymitch chose to use alcohol to escape, it lessened his likelihood of rebellion and kept him under control of the Capitol.

The Capitol, though, is known for using a method of psychopharmacology against its rebels, known as "hijacking." By taking the venom of a tracker jacker—a species of wasp, genetically engineered by the Capitol for use in the Hunger Games—and using it to conduct fear conditioning, they are able to induce "terror. Fear. Nightmarish visions…mental confusion" and "a sense of being unable to judge what [is] true and what [is] false" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 180). By using this against Peeta, the Capitol was able to position him against his own allies, even attempting to kill Katniss when they are first reunited. By altering his memories to align with the Capitol's notions of society as well as to distrust those who he once fought for, Peeta is left in a state of unpredictability, wavering between ally for the alliance and weapon for the Capitol.

Either by their own choice or encouraged by the government that controls them, drugs are a means of keeping people docile, malleable, and controllable. After having been so deeply conditioned to lean on the drugs they are encouraged to take, it is impossible for civilians to function without them because they have never experienced the complexity or depth of emotion without the calm induced by drugs. It would be detrimental to the society for emotional maintenance to be required of each member, potentially even if they had never encountered these chemical compounds in the first place. Along with their controlling properties, drugs are the governments' insurance policies against the society truly recognizing what is happening around them and, sometimes, within themselves.

Propaganda

The use of propaganda in literary dystopian societies occurs by creating messages and projecting them to the masses with consistency; the masses are eventually conditioned to believe what they are told. This is especially the case when no other evidence exists to contradict the message. In each of these novels, protagonists are forced to consume propaganda.

Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has an exceptional model for propaganda and conditioning use for controlling citizens. Propaganda is managed by the Ministry of Truth; contradictory to its name, the ministry concerns itself with the lies of the Party, while the Ministry of Love focuses on war, the Ministry of Peace on torture, and the Ministry of Plenty on starvation and rationing (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 222). In the novel, Orwell describes the depths of the Party's power over human memory and the way its propaganda corrupts a person's understanding of his or her own life: "Even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the details of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 33). No one can hold onto the truth with enough strength or authority to determine its truth. Simultaneously, the truth is what the Party wants it to be; for Winston, after enough pressure, torture, and propaganda, truth eventually has no meaning at all.

This ever-fluctuating truth, promoted by the Party's propaganda, occurs by "rectifying" records in an endless cycle of creating content, distributing it, and then editing it to align the content with a new truth of the Party (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 39). The citizens are left in such a state of confusion that rebellion would be utterly impossible. Winston works for the Ministry of Truth, altering messages to create continuity. He explains, in one instance, a prediction had been printed in a news article which has turned out to be incorrect. It is his job to rectify the prediction to match the correct value (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 40). With the truth in constant revision, the only consistent truth the citizens have to rely on is Big Brother. Both of these are results of Oceania's obsession with the present. Kathryn M. Grossman expands upon this when she writes, "The use of technology to discover people's thoughts, to rewrite the history of the state, and to torture and destroy its dissenting citizens is but a symptom of a greater disorder—the will never to change. Technology exists as a tool for Oceania's ceaseless striving towards its own form of static perfection" (53). Propaganda is a powerful tool for the seeking of constant perfection and acquiring power for the Party.

Propaganda is a prevalent weapon seen frequently in other works. The World State, as it is described in the pages of *Brave New World*, is saturated with propaganda, beginning with its very motto: "Community, Identity, Stability" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 3). As long as members identify with the community, they will be stable. The propaganda is often recognized by the characters who struggle to fit in with the society, but it has the most impact on John, the savage. Since he has experienced life where humanity still remains, he struggles to reconcile the World State and its "stability" with the humanistic values of the life he left behind on the Reservation. Andrew W. Hoffecker writes that "the Savage is reminded that the virtues such as self-denial,

nobility, heroism, and chastity are impossible because conditions of instability do not exist where they can be exercised" (51). These are only qualities that can exist or are valued where instability exists. Attempts to demonstrate any of these—self-denial, nobility, heroism—are met with discomfort from surrounding citizens who recognize the atypical behavior as resistance to the propaganda.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, before graduating and becoming a handmaid, Offred and her fellow handmaids are subject to conditioning and propaganda at the Rachel and Leah Center, named for the Biblical women. Propaganda comes in many forms, often paired with violence and conditioning should the message not be as direct as necessary. Offred describes many of the films that the women are forced to watch to remind them how life had once been and how far they had come, a testament to the betterment of society because of Gilead's existence. Images of rape, violence, murder, and degradation are used to make the handmaids grateful for the state of their community. Other videos of the Unwomen protesting authority, marching as part of a crowd, are used to make them grateful for their role. These Unwomen, according to Aunt Lydia, were "wasting their time like that, when they should have been doing something useful" (Atwood 118). Where a lack of innate loyalty exists, the aunts cultivate it by reminding them what life could be like.

President Snow in *The Hunger Games* uses propaganda to frequently lie to citizens regarding the status of Panem. As Don Latham writes, "In Panem, as in all totalitarian societies, the government's survival depends not only on its ability to impose punishment and enforce discipline, but also on its ability to manipulate media and control the flow of information" (35). After drugging and torturing Peeta to make him complicit in the Capitol's goals, Snow uses him as a spokesperson against the rebellion and against the imminent battle for control over Panem. Over a televised interview, he offers a veiled threat to remind all viewers of the last time a rebellion occurred: "We can't fight one another…There won't be enough of us left to keep going. If everybody doesn't lay down their weapons—and I mean, as in very soon—it's all over, anyway" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 26). Katniss, along with the rebels of District 13, are distressed by the converting of such a loyal ally, and Peeta is labeled a traitor for his proclamation of a cease-fire.

President Coin and the rebel cause she leads use propaganda not to calm the citizens but to enrage them to join District 13. By manipulating Katniss's emotions, they use her image to create propaganda to incite districts to rebel. Though the uprising of District 13 has goals of setting Panem free of tyrannical leadership, Coin has ulterior motives of claiming control of the nation for herself and she encourages violence as the primary means of securing her victory. The rebellion analysis of the images they distribute demonstrate that they are not aiming only to encourage the districts from freeing themselves from the Capitol's rule but also to deliberately influence opinions and loyalties of the districts. While negotiating her terms for agreeing to act as the rebellion symbol, Katniss asks that Gale join her to which President Coin asks, matter-of-factly, "Do you want him presented as your new lover?" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 39). This is followed by another rebellion leader who comments, "I think we should continue the current romance. A quick defection from Peeta could cause the audience to lose sympathy for her ... Especially since they think she's pregnant with his child" (39). Rather than making choices that would encourage

and inspire viewers to believe in a better future of peace and equality, the rebel leaders plot and deceive to achieve their goals.

Coin's legacy of deceit continues through the fight for control over Panem. Though, initially, Katniss is a fitting and vital symbol for the rebellion, as time progresses, her value diminishes in Coin's eyes as the war draws to a close. Boggs, Coin's second-in-command, explains to Katniss, saying, "She doesn't need you as a rallying point now. As she said, your primary objective, to unite the districts, has succeeded … These current propos could be done without you. There's only one last thing you could do to add fire to the rebellion … Give us a martyr to fight for" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 266). This is proven correct; following the apparent death of Katniss, Coin uses it as a propaganda opportunity to proclaim to all districts: "Dead or alive, Katniss Everdeen will remain the face of this rebellion. If ever you waver in your resolve, think of the Mockingjay, and in her you will find the strength you need to rid Panem of its oppressors" (294). Katniss acts as a symbol for the rebellion, and in death, she becomes a martyr for the cause.

Conditioning and propaganda go hand-in-hand in their constant inundating of the masses with information until they have no choice but to believe it. The conditioning and propaganda can be especially difficult to consume for those who have witnessed life that no longer exists in their society. Resistance to the truths offered by authority can have dangerous consequences, as is the case with Winston, John, and Offred, all of whom are removed from society for their counter-truths.

Censorship

Where propaganda gives to the masses, censorship takes away. A society unable to educate themselves is unable to participate adequately in a civilized democracy or consider life outside of themselves. This is the ideal for a government that desires to easily mold their citizens and create predictability. Books, television, and forms of entertainment are often both censored and transformed into propaganda by taking the courageous thoughts that inspire and replacing them with unsubstantial, government-approved drivel.

In the society in *Fahrenheit 451*, like many other dystopian societies, reading and owning books is a criminal offense and instead of firefighters snuffing out fires, they set them. This is a formidable means of control because the firefighters are "burning not just books but ideas" (Day). Unlike most dystopias, this is a society that its members accepted for themselves. To avoid unhappiness, stress, and worry, information was gradually withdrawn. As Beatty told Montag, "If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none" (Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* 58). Simultaneously, the government and its people worked to create a world where people were "happy." Taking information from the masses makes them easier to control, while it also allows people to worry less about the happenings outside their lives.

Faber, a retired English professor in *Fahrenheit 451*, explains the culture of carefreeness and the way that it cannot simply be altered by one person picking up a book with determination, as Montag has done. He says, "So few want to be rebels any more. And out of those few, most, like myself, scare easily. Can you dance faster than the White Clown, shout louder than 'Mr. Gimmick' and the parlour 'families'? If you can, you'll

win your way, Montag. In any event, you're a fool. People are having fun" (Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* 83). No one is interested in rebelling against the establishment and, in fact, it would be impossible to pull them away. While books were no longer allowed, they had been replaced with suitable entertainment and constant fun to distract the masses, keeping them happy and free but also living a meaningless life. This freedom, however, is in opposition to the freedom spoken of by Plato in his vision of utopia. James Filler explains "Freedom, then, is for reason to rule over the soul. But this, by itself, is insufficient. Reason can be misguided or lack knowledge … For Plato, not only are knowledge and freedom not antagonistic, but also true freedom occurs only through knowledge" (3). If the public is unable to access knowledge, then freedom, as Plato saw it, is not possible. Within *Fahrenheit 451*, there is a belief that, because they do not have to carry the weight of the knowledge of wars, famines, or tragedy, they are able to be free, when, in fact, the exact opposite is true. It is by their ignorance that they are unable to possess any freedom at all. According to Sunjoo Lee, Montag is in opposition because of "reclaiming this nearly 'forgotten' body of him, of his [hands'] being shocked to life again, in the process of which he will take back his freedom to read and think" (144) Without realizing it, he is attempting to exercise true freedom through knowledge.

Montag's wife is a perfect example of consuming meaningless content while expecting it to provide her with meaning in her life. She is far more connected to the "family" she visits every night on the three television screens of her living room than she is to Montag. Her horror over his collection of books is related more to the fear that the firemen will burn and destroy her "family" rather than the act itself. This supports M. Keith Booker's statement that "the entire culture of this society seems designed precisely to numb the minds of the populace and to prevent them from experiencing any real thought or feeling" (88).

Censorship occurs frequently in other dystopian works because of its ability to make people ignorant. *The Handmaid's Tale* is similar to *Fahrenheit 451* in its societal ban on reading and censorship. The censorship in Gilead even goes so far as to remove the words on store signs, replacing them with images of what can be purchased there in order to forgo the slightest possibility of reading. Offred craves words and the exercise of her mind, regardless of the punishment it threatens. Once invited into the Commander's study, she discovers books and magazines, forms of entertainment only allowed in the hands of those "beyond reproach" (Atwood 158). Upon her visits, her hunger to use words is seen in the games of Scrabble she and the Commander play, as she uses words like "larynx," "valance," "quince." Later, this hunger evolves into devouring the illicit magazines he provides her and the books within his office. Offred describes the intensity of her reading, saying, "I read quickly, voraciously, almost skimming, trying to get as much into my head as possible before the next long starvation" (Atwood 184). Because Offred, in her former life, knew the joy of books and their knowledge, she craves them still.

Unlike *Fahrenheit 451* or *The Handmaid's Tale*, censorship comes in a different form in *The Giver*. There is no temptation to violate the laws governing books and their censoring because there has been no exposure to them in the first place.

Instead, knowledge of all kinds is censored; the knowledge outside the community is compressed and granted to only one individual. The memory of an entire society—the history, art, pain, suffering, and happiness of all civilization—rests in the mind of one person so that all others focus only on what is in front of them. They cannot ponder outside of their lives because they have no knowledge of anything greater than living within a community.

When Jonas ponders the absence of decision-making in the Community, he expresses feelings of both frustration and fear. Unable to see color consistently, he exclaims his annoyance, saying, "If everything's the same, then there aren't any choices! I want to wake up in the morning and decide things!" (Lowry 9). He retains these feelings in his conversation with the Giver, but he also recognizes the devastating impact that having choices could have on individuals or the community at large. Should a person decide on a mate or a job without the weighty consideration of the Committee of Elders, the likelihood of an incorrect choice increases. Though he desires choice, Jonas agrees that it would be dangerous to allow it freely. Choices always provide the potential for poor outcomes, for disastrous consequences. Because of this, life is safer in the Community than without it and Jonas, in fact, supports this.

Censorship is destruction, not just of ideas, but of every thought that could have consequently arisen. When dystopian governments are trying to prevent freedom, censorship is a frequent tool because of the ease it creates for the public. Destroying thoughts of pain, suffering, and confusion, as well as destroying the potential of poor choices, can be a method which goes unchallenged by the governed. When censorship goes unknown, as it does in *The Giver*, no one is the wiser and they are content for it. However, when censorship occurs after members have known another life, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the craving to break rules may be too tempting to deny.

The rulers and political structures, in whatever form they take for dystopian societies, make up the expectations for the citizens and the consequences that follow when norms are not met. Big Brother, Mustapha Mond, and President Snow use fear to keep all citizens in line. Without their aggressive forms of control, such as violence, propaganda, and drugs, it would be impossible to demand complete obedience from those they oversee. Control and how they wield it are the rulers' greatest tools for manipulation and driving fear into the hearts of each citizen, demanding conformity and therefore creating a dystopia based on how they treat their members.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships exist in dystopian societies, though they hardly resemble those that appear in the real world. They are, instead, poor facsimiles of the most important relationships that bind human beings together. This chapter will explore how corrupted sexual relationships, falsified families, and superficial friendships force every person into the role the rulers want them to play, always with the goals of the society in mind. To challenge the relationship standards that have been set is to risk one's life, but for the rebels within the dystopian societies, sometimes pushing aside their fear is worth the benefits of having an illicit relationship.

Sexual relationships

The qualities surrounding sexual activity and relationships can differ widely between dystopian novels, yet the power sex holds is always relatively high. Sexual acts and relationships are not private affairs. Instead, they fall into two categories, according to Sargent and Sargisson, "sexual relations [that reproduce]" and "sexual relations [that are] gender-equal assertion of the right to act freely" (316). This variability occurs based on the influence of the government within the relationship. Since sex has no reproductive purpose in *Brave New World*, it is only used for entertainment. In comparison, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the future of the human species relies on a select number of women who are still able to bear children.

In Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale,* sexual relationships are warped into something entirely void of relationship. When repopulation becomes the sole objective for humanity, the balance of power is revisited, and women are ranked based on their ability to contribute to this goal. The threat of being sent to the Colonies—an area contaminated by pollution, chemicals, and the like—is a death sentence, and therefore keeps the women in line. Gilead's history of killing protestors and rebels continues to prevent statements of discontent. Ofglen is a vessel for the future of mankind, her only value being her womb. Without any escape from this truth, she accepts her status, stating, "We are containers, it's only the insides of our bodies that are important" (Atwood 96). The usefulness of women—and what separates them from the "unwomen"—is to conceive and provide children. There is nothing romantic about their purpose or role. Aunt Lydia describes this society best when, while wagging her finger at the handmaids, she says, "Love is not the point" (Atwood 220).

Sex becomes a means to an end for the chosen citizens of Gilead, and that is exactly what they are told—they have been chosen. Sex is regulated for both genders. Though women bear the weight and stress of furthering the species, sex is still a rarified commodity for the society. It is illegal to have sexual relationships not sanctioned by the state because "marriage is promoted as a social goal, though it is only available to those who have reached a certain social status in this strongly stratified society. Indeed, wives are literally 'issued' to successful males as rewards for loyal service in the community, demonstrating the thorough commodification of women in Gilead" (Booker 78). Gilead and its moral base do not wish for sexual relationships to be seen as they once were; instead, they are transactional. Since each household desires the honor and pride of having a child of their own, they experience the degrading and uncomfortable addition of a third party to the relationship: man, wife, and a Handmaid to consequently provide a child. Offred describes this:

> Above me, towards the head of the bed, Serena Joy is arranged, outspread. Her legs are apart, I lie between them, my head on her stomach, her pubic bone under the base of my skull, her thighs on either side of me. She too is fully clothed. My arms are raised; she holds my hands, each of mine in each of hers. This is supposed to signify that we are one flesh, one being. What it really means is that she is in control of the process and thus of the product. If any. (Atwood 93-94)

By introducing this third member to the relationship, Gilead's leaders have forced a discomfort that no individual can overcome. This is by design; the process is not meant to

be enjoyable, for, if it is enjoyable, it is sin. Sex is for one purpose: to have children, and, in doing so, to glorify God. No members of the society deny this, nor is sex an experience to be savored. Instead, Ofglen describes it, saying, "It has nothing to do with sexual desire … Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary; they would be a symptom of frivolity … This is not recreation … This is serious business. The Commander, too, is doing his duty" (Atwood 94-95). She notes that no one in this situation is pleased by it, yet they all participate because this is their job. This is how they contribute to the society.

To remind everyone why the world has evolved, there are constant references to what life had once been like, to the flaws of the oversexualized and immoral world that Gilead left behind. During training, Aunt Lydia judges the women of the former age, saying, "some women believed there would be no future, they thought the world would explode. That was the excuse they used, says Aunt Lydia. … They were lazy women, she says. They were sluts" (Atwood 113). Here, Aunt Lydia creates a link between the words "lazy" and "slut" and their new meaning: sex for no purpose.

Sex without purpose, however, is exactly the goal within *Brave New World*. The World State has eliminated emotions, parenthood, and connections, all to eliminate exclusiveness and its "narrow channeling of impulse and energy" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 40). Sex has a stringent purpose: "Sex is for fun or religious devotions, procreation is via hatcheries, love and the family and motherhood are useless components of the package and have been discarded" (Walsh 142). As a result, sex carries with it no emotional attachments nor consideration of any consequences. As one of the World State leaders explains, "No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability … Stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 43). Everything the World State implements is to foster development of their motto: "Community, Identity, Stability" (3). From a very young age, the children of the World State are exposed to sexual activity and the accompanying belief that "every one belongs to every one else" as a kind of game (40). This normalization primes them for a life of mindless consumption of sex, devoid of any feelings or relationships.

In *The Giver,* the exact opposite is true. There is no place for sexual desires or activities. There are specified roles for reproduction and drugs are implemented to assuage sexual desires. Ultimately, this conforms all members to asexuality, where sexual interest and conduct are banned from human life. Conveniently, this is done by the Elders by drugs which makes all members of the Community disinterested in sexual activity as well.

Sexual relationships in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* most closely resemble those of the real world, still with its own dystopian distortions. Sex is still reserved for Party-approved marriages, but it is not used as an expression of love. Rather, it is used only for procreation. Winston and his wife live separately because the only real component of marriage in Oceania is conception and they are unable to do so. Winston's relationship with Julia would have been a form of rebellion even without sex, due to their deviant conversation and beliefs. But their unsanctioned and deliberately hidden sexual relationship violates the true goal of the Party in the elimination of sex outside of marriage. While important, this was not "merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which [the Party] might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all

pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 67). While Winston and Julia feel loyal to one another, their erotic relationship and enjoyment is the true affront to the Party and is the reason that Winston's emotional attachment to Julia must be extinguished during his time in Room 101.

Sex, regardless of how it is used, is meant to be separated from meaningful relationships for the individuals of the society in dystopian novels. For protagonists who feel at odds with the values their community emphasizes, sexual relationships are perverted from a means of loving expression to a worthless form of entertainment, a purely reproductive exercise, or an activity that only lives in the past. Dystopian novels explore alternative ends for sexual relationships and the potentials for how those relationships may develop, but in every instance, the former meaning—a loving union between two people in a mutual relationship of their choosing—is excised and ultimately forgotten.

Family

It has been theorized that when family units became the norm for homo sapiens, they demonstrated the first instance of humanity. Jean-Jacques Rouseeau writes they were "united husbands and wives, parents and children, under one roof; the habit of living together gave birth to the sweetest sentiments the human species is acquainted with, conjugal and paternal love. Every family became a little society" (216). These are the very sentiments that make familial relations so dangerous within societies that demand absolute control over the masses. Family units in dystopian literature often take a particular kind of planning and predetermination, if they exist at all. The best means to safeguard the relationship between state and individual and to fracture any sentimental or biological bonds—as seen in families—would be to eliminate them altogether. If that is not possible, an alternative is to create an environment where the present is ever consuming to reduce sentimentality. In dystopian literature, if families still act as a prevalent way of raising children and preparing them for their community responsibilities, these relationships are rarely genetically authentic. More often, they are the result of strategic planning on the ruler's part, to ensure adequate transition or proper upraising.

In *The Giver*, like many other dystopian societies, families are completely dictated by the parties in control. Families begin with the initial pairing of spouses, which is given "such weighty consideration that sometimes an adult who applied to receive a spouse waited months or even years before a Match was approved and announced" (Lowry 48). Since the cohesiveness of the community depends largely on these spousal pairings and the family units, common qualities such as disposition, energy level, and intelligence are vital. Jonas noted his mother's higher intelligence and his father's calmer disposition as factors in their successful marriage (Lowry 48).

Giving children to the spouses to raise is given the same amount of weighty consideration, but, even in a society that values families and their development, it is women who work to bring children into the world and are still devalued. These women are known as Birthmothers for the three years that they spend having children. Then they are Laborers for the rest of their lives until they enter the House of the Old. The contrast between family units and the women who make it possible is yet another instance of the value that is placed on the nuclear family.

Within the Community, the nuclear family lasts only one generation. The past is constantly eliminated, similarly to the way that the past is forced to be carried by the Giver, so that any connections are destroyed. Families are an illusion, created artificially, and its members move from one nuclear family to the next. Jonas discovers this with surprise when he learns that he has grandparents, or parents-of-the-parents. Each child is raised in a family with a mother, a father, and a sibling of the opposite sex. Later, the children move on with their lives, hoping to acquire spouses and nuclear families of their own, thereby abandoning one family for the next, leaving behind their past in pursuit of their own futures. Once Jonas moves on to have a family, he realizes, his parents will no longer be a part of his life. When conversing with the Giver about the death of his parents, Jonas states, "I won't even know about it. By then I'll be so busy with my own life. And Lily will, too. So our children, if we have them, won't know who their parents-of-the-parents are, either" (Lowry 124-25). The cycle of constant movement from one nuclear family to the next emphasizes the Community's intolerance towards the past as well as emotional connection.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there is a family of a different kind. Near its end, Winston learns to see as the Party wants him to and he exclaims, "O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the living breast!" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 308). This creates a tone of maternal relationship with the Party, which Aaron S. Rosenfeld describes as a "perverse switch on the family romance, the subject's true home in the law. 1984 closes with Winston's successful return to the bosom of 'family'" (354). This connection between the people and Big Brother now seems obvious to Winston. His thoughtcrimes will have him executed at a time unbeknownst to him, and now he can see Big Brother as he always should have. This misunderstanding will separate him from this parental figure he now finds in Big Brother. Winston is like a lost son who finally returns home, which, according to Paul Robinson, "suggests the collapsing of all dichotomies—threatening patriarch and beckoning mother, self and non-self, history and timelessness-into oceanic oneness" (157).

Biological families are still in existence in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and they, too, emphasize the law as family. Winston is married, though he and his wife live apart because of her inability to conceive. There is a threat that accompanies parenting children in Oceania. Since children have no memory of life before the revolution, they are blank slates for the Party and for Big Brother to imprint upon. These children are especially radical in enforcing the Party's beliefs. Mr. Parson—a fellow worker at the Ministry of Truth—has a wife and two children: the Parsons are a nuclear family. Upon visiting the family, Winston is struck with fear when witnessing the children playing spies because the "family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately" (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 168). These children are so easily and completely impacted by the teachings of the Party that they consume it completely and make them informal spies for the Party. This results in the severing of "emotional bonds between family members, effectively demolishing the true family unit and creating citizens whose loyalty to the state is stronger than their loyalty to their parents or siblings" (Griffin 53-54). In fact, these same children turn in their father for speaking against the party in his sleep. Loyalty, for these children, does not rest with their parents; it rests with their family, the law.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the structure of family also takes a unique form. Because of the addition of a third member into the reproductive process, birthmothers are only vehicles for the birth of another woman's child. Offred comments that there have been problems with Handmaids unwillingness to give up their children, a choice entirely out of their control. The process of birth shares similarities with conception, as the wife sits on the Birthing Stool, behind the handmaid. When the child is born, the wife of the household is tucked into bed and the child placed into her arms, as though the handmaid had never been there.

The Everdeen family of *The Hunger Games* is an excellent example of the radical loyalty that can grow when ties have not been severed. Katniss, Primrose, and their mother have a relationship forged by dystopian struggle—one only to be broken by death. It is a relationship distinct from other families in her community: when Primrose is initially chosen as tribute for the Hunger Games, Katniss's first reaction is to demand taking her place, but when Peeta is chosen as tribute, neither of his brothers volunteer themselves. Katniss clarifies, saying, "This is standard. Family devotion only goes so far for most people on reaping day. What I did was the radical thing" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 26). Her commitment is unique, and that makes it dangerous. Lindsey Issow Averill explains what separates Katniss from others, writing, "Undoubtedly, the emotions that motivate Katniss to act courageously are good ones: loyalty, love, devotion, compassion, and care … Katniss volunteers to go in Prim's place because her devotion to protecting her sister runs much deeper than anyone in District 12 believes is morally required, not because she's compelled by some abstract moral principle" (Averill 164). No one else has the degree of devotion Katniss feels for her family, which continuously drives her to do whatever it takes to protect them. If the Capitol had strained or severed the familial ties, Katniss would have stood by and watched—as Peeta's brothers did—while her sister was sent to her death, and the Capitol would likely have been left standing.

In dystopian novels, typically familial ties are strained in a manner to prevent any loyalty that would eclipse the loyalty that should be felt for the community at large. Relationships in which loyalty could lie somewhere other than within the community are effectively managed in other means of the dystopian society and, more likely than not, become impossible. Family relationships are subject to the same scrutiny as sexual relationships and friendships, ultimately requiring vows to the community, not to each other. Consequently, it is most common for nuclear families to be eliminated whenever possible.

Friendship

Friendships in dystopian literature are truly rare and could, in fact, be considered a kind of control technique implemented by the powers of the society. The rarity of friendship is typically the result of the awareness that everyone is distinctly and intentionally separated from each other. For fear that there may be an uprising, resulting from connections made, the society is often deliberately organized to prevent such relationships. The extreme social duress that people feel in these societies prevents them from seeing any real benefits to investing in relationships with others.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead is pervaded with suspicions. No one is above doubt, and no one feels safe enough to trust another person. This, however, does not prevent attempts to bond with others. Offred comments on this bluntly, stating, "We aren't allowed to go there except in twos. This is supposed to be for our protection, though the notion is absurd: we are well protected already. The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers" (Atwood 19). The society has demanded fear of others from all parties and uses these friendships as a means of spying, expecting those who see or hear things abnormal to report them. As Margaret J. Daniels and Heather E. Bowen describes it, "Friendships, then, are strictly forbidden, this mandate taken to the extent that the Handmaids can only speak to one another in dictated generalities and are not permitted to look at one another directly" (5). Breaking these generalities and customs, as a result, has become a thing of revolt. Even the simple act of saying "yes" when responding to a comment instead of the prescribed "Praise be" is considered taking a chance.

Though threats abound for the handmaids who attempt to bond, that does not stop them from occasional and brief interactions. During Birth Days, for instance, the handmaids are full of jubilation. When Offred climbs into the Birthmobile, she is greeted by handmaids she has never met but who are sharing in the same joy she feels. She describes another handmaid saying, "She's laughing, she throws her arms around me, I've never seen her before, she hugs me, she has large breasts, under the red habit, she wipes her sleeve across her face. On this day we can do anything we want" (Atwood 112). This has its limits, though; shared joy over a birth is not the same as friendship.

One instance of making a dangerous attempt at friendship occurs when Ofglen expresses the keyword "Mayday" to Offred, which notes her as a nonbeliever in Gilead's mission. Though she speaks casually enough, this is actually a deliberate and dangerous attempt at friendship. This, however, is a worthless effort because the word's meaning within the network is unknown to Offred. This expression is later mimicked by Offred to Ofglen's replacement. Instead of obliviousness as Offred had expressed to the first Ofglen, her new walking partner is not quite so ignorant of Mayday's meaning. She, however, is not one of them and the mistake haunts Offred.

After Offred's outing as a "violator of state secrets," Nick assures her that things will be all right immediately before she is to be taken by the black van, using the same keyword of alliance that she had heard before. He says, "It's all right. It's Mayday. Go with them" and goes so far as to call her by her real name (Atwood 293). This, however, does not convince Offred of anything. Even with the use of this keyword, Offred does not let her guard down, asking herself, "Why should this mean anything?" and wondering if he is perhaps an Eye, trying to make her go with them more easily (Atwood 293). Even after having an intimate, illicit relationship with him, Offred questions his intentions, who he is, and what he actually wants as she does with anyone else she has met since her world changed.

Though their once free and honest speech evolves into whispered words in bathrooms, Moira and Offred demonstrate best that to have alliances in their world is to be a threat. Their relationship contrasts with that between Offred and Ofglen because of the environment where they had been formed. Since Moira and Offred had no reason to

mistrust each other when their relationship began, this attitude continues through their lives and their unexpected meetings. They had the grounds to connect so deeply in the past and continue to adapt their friendship for the circumstances that face them.

When Offred is first united with Moira, they know any sign that they knew each other could be dangerous. Even before they are fully trained handmaids, they have no doubts about the peril imposed upon them. Offred describes the first time seeing her in the center, saying:

> We avoided each other during the mealtime lineups in the cafeteria and in the halls between classes. But on the fourth day she was beside me during the walk, two by two around the football field. We weren't given the white wings until we graduated, we had only the veils; so we could talk, as long as we did it quietly and didn't turn to look at one another. (Atwood 71)

They had little opportunity to communicate before Moira's final escape, but the same friendship that had bonded them before keeps them safe in each other's company.

It would be many years before they would be united again, and when they were, their initial reactions are anything but jubilant. Offred says, "We stare at one another, keeping our faces blank, apathetic. Then she makes a small motion of her head, a slight jerk to the right. […] Our old signal" (Atwood 239). Though Moira is not a handmaid and lives in a world much different from Offred, she is still not allowed friends, nor is she allowed to act in any way that would suggest that they have just reconnected for the first time in years. But instantaneously, their relationship resumes. The risk is irrelevant; they crave the connection too intensely.

Friendships—like any other relationships that differ from the society's norms—are regularly met with discomfort and even suspicion in other dystopian works. In *Brave New World*, it is considered distinctly abnormal for individuals of the opposite sex to spend any continuous amount of time together. It does not warrant a second glance if two women often speak with one another—for instance, Lenina and Fanny; however, it is considered strange to repeatedly associate with someone of the other gender. Even having sex with the same person several times is met with confusion. Though these do not demonstrate friendships in any sense, these are the means by which the World State discourages any relationship other than those that they wish to instill.

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Montag lives a meaningless life, but he finds joy in a strange young woman named Clarisse. She, like Montag, is unlike the people around her. She has no interest in destruction or killing like other children her age, and the peculiar questions that she asks Montag are the catalyst that forces him to reconsider his job and his life. Clarisse is presumably killed and disappears from Montag's life, but her influence resonates with Montag. The relationship between the two, however brief, is still one that leads to Montag's rebellion.

Friendships in dystopian societies carry fear of two kinds. First, there is the fear of being found out and for bonding over illicit topics. This is one which may be met with violence and even death. Second, and perhaps worse, is the fear of being betrayed.

Violence and death are certainly potential outcomes, but the loss of what a dystopian citizen believed to be a friend may be even worse. Because trust is such a rare and, often, falsified commodity, it is often easier to give into the fear than fight against it.

Dangerous or not, the craving for companionship and understanding, whether it be in sexual, familial, or friendly relations, overwhelms people, even in the circumstances of dystopian societies. Alone, one person can make very little difference, but united, limitless destruction can come to the dystopian societies that rulers and governments worked so hard to create and maintain. For rulers to prevent such uprisings, they encourage separation and forbid any interactions that are not strictly superficial, loyalties beyond that to the government can be avoided.

THE CREATION OF UNITY

In these dystopian worlds so strictly monitored and deliberately organized, there are still opportunities for connection between the people. Some of these are implemented by the government, aware that the human race is a social animal and that the society would be unable to thrive without some form of unification. In each dystopian novel, the individuality of each person is eradicated in favor of creating groups of people with shared characteristics. As such, no person is unique, but they are unified with members of the community similar to them and together, they are bonded with something that separates them from other groups. This chapter will explore the final common characteristics of dystopian literature and the various ways societies create unity within communities while devaluing individuality.

In *Brave New World*, unity is created by methodical and deliberate means. People are discouraged from bonding themselves specifically to individuals—for example, being a part of a monogamous relationship—but they are conditioned to identify only with members of their caste and to dismiss the other castes. This is done regardless of where members fall on the social ladder. Beginning in youth, children are conditioned to appreciate the work of the castes above them, listening in their sleep to a soft voice say, "Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 27). They are conditioned to dislike those below them: "and Delta Children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta" (Huxley, *Brave New World* 27). From the conditioning of their youth and the continued value of the caste system during their life, the "citizens of Huxley's bourgeois dystopia lack real individual identities … Instead, they exist principally as specimens of their class" (Booker 172).

The unity created in *Brave New World* has deep roots in the basis Plato described as the utopia, with Bokanovsky's Process acting as a counterpart for Plato's allegory describing the tiered roles for society. Instead of the three tiers described by Plato, Huxley expands this to cover a range from Alpha-plus to Epsilon-minus. The manner of assigning individuals to their position is also improved in *Brave New World*. As

W. Andrew Hoffecker writes, "The genetic engineering of *Brave New World* appears to have fulfilled such a view by guaranteeing through technology a perfectly ordered society. Not only are people's natures and skills determined at birth; they are actually created" (4). In the lesser members of society, their value is lessened even further, as Deltas, Gammas, and Epsilons may have as many as ninety-six identical siblings, all created from the same egg and sperm, which is the method of Bokanovsky's Process. Suljic and Öztürk write about this process, saying, "The methods of accomplishing such high social goals—such as genetic engineering for the sole purpose of providing human bodies for the state's requirements for mass production and consumption—are gruesome and Dystopian" (35). As gruesome and dystopian as it may be, it is a simple process of life not just in London but across the entire world. Unity is particularly easy to create within the lower classes considering many members are genetically identical.

Within *The Giver*, Lowry has depicted a harmonious community of form and communication. However, this communication is largely prescribed, as there are anticipated comments and responses that are generally followed by all members of the society. In one instance, Jonas's friend Asher is running late for his class—as is common—and he expressed "the standard apology phrase," saying, "I apologize for inconveniencing my learning community" (Lowry 4). Following this statement, it is expected that an explanation will follow, which Asher offers. There are many other instances of unity being created through expected call-and-response conversations in the community, most often in the form of apologies. The etiquette of speaking in the Community is quite strict, forbidding boasting or calling attention to differences in others. These rules keep the society organized in that no one asks questions for which another is not allowed to answer, as well as preventing behavior that would disturb the order.

One of the unique aspects of community and unification in *The Giver* is the December ceremony that takes place every year. Primarily, this is a celebration of the youth becoming twelve years old, as no one has individual birthdays. All other members are there to support the children as they mature. Upon their first December ceremony, children are incorporated into their new families and given names. Some years are marked by gifts or milestones, such as new jackets that button in the back to teach interdependence at four years of age, front-buttoning jackets at 7, and bicycles at age eight. The most important ceremony takes place at age twelve when children are given assignments within the community. Up until this point, they have been included in the society but have not been contributing as the adults do. Their twelfth December ceremony is the culmination of all their experiences and preparation to be integrated into the community. Similarly, children of the same age are grouped for their first twelve years, but upon receiving their assignments they are dispersed. No longer do they identify with their age group, but instead they identify themselves by the responsibilities they hold. In fact, age often becomes irrelevant after the ceremony of twelve. Jonas's father states, "After Twelve, age isn't important. Most of us even lose track of how old we are as time passes, though the information is in the Hall of Open Records, and we could go and look it up if we wanted to. What's important is the preparation for adult life, and the training you'll receive in your Assignment" (Lowry 17). This is yet another instance where the past is eliminated in favor of only keeping eyes on the present.

While the December ceremony is certainly an important one, it is not the only one which ties the community together. Though they experience far fewer incidental deaths or tragedies, they have their own ceremony to commemorate these losses, known simply as the Ceremony of Loss. In one instance, a young boy fell into a river and drowned. On that day, "the entire community had performed the Ceremony of Loss together, murmuring the name Caleb throughout an entire day, less and less frequently, softer in volume, as the long and somber day went on, so that the little Four seemed to fade away gradually from everyone's consciousness" (Lowry 44). Later, when his parents received a new child, he was given the same name—Caleb—and the ceremony was reversed, the crowd bringing the name back to life now in this new little boy. In this way, the whole community celebrates and mourns, waxing and waning as one.

In *The Hunger Games*, division is intentional for fear that the people should rise again to rebel against the rulers of Panem. This is done by pitting the children of each district against each other and by preventing movement or communication between districts. Because these communities are intentionally separated, kept apart and made to dislike each other to prevent another uprising, it is important that they are unified only within themselves.

When Katniss volunteers to take her sister's place, she witnesses a moment of bonding among her district. She says, "Instead of acknowledging applause, I stand there unmoving while they take part in the boldest form of dissent they can manage. Silence. Which says we do not agree. We do not condone. All of this is wrong" (Collins, The Hunger Games 24). Even if just for a moment, she unites her people in dissent and silent rebellion. They resist in their boldest form, even in their fear. Remarkably, this is a televised event, to be shown to all districts throughout Panem. Though they may never know the impact of their silence, they demonstrate an even stronger symbol of unity: "almost every member of the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to me. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means good-bye to someone you love" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 24). Out of empathy and respect—rare qualities in dystopian societies—the district unifies in recognizing Katniss's pain, as well as love.

While the Hunger Games unify District 12 in fear, this is not the case in some other districts. For those districts "in which winning the reaping is such a great honor, people are eager to risk their lives" and they are instead unified by their intense vigor to represent their community (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 22). The fervor of the training and the increased likelihood of a victor coming from these districts continues a vicious cycle. Since "the Capitol will show the winning district gifts of grain and oil and even delicacies like sugar," a winning district is more capable of perpetuating its environment of active preparation for the Hunger Games, further increasing their likelihood of winning again, and so the cycle goes (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 19-20). Furthermore, the Capitol places special value on the inhabitants of these districts because of their consistent anticipation of the games. Simultaneously, though, members of these districts are placed at odds with each other for the desire to fight in the arena. The pride of representing their district, the considerable likelihood of their victory, and

the comfortability for the rest of their lives unifies the wealthier districts in support of the Hunger Games but still manages to create distance between members.

Loyalty is expected from the districts, but not within the districts. To create camaraderie within the individual social structures of the districts would be to invite danger and distance from the Capitol. By taking two members from each district to fight, tributes fend for themselves. The rewards for victory isolate others, either encouraging anticipation for the games in affluent districts or cultivating fear in unprepared districts. The Capitol has created a delicate balance of unity which was sustainable for seventy-four years until two tributes rebelled with a handful of berries.

Unity is perhaps the most valuable tool within dystopian novels. It can be used to guide the society, lean them in one direction or another, and even pose members against each other. It has the responsibility of solidifying the community. Regardless of values, attitudes, means of power, or means of manipulation, without creating some form of durable unity, the dystopian will fall.

FEAR OF HUMANITY

Each of the six dystopian novelists within this paper take unique approaches to demonstrating flawed versions of the utopias of Plato, More, Bacon, and Wells. These iterations of dystopia are undoubtedly influenced by the individual experiences of the authors and the troubles they saw within society. As Bradbury found censorship and the destruction of knowledge a terror to society and then wrote about it, so did Atwood explore reproductive rights and Collins address war and its relationship with entertainment. Each author took a fear they had within society and applied it to their fictional dystopian world.

Rulers and government structures lead the society in its supposed utopian direction; however, these rulers and the control techniques they utilize are the reasons that their societies take a turn towards dystopia. With rulers like Big Brother, Mustapha Mond, and President Snow, they hold the power to manipulate and inflict fear upon all members. They demonstrate the reckless nature of humans and the desire for control, no matter what measure it might require.

In most dystopian societies, relationships that encourage selfishness or loyalty to anyone other than the governmental power are eliminated. Loyalty in a relationship draws energy away from the loyalty that citizens should be feeling towards the government or ruler. Where friendships are eliminated in *The Handmaid's Tale* because they have no value to Gilead and are only seen as a threat, families still exist because they are a form of service to the community. This is similar to Nineteen Eighty-Four, where friendships demonstrate loyalty to someone other than Big Brother and family is monitored by the extremist, pro-Party children in the family. Violations of the relational rules of the dystopian societies are dealt with swiftly and violently. Rarely are citizens brave enough to face the fear of rulers and their methods of control. As a result, these rules are usually upheld.

Unity, in a world of fear, gives dystopia's citizens opportunities to connect and lean against one another. Though fear can be the very thing that unifies the community, as it is in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, this is less common. Instead, unity is used to encourage a sense of community to offset the decreased value of individuality. This is seen in *The Giver* and *Brave New World*, where there is a sense of oneness and collectiveness for all members.

The etymology of "dystopia" is not much different from that of utopia. The two words share a root, but dystopia introduces the prefix *dys-*, representing the Greek δυσ-, meaning "hard, back, unlucky." Dystopias and utopias are polarized opposites; where one seeks a society that is as great as can be imagined, the other is a place where nothing could be made worse. But the history of the words themselves demonstrates that society will not reach either polar opposite, regardless of how hard we try to reach a utopia or how close people fall to a dystopia. The fears embodied in the dystopian works of each writer are natural human fears, fed by eerie uncertainty towards the future. Though these feelings of fear continue to well up in the creative works of the human race, this has been happening for hundreds of years and will continue to happen well into the future. Dystopian works are fed by concerns rooted in humanity's nature; as such, humanity will continue feeling them and authors will continue writing about them. That, however, does not mean it is the end of the world.

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