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The Germ Theory of Dystopias: Fears of Human Nature in 1984 and Brave New World

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**THE GERM THEORY OF DYSTOPIAS: FEARS OF HUMAN NATURE IN *1984*
AND *BRAVE NEW WORLD***

by

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

This project is an exploration of 20th century dystopian literature through the lens of germ theory. This scientific principle, which emerged in the late 19th century, asserts that microorganisms pervade the world; these invisible and omnipresent germs cause specific diseases which are often life threatening. Additionally, germ theory states that vaccines and antiseptics can prevent some of these afflictions and that antibiotics can treat others. This concept of a pervasive, invisible, infection-causing other is not just a biological principle, though; in this paper, I argue that one can interpret it as an ideological framework for understanding human existence as a whole. Particularly, I believe that authors of prominent 20th century dystopian novels applied the tenets of germ theory in order to explore the potential “pathogens” that furtively exist within the human mind. These pseudo-germs are various human tendencies that, when left “untreated” by governments, create nonnormative members of society. In the eyes of dystopian regimes, it is precisely this nonnormativity that poses a lethal threat, in that it challenges the continued existence of society with the current ruling body at the helm. In this paper, I trace love (both sexual and familial) and individuation (as a function of social hierarchy, recreational activities, and the use of language) as social disease-causing pathogens in George Orwell’s *1984* and in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*.

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I'd also like to thank my roommate and close friends (AD, LC, AC, JK, JN, KP, CH, AM, IS, RG, JM, EF, AS²) for putting up with me always, but especially during the past six months. I likely wouldn't be sane without your constant reassurances that everything will be okay. And I definitely wouldn't be alive without the dinners that you delivered to my room when I was too focused on my thesis to feed myself. You are infinitely wonderful, and I am so appreciative of you.

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I) INTRODUCTION

When my professors first confronted me with the impending arrival of my senior year and the prospect of writing my thesis, I admittedly had no idea where to begin. Sensing my neurotic tailspin, my advisor suggested that I draw upon my interdisciplinary interests – my simultaneous love of science and literature – in order to create a hybrid project, of sorts. So, during my summer of (productively procrastinating) MCAT preparation, I spent every day reading, re-reading, and researching my favorite books until I decided to focus on dystopian literature – a genre that felt perfectly analogous to my daily life at that time. Once I had selected my literary niche, I had to choose a scientific angle from which to approach it (which, to me, was the hardest part of my topic selection). I spent several days exploring the various technological developments that emerged in the years and decades preceding the first (officially) dystopian novels. I was initially tempted to apply ideas about reproductive science as a lens through which to read these books; however, this principle proved far too broad for an effective argument about my chosen literature, so I continued scouring the Internet for other scientific advancements.

Eventually, after several failed attempts to correlate obscure physics concepts to dystopian literature, I realized a connection far simpler than those I had attempted to force into fruition: germ theory and dystopias. After all, I told myself, nowadays *everyone* knows what germs are and *everyone* knows that they are pervasive. Germs are invisible, and they are everywhere (even inside our own bodies). However, this knowledge is relatively recent, and its discovery must have caused a massive ideological shift during its emergence as an accepted scientific principle. As a result, the cultural

artifacts produced during this time (like dystopian literature) must provide a cogent record of this development. So I decided to look at early dystopian novels through the framework of germ theory. Through this process, I realized that germ theory underscores the ways authors construct their characters and societies. What follows in this paper is my analysis of these multifaceted relationships.

i) WHAT IS DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE?

As I embarked on this project, I thought I understood what comprises a dystopian world. I believed that these environments were perpetually dreary, and that no inhabitants of dystopian societies could be happy. Perhaps unsurprising to my reader, my definition of a dystopia was not particularly well-informed. Upon further research, though, I have deduced a rarely acknowledged fact about these worlds: no one agrees about what, exactly, defines them. Literary critics have produced several definitions of dystopias, but most of these descriptions are incongruous. There are some common elements of these analyses that I will explore throughout this paper; however, I believe that the most effective way to define a dystopian world is by first exploring its etymological predecessor: the utopia.

In 1516, Sir Thomas More wrote *Utopia*, a world which was “presented by the narrator as having a perfect social, legal, and political system” (“Utopia, N.”). At risk of sounding trite, I summarize this account with the statement that constant bliss, through the eyes of the narrator, characterizes literary utopias. These societies have governments that rule fairly and effectively, ensuring the narrator’s perception that all citizens are perpetually happy. Other critics have elaborated on More’s initial definition of a utopia.

In her doctorate dissertation, Mary Gainer summarizes the work of Walter Benjamin and other foundational theoretical texts, explaining that “utopia” literally means “no-place”; utopias are perfect, yet unachievable worlds (Gainer 7). Gainer draws upon the work of her colleagues and predecessors to argue the impossibility of a utopian existence; it is a flawless, but entirely fantastical universe. Gainer (and her fellow literary critics) imply that humans cannot actualize a utopian society because, we as a species, are fundamentally flawed. Discourse surrounding utopias perpetually assumes a destructive and inherent “human nature” in all people that is ineradicable; we cannot experience a utopic reality because we are naturally corrupt.

In 1868, John Stuart Mill named “dystopia” as the antonym of “utopia” (“Dystopia, N.”). In describing these worlds, he stated, “What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what [legislators] appear to favour is too bad to be practicable” (“Dystopia, N.”). Mill elaborates on the notion that “Utopian” worlds are unattainable because “human nature” is inherently *un-*“good.” Mill and other mainstream critics perpetually insinuate that humans are incapable of realizing a “perfect” world because, without a “civilizing” force to fix us, we are naturally *imperfect*. A utopia is impossible because we as humans are too flawed to create and maintain it. Mill places utopias and dystopias – both of which are supposedly impossible – at separate ends of a spectrum. When societies realize the unattainability their utopic ideals, they decide to “favour” dystopias, which are implicitly devoid of perfection and bliss; thus, Mill constructs the latter societal organization as inherently informed by utopian aspirations. In this way, Mill suggests that society arrives at dystopias in relation to utopic (read: blissful) goals.

Oxford English Dictionary defines a dystopia as “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible” (“Dystopia, N.”). This definition is consistent with my initial understanding of these worlds. I perceived dystopias as “imagined places” in which everyone is suffering and every facet of reality is miserable. I realize that, on its own, though, this definition is not comprehensive. However, taken in tandem with Mill’s aforementioned characterization, the OED classification of “dystopia” is more nuanced than it first appears. Mill implies that this nightmarish reality only comes about in relation to explored utopic potentials. As a result, this OED definition is fairly limited in its applicability, as it excludes Mill’s concept that utopic ideology underpins the conception of a desolate dystopia; according to Mill, by definition, the “good” elements of utopias inform the emergence of their cynical counterparts. Even though the former type of society does not directly cause the latter, Mill nevertheless suggests that its contemplation is a component necessary to the realization of a dystopia. In light of this foundational description, perhaps not *everything* in the dystopian reality is “as bad as possible.” After all, as Mill suggests, dystopias cannot emerge without at least some governmental consideration of utopias. Further, if “everything” were truly awful in these narratives, then readers would not engage with them; they would not feel any emotional compulsion to read the texts.

I argue that many aspects of dystopian texts are defined as such because they portray government-imposed regulations on the individual that are in tension with the authors’ (and many of the readers’) ideas of our “essential human nature.” More specifically, there exists a mainstream conception that we have “natural” qualities that define us as humans – that separate us from and elevate us above animals, and that are

essential to a utopian existence. This idea pervades discourse about “humanity” as a whole. In dystopian novels, for the most part, daily human life is “as bad as possible” because governments suppress certain elements of most citizens’ “human nature.”¹ Authors portray the dystopia as such by comparing it to an ideal of unaltered “human nature,” which supposedly results in “blissful” (or utopian) existence. This relationship only emerges through dystopian authors’ inclusions of counternarrative forces throughout each novel. These characters maintain their supposedly utopian, “natural” humanity for the majority of these narratives, so they provide the reader a tangible reference to the tension underlying dystopian bleakness and the government’s stated attempts to create society-wide contentment.

Gainer elaborates on this concept by quoting M. Keith Booker, who says “dystopian literature is specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism” (qtd. in Gainer 4). This comment further reinforces the notion that dystopias (and all their negative aspects) arise due to unmitigated good intentions, rather than malicious ones. Booker, like other critics, specifically parses “dystopian literature” in comparison to “utopian thought.” This tactic reinforces the popular discursive notion that dystopias distill all the “negative consequences of arrant utopianism”; unchecked pursuits of widespread bliss cause large-scale bleakness. Again, the reader sees that critical rhetoric surrounding dystopias insists that the undesirable aspects characteristic of these

¹ Additionally, it is particularly interesting to note that dystopian texts (as defined by mainstream critics) feature totalitarian regimes. Similar novels that include slightly different forms of government are typically classified as “science fiction,” which implies that critics perceive totalitarianism as a necessary component of dystopias.

societies are not due to the overt ill intents of ruling bodies; rather, critics are adamant that these regimes are honestly attempting to establish perfect, happy communities. According to many theorists, the ensuing desolation occurs due to the dystopian governments' stated conviction to create and maintain blissful utopias.²

Eric Rabkin, in his book about utopian and dystopian literature, offers the reader more insight into the relationship between these genres. Like Mill, Gainer, and other mainstream critics, Rabkin reads dystopias as utopias gone awry. Unlike his colleagues, though, Rabkin offers a Judeo-Christian reading of these texts. He argues that the utopian ideals to which dystopian regimes supposedly aspire are representative of pre-fall Garden of Eden (Rabkin 3). Rabkin continues this analysis, explaining that dystopias emerge as a byproduct of authoritarian regimes' attempts to recapture Edenic bliss for their fallen societies.³ Rabkin elaborates, "we often recognize dystopias for what they are by virtue of their anti-pastoral, post-Lapsarian nature" (Rabkin 3). To Rabkin, the defining characteristics of dystopian worlds are the human tendencies that arose after Eve ate the apple. He continues his analysis with the statement, "a real return to the Garden finally depends on a basic change in human nature" (Rabkin 5). This comment suggests that in order to achieve a utopia (read: the ultimate goal of a dystopian government), there are certain aspects of an argued essential humanity that society must eradicate or otherwise

² In this discourse surrounding dystopian governments, theorists consistently avoid skepticism of the rulers' "true" intentions. Critics seem committed to this idea that ruling bodies are committed to utopian idealism, and that dystopian outcomes are simply unintended side effects of noble goals. Supposedly, governments (even in projected political fictions) *always* aspire to maximize the quality of life for all citizens.

³ Rabkin, like his colleagues, supports the notion that dystopian governments have in mind the best interests of their citizens. In fact, Rabkin hyperbolizes this belief to the extent that dystopian regimes are supposed guardians of Biblical ideals – an extreme compliment in the scope of traditional Western discourse.

change. It is “human nature” itself that challenges the possibility of a utopic society. Hence, there are very specific post-Lapsarian qualities that these regimes perceive as threats to their communities. To dystopian governments, these tendencies, unchecked, are the sole barriers to their Edenic ideals.

Now that I have introduced my reader to the theoretical premises of dystopian literature, I will briefly trace the development of this genre. Many literary theorists agree that Jack London’s 1907 *The Iron Heel* was the first dystopian novel (Erich Fromm qtd. in Orwell 316; Gainer 147). London, an American novelist, presents this work as a long-lost diary that a historian has recently unearthed and annotated. The novel documents the personal account of a woman whose husband unsuccessfully attempts to lead a revolution against an oligarchical government. While this novel was a commercial failure (to the extent that, in 1998, critic Erica Briscoe penned an article named “The Iron Heel: How Not to Write a Popular Novel”), it nevertheless established the foundations for this emerging literary field.

Following London’s initial contribution, the 20th century saw a proliferation of dystopian texts in both Europe and America. While my thesis focuses on *1984* (1949) and *Brave New World* (1932), I want my reader to understand that these are simply two works typical of this fast-growing genre. Other particularly notable pieces characteristic of 20th century dystopian literature are Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* (1921), Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), L.P. Hartley’s *Facial Justice* (1960), Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985). These novels all contain the important elements that critics (and I) use to classify a novel as dystopian. Gainer frequently reminds her reader of the ways that dystopias begin *in*

media res, which forces one to accept each specific society in its presented manner (Gainer 151). Additionally, Lyman Tower Sargent eloquently describes “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian [good place] enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia” (qtd. in Gainer 12). I call my reader’s attention to Sargent’s comment that dystopian novels must include “at least one eutopian enclave,” as it exemplifies the human potential to overcome the confines of a dystopian regime. Though this promise of hope is frequently minute, it is nevertheless apparent in all of the aforementioned texts. These novels implore their readers to see the human capacity to resist governmental attempts to eradicate specific qualities that pose a threat to the dystopian society’s re-entry into pre-Lapsarian Eden (per Rabkin).

In the next section, I will introduce some specific methods by which the regimes in *1984* and *Brave New World* attempt to achieve these means. I ask my reader to study these summaries while keeping in mind the notion that dystopian governments perceive certain intrinsic human qualities as threats to society’s ability to achieve a blissful utopian existence.

ii) *ORWELL, HUXLEY, AND THEIR DYSTOPIAS*

To a general audience, *1984* and *Brave New World* are among the most notorious dystopian pieces, and I have selected to explore them because of this prominence; if I can clearly delineate and support the connections between germ theory and these hallmark

novels, then I believe that similar parallels between lesser-known works will be comparably elucidated.

1984 presents a stereotypically dystopian universe. Orwell's nation, which he has named "Oceania," is one of three perpetually at-war super-states in the world. Citizens of Oceania practice the principles of "Ingsoc" (English Socialism), as opposed to the "Neo-Bolshevism" of Eurasia and the "death worship" of Eastasia. This society contains three groups: the Inner Party (elite members of the government, who comprise less than 2% of the total population), the Outer Party (other governmental adherents – the middle 13%), and the Proles (the proletariat – the remaining 85%). In *1984*, moderation characterizes governmental directives. This regime, which the never-seen Big Brother leads, controls citizens by systematically limiting them in all their pursuits. These regulations include bounds on language, thought, knowledge of the outside world, relationships, free time, and every other imaginable facet of one's life. Big Brother's government ensures compliance with these directives by constantly monitoring citizens through "telescreens," hidden microphones, and human spies. If these resources detect any nonnormative behavior or thoughts ("thoughtcrime"), the offending individual is "vaporized" or subjected to behavior-modifying torture.

Orwell follows protagonist Winston Smith, whose nonconformity develops throughout the novel until his ultimate capture by the "Thought Police." Winston's deviant behavior begins with his writing in a journal and progresses to his illicit sexual affair with Julia, a fellow rebellious Party member. Winston pursues membership with the Brotherhood, a rumored revolutionary secret society. As Winston constantly predicts, these treasonous thoughts and actions result in his imprisonment. In the end of the novel,

Orwell's reader sees Winston's torture, which ultimately culminates in his total acquiescence to Big Brother's mandates.

While Orwell's dystopia emphasizes constraint, Huxley's *Brave New World* is a nation of overindulgence. This novel begins in London 632 years A.F. (After Ford). Huxley's citizens are conceived and gestated in a controlled laboratory environment, where they spend their adolescence undergoing Pavlovian classical conditioning that affects every aspect of their daily lives. Huxley's World State forces its constituents to value extravagance and consumerism because acts of moderation, the government says, are more socially problematic (read: destructive to the regime) than the excess gratification of unavoidable human tendencies.

Huxley's reader experiences this society through the lens of a third person omniscient narrator that follows several characters. Of particular note are Bernard Marx and John the Savage, the novel's central-most nonconforming individuals. Bernard, who experienced a typical World State upbringing, constantly questions his environment. Eventually, he brings Lenina Crowne, his love interest, on a date to Malpais (the "Savage Reservation" in New Mexico) where they meet John. His mother, Linda, is a former World State citizen who was (accidentally) stranded on Malpais for several years. Upon meeting John and Linda and hearing their story, Bernard and Lenina bring the pair back to London, where the adolescent struggles to understand the highly regimented society. Meanwhile, Bernard uses John, a Shakespeare devotee, as a party trick in order to garner social attention. John epitomizes the Noble Savage archetype; he is a Shakespeare-reading indigenous outsider whom "civilized" society has not tainted with its codes. Eventually, though, John realizes his incompatibility with this "brave new world" and the

confines it places on his “natural” human existence, so he retreats to a solitary lighthouse, where he ultimately hangs himself.

As I have indicated, both *1984* and *Brave New World* feature governments that value social stability. In order to realize this stated primary objective, the regimes treat various human tendencies as particularly problematic obstacles, which, throughout this thesis, I argue is typical of dystopias. While the specific methods of governmental control are different in these two archetypal novels (moderation in *1984* and overindulgence in *Brave New World*), their overarching commonalities are numerous. Particularly, both regimes treat similar human behaviors as damaging. The two general tendencies that I have chosen to explore are: individualism (as expressed through social hierarchies, free speech, and free time); and sex, love, and family structures.

Now that I have established this ideological framework of the literature itself, I will turn my attention to the scientific portion of my paper: germ theory.

iii) WHAT IS GERM THEORY?

Before I explain germ theory itself, I find it poignant to define “germ.” According to Oxford English Dictionary, the first recorded definition of a germ is “An initial stage or state from which something may develop; a source, a beginning. Also: a small constituent or quantity” (“Germ, N.”). I draw my reader’s attention to the absence of any scientific terminology in this description; germs were not initially biological beings. Rather, a “germ” was a condition that connoted the possibility of future growth and “development”; it was the “beginning” of an idea or a state of being. Only in the mid-18th century, did it come to mean “the causative agent or source of a disease” (“Germ,

N.”). However, the scientific understanding of viral diseases was not firmly solidified until the advent of germ theory in the 19th century.

Oxford English Dictionary defines germ theory, first used in 1863, as “the theory that infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms” (“Germ, N.”). This explanation, while clear, is far from thorough. It does not mention the concurrent development of preventative and curative measures for diseases, and it excludes the previous understandings of disease. Instead, Oxford English Dictionary just provides curious readers with the seemingly simple fact that microorganisms cause diseases – common knowledge to a modern-day audience.

Before the 17th century, though, the existence of microorganisms (let alone disease-causing microorganisms) was not even fathomable to Europeans. Instead, Western people attributed illness to other factors. Particularly, until roughly 400 BCE, ancient Grecians believed that disease and its alleviation were matters of divine will; the gods were responsible for one’s health. This sentiment gradually changed and eventually culminated in the theories attributed to Hippocrates (circa 460-370 BCE), the “father of modern medicine” (Gaynes 11). Hippocratic (humoral) theory states that the four visible secretions of the human body – blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile – correlate, respectively, to the four basic elements that were thought to compose the earth – hot, cold, moist, dry (Gaynes 16, “Open Collections Program: Contagion, Germ Theory”). According to Hippocrates, any imbalance of these four humors (dyscrasia) causes illness, both physical and psychological (Gaynes 18). Individuals would alleviate dyscrasia through attempts to restore these humoral imbalances, the most famous of which was bloodletting (“Open Collections Program: Contagion, Germ Theory”). This

understanding of disease is particularly interesting in its implication that illness largely occurs due to existing “natural” forces within a person’s body. Humoral theory even maintained its acclaim during the European Plague of the Middle Ages, when doctors advised against bathing because they believed that opening one’s pores would allow tainted air (miasma) to penetrate the body (Gaynes 32). While the concept of miasma inculcates an external source for disease (similarly to germ theory), the means of transmission is through an individual’s own bodily imbalance; miasma does allow for the concept of microorganisms within the air (“Competing Theories of Cholera”). Robert Gaynes, in his extensive book about germ theory, succinctly states, “Even the concept of infection is in opposition to the humoral theory” (Gaynes 23-24). Given this extreme incongruity, humoral theory was the prevailing mode of thought for two millennia (Gaynes 27).

In 1020CE, Avicenna, a member of the “Islamic intellectual world,” wrote *Canon of Medicine*, an extensive medical text that included ideas about contagion (Gaynes 37, “Avicenna (Ibn Sina) | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy”). Renaissance Europe, which experienced the sporadic reemergence of plague throughout the 14th-17th centuries, refused to accept Avicenna’s theories for several centuries, though. Ideologically, this resistance might be attributed to the fact that “the concept of contagion involves a cause of disease that was entirely external to the body,” which was ideologically novel (Gaynes 41). Furthermore, in practice, Avicenna’s theories were not helpful to his Western contemporaries; most attempts to contain plague through the quarantine of afflicted individuals were ineffective, Gaynes argues, given the rarity of human-to-human plague transmission (Gaynes 47). Meanwhile, the medical community continued to use humoral

theory-based treatments like bleeding in order to mitigate the spread of the disease (“Open Collections Program: Contagion, The Great Plague of London, 1665”). While plague was, in fact, a massive problem for society, the form of its transmission (which modern Western science has determined is from insect and animal sources) was not conducive to the study of human-transmissible diseases. As a result, Avicenna’s concept of contagion did not gain much traction in Europe for a significant period of time.

In the mid-17th century, Anton van Leeuwenhoek provided the observational foundation for the development of germ theory. In the Netherlands, van Leeuwenhoek created the first single-lens microscope and clearly observed microorganisms for the first time in recorded history (Gaynes 57). Though his research was interesting, van Leeuwenhoek did not directly apply it to the medical context. He continued to refine his design for several years and experimented with its possibilities. Van Leeuwenhoek monitored many samples over time and repeatedly observed the growth of microorganisms (which he named “animalcules”) in previously uncontaminated environments (Gaynes 68, “Antony van Leeuwenhoek”). According to Gaynes, “without [knowledge of microorganisms], the theory of contagious disease was a theoretical exercise” (Gaynes 64). Due to van Leeuwenhoek’s creation, which the Royal Society later replicated and verified, the “germs” which comprise “germ theory” entered Western scientific discourse (Gaynes 69). Gaynes reminds his readers that, “Until the seat of disease was reassessed from a change in the balance of humors to our modern medical pathophysiological approach, the existence of bacteria was only a novelty of nature” (Gaynes 75). Though the scientific community accepted the existence of germs, Gaynes suggests, it did not correlate various “natural” phenomena with the human body; they

appeared to be two different disciplines. This distinction is particularly understandable when one considers the pervasive Western insistence that humans are elevated above animals and other nonhuman beings; therefore, the mainstream acceptance of “natural” principles as being applicable to our own existence is frequently slow. Further, Gaynes’s comment reinforces the notion that “nature” and human “disease” were still two separate modes of thought; researchers largely perceived nonhuman scientific principles and human physiology as mutually exclusive areas of study. The existence of these germs, while fascinating, could only become part of the lens of human understanding if it was demonstrably relevant to daily life. As such, humoral theory continued to define the practice of medicine through the 17th and 18th centuries (Gaynes 74, “Open Collections Program: Contagion, Germ Theory”).

During this time, smallpox infections persisted in Europe and North America. This disease was typically fatal, and even its milder forms resulted in severe disfigurement (“Open Collections Program: Contagion, The Boston Smallpox Epidemic, 1721”). In the 18th century, variolation (also known as inoculation) emerged as a means to combat smallpox infection. In variolation, a lancet containing pustular material from an individual with a mild case of the disease was injected into a healthy person; thus, the previously healthy person acquired a very mild case of smallpox (Gaynes 99, “Open Collections Program: Contagion, The Boston Smallpox Epidemic, 1721”). Unfortunately, this process occasionally killed patients due to the use of unclean lancets and various complications of smallpox. Then, at the end of the century, Edward Jenner developed the first published vaccine in Western medicine. He had spent significant time observing the proliferation of the disease, and noticed that milkmaids never contracted smallpox,

though they did suffer from cowpox, a related non-lethal condition. In 1796 England, Jenner successfully used cowpox to inoculate an adolescent male against smallpox (Gaynes 106). Given the positive outcome of this treatment and its similar results in a larger sample pool, Jenner's ideas gained in widespread acclaim. This vaccine became hugely popular in both Europe and America, as it prevented an extremely destructive disease from claiming many victims (Gaynes 111, "Open Collections Program: Contagion, The Boston Smallpox Epidemic, 1721"). The connections between Jenner's vaccinations and van Leeuwenhoek's "animalcules" had not yet been delineated, though; germ theory still did not exist.

Finally, during the mid-19th century, germ theory emerged as the prevailing model of disease. This change is due to the largely concurrent work of three European men: Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, and Joseph Lister. These individuals, though they did not work in concert, each contributed a significant portion to the cohesive germ theory. By the time these men began their separate research projects, the cellular theory was understood as fact (Gaynes 150). This theory, developed by Robert Hooke (in conjunction with van Leeuwenhoek's research) stated that all living things are composed of cells (Mazzarello). The Royal Society later confirmed this discovery, thus introducing it to the scientific canon ("Robert Hooke"). Louis Pasteur, one of the three foundational researchers of germ theory, primarily examined the apparently spontaneous contamination of sealed fluid containers. In 1886, Pasteur won the Paris Academy's Prix Alhumbert for his work proving that microorganisms exist throughout the atmosphere, and that they are responsible for contaminating (and otherwise tainting) formerly sterile solutions; this evidence challenged the prevailing theory that said contamination arose

due to spontaneous generation of foreign matter (Gaynes 155). This ideological development was extraordinarily significant in its implications that contamination is not borne from random mutations in a sample; rather, exchanges with the external environment induce this effect. Pasteur applied this this knowledge to the human practice of midwifery in combating puerperal fever, to the successful fermentation of alcoholic beverages, and to the elimination of significant diseases in silkworms (Gaynes 155). This interdisciplinary work indicated the widespread validity of his developing idea. While this information allowed Pasteur to create a basic understanding of germ theory, though, he was missing several aspects of modern-day conceptions of disease and pathogenicity. Specifically, Pasteur understood that the infiltration of clean environments with microorganisms from the surrounding atmosphere results in contamination and, frequently, decay. However, Pasteur's ideas were not sufficiently thorough to create a cohesive theory of human illness-causing germs.

Within a few decades, Robert Koch expanded on the ideas that Pasteur had begun exploring. At this time, it had become common practice to microscopically inspect skin, tissue, and fluid samples of ill animals and humans in order to deduce potential microbiological factors at work (Gaynes 161). Koch primarily examined products of individuals infected with tuberculosis and anthrax, and, in 1884, he published "The Etiology of Tuberculosis," which contains his four postulates regarding germ theory. feaf These rules state that there are specific germ-pathology relationships present in wounded tissue ("Open Collections Program: Contagion, Robert Koch, 1843–1910"):

1. The putative organism must be consistently present in diseased tissue.
2. The organism must be isolated in pure culture.

3. The pure culture must induce disease when injected into experimental animals.

4. The same organism must be isolated from these diseased animals.

(Gaynes 186-187)⁴

These postulates specifically articulated the role of germs in human illness for the first time in recorded history. They are only valid for certain types of bacteria, though (Gaynes 193, “Open Collections Program: Contagion, Robert Koch, 1843–1910”). Regardless, Koch identified that a specific “organism” correlates with a specific disease.

Additionally, he provided the concept that these microorganisms can be “isolated” from other pathogens – each germ is a distinct category. Finally, he stated that germs are self-propagating, in that they “induce disease” in previously healthy individuals. Despite the highly specific applicability of these postulates, they nevertheless form the defining ideology of germ theory; germs are invisible, unique disease-causing Others that inhabit our bodies.

Meanwhile, Joseph Lister conducted his surgical-related experiments in England. At this time, any post-operative infections (which were overwhelmingly common) were attributed to the mere presence of oxygen around an open wound (Gaynes 217). Lister, frustrated with poor patient outcomes, studied the wounds and subsequent infections of his patients. Eventually, Lister read the work of Pasteur, his contemporary, regarding the “diseases of fermentation,” in which alcoholic fermentation in the production of beer and other liquors goes awry due to the presence of microorganisms. Lister noted parallels to

⁴ Because I cannot read the postulates in their original German, I have elected to use Gaynes’s translation of them.

his own research and determined that Pasteur's discoveries were applicable to a human physiological context (Pitt and Aubin 8). Specifically, Lister hypothesized that post-operative infections do not occur due to oxidation by the air; rather, microbes in the air enter the wounded tissue and cause these complications (Gaynes 218). This idea, while reminiscent of the aforementioned miasma theory, is different in its implication that all air, not just "tainted air," contains microbes. Additionally, miasma theory states that simply inhaling air will cause disease, while Lister believed that airborne microbes are only infectious to open wounds. The mere existence of infection-causing microbes in wounds challenged Lister; he was determined to destroy them. In March 1865, Lister used undiluted carbolic acid to dress a patient's wound (due to a complex leg fracture). This experiment was incredibly successful, and Lister replicated these results with several other patients. Thus, Lister created the first antiseptic (Gaynes 220, Pitt and Aubin 9). He later described the conditions for success with antiseptics: "the first object must be the destruction of any septic germs which may have been introduced into the wound, either at the moment of the accident or during the time which has since elapsed... The next object to be kept in view is to guard effectually against the spreading of decomposition into the wound" (Lister 246). Lister's phrasing implies that "septic germs" can enter the body and cause "decomposition" extremely rapidly. Additionally, Lister suggests that medical providers must constantly "guard effectually" against further contamination because pathogens pose a perpetual threat to one's survival; germs never completely disappear. This concept might seem commonplace to a modern audience, but Lister's ideas were groundbreaking in his day.

This technique proved so reliable that it immortalized Lister in medical history. In the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War, doctors treating wounded soldiers had massive sample sizes to practice utilizing Lister's strategies. This practice averted countless deaths that were otherwise certain, and Lister's application of germ theory became a central tenet of disease control, even to the layman (Gaynes 224). This popularity occurred due to Lister's unfathomably large sample size; the war affected his entire nation. Together, Pasteur, Koch, and Lister created and refined the modern understanding of the germ theory of disease.

In the late 1890s and early 20th century, Paul Ehrlich contributed his experiments with antitoxins to this increasing collection of knowledge (Gaynes 244, "Open Collections Program: Contagion, Germ Theory"). Ehrlich successfully used antitoxins to eliminate specific infectious agents in vivo. After observing the work of several of his colleagues, he determined:

1. Treatment needed to be initiated at the onset of disease.
2. The later in the course of the disease, the higher the serum quantities needed for cure.
3. Minimal dosing could be recommended, depending on the severity of the disease. (Gaynes 246)

While this process of targeted disease eradication is not overtly a facet of formal germ theory, it utilizes several of the themes previously explored. In his first tenet, Ehrlich evokes Lister's attitude towards timeliness with respect to adequate pathogen elimination. Additionally, he recalls Pasteur's work with (the lack of) spontaneous generation in his mention of the proliferative nature of disease-causing germs. Meanwhile, Ehrlich also

suggests that these germs are unique and specific; each one requires its own antitoxin. In the context of my ideological framework, I find it particularly interesting to note Ehrlich's insistence that disease severity influences dosing quantities. Specifically, I draw my reader's attention to the notion that more ill individuals require more intensive treatments; nonnormativity is not a zero-sum game.

I have attempted to supply my reader with the knowledge necessary to understand its basic principles. Briefly, germ theory states that there are microscopic, disease-causing particles pervading the air and surfaces that surround human life. These germs proliferate rapidly in appropriate (human) hosts, each leading to specific infections. One can prevent these illnesses through vaccination against individual pathogens (using an inactive form of the pathogen) or through application of general antiseptic to potentially contaminated regions. If disease occurs despite preventative measures, specific antitoxins (like antibiotics) can be used in quantities that depend on the severity of the infection.

iv) HOW DOES GERM THEORY RELATE TO THE STUDY OF LITERATURE?

While I have yet to find analyses of specifically dystopian literature through the lens of germ theory, I have read theory that discusses the implications of germ theory as a cultural phenomenon. Additionally, I have read dystopian theory that invokes the tenets of germ theory without naming this principle as such. So, while there is not yet published material that particularly links these two ideas, I aspire to convince my reader that this relationship does exist.

I believe that critic Heather Schell's discussion of the cultural and literary impact of germ theory is a cogent way to introduce this idea. In her 2002 article, Schell

succinctly states, “Despite its scientific trappings, the germ theory is anything but free from politics” (Schell 806). In one sentence, Schell establishes the concept that I am using to guide this project. She explains that, while germ theory is a biological principle, this “scientific” field has interdisciplinary ramifications. The scientific realm and the realities of daily human existence are not mutually exclusive categories; they significantly influence each other. Specifically, in this case, germ theory (read: the concept of invisible, omnipresent, illness-causing pathogens) affects cultural attitudes. Schell further explains, “Viruses now reside meaninglessly, inert, in our cultural texts” (Schell 807). This comment again correlates two seemingly disparate fields: biology and society, in that Schell states there are specific “cultural” viruses lurking below the surface of daily human life. Further, Schell’s ideas suggest that the Western understanding of germ theory has produced a conflation of biophysical disease with social (or “cultural”) illness. As these germs are “residing...in...texts,” Schell implies that they are not literal pathogens; instead they represent the ideological notion of contagious and invisible illness-causing germs that may (or may not) be “inert” at any given time. This direct correlation between biological and cultural disease⁵ implies an understanding of social normativity as a function of pathogen eradication. For the most part, the unseen germs that pervade our collective unconscious are “inert” and do not pose active threats; however, the mere idea of a “virus” has permeated our understandings of our own lives, and we, Schell argues, live in constant fear of these (literal and ideological) germs. This idea alludes to the crux of my argument: while literal microbial germs do not constantly

⁵ Throughout this project, I use the terms “cultural disease” and “cultural illness” in reference to systemic social nonnormativity.

pervade our cultural discourses, we nevertheless perceive the omnipresence of unseen (and possibly dangerous) Others.

Schell expands on this interdisciplinary relationship between pathogens, the individual, and the community. She states that “through [the lens of germ theory], military and cultural imperialism become the expression of biological imperatives” (Schell 805). In this way, she again draws her audience’s attention to the undeniable ties between biology and the social body. While Schell specifically discusses traditional forms of “imperialism,” I believe that this concept is applicable to the totalitarian regimes characteristic of dystopian novels, in that both classes of governments attempt to maximize their respective societies’ well being through the exclusion of specific “undesirable” human tendencies. More specifically, these forms of imperialism inflict upon a certain group the ideas of normative function that contradicts the “natural” tendency. In this paper, I argue that dystopian regimes perceive sex and individuation as the two “biological imperatives” of “human nature” that are most in need of social norming.

Lennard Davis, discussing this relationship between individual and social health, states, “The emphasis on nation and national fitness obviously plays into the metaphor of the body. If individual citizens are not fit, if they do not fit into the nation, then the national body will not be fit” (Davis 6). In this passage, Davis explains that dominant members society believe that the group’s overall “fitness” is dependent on each citizen’s embodiment of the cultural ideal. While Davis does not directly implicate germ theory into this analysis, his commentary nevertheless alludes to this relationship through its

insinuation that an individual's unfitness (illness) is a potential contagion, in that ruler's believe it can undo the well being of civilization as a whole.

I have established that germ theory is culturally, as well as biologically, applicable. Now, I will discuss the implications of this dynamic on dystopian novels. Namely, I propose that dystopian regimes perceive certain human qualities as germs that, if untreated, prevent the attainment of a "perfect" utopian society. Thus, I argue that, to dystopian governments, largely invisible (read: microscopic) social pathogens pervade the human psyche and perpetually threaten community's ability to achieve a supposed pre-Lapsarian Edenic ideal. As a result, these rulers are determined to vaccinate, treat, and contain the cultural germs, so that a utopia-preventing epidemic does not occur.

This goal drives the establishment of an authoritarian rule typical of dystopian regimes. The government ensures that each citizen adheres to a specific notion of normative human behavior; deviant individuals undermine the fitness of the social body and must be treated or eliminated. Rabkin comments, "the ideal of a material utopia is inwardly corrupt; it turns into its opposite because individuals are inherently imperfect, and a perfect state demands that they be forced into patterns alien to their natures" (Rabkin 159-160). This statement is further indicative of the threat that human "nature" poses to a "perfect state." When dystopian rulers cannot "forcefully" eliminate the "inherent imperfections" that pervade their constituents, they quarantine these individuals as sources of cultural contagion.

Erich Fromm, in his afterword to *1984*, poses a series of questions that expand on this tension between human "imperfection" and the attempts of dystopian governments to eradicate these pathogenic tendencies. Fromm inquires:

can human nature be changed in such a way that man will forget his longing for freedom, for dignity, for integrity, for love – that is to say, can man forget that he is human? Or does human nature have a dynamism which will react to the violation of these basic human needs by attempting to change an inhuman society into a human one? (Fromm qtd. in Orwell 318)

These quandaries succinctly illuminate the relationships that I plan to explore. Fromm, without overtly referring to “freedom,” “dignity,” “integrity,” and “love” as germs, alludes to the cultural pathogenicity of these qualities inherent to “human nature.” According to Fromm, whose analysis I find consistent with the attitudes of dystopian authors, in these tendencies are particularly resilient germs that pervade our supposed human condition. Dystopian governments attempt to “violate” these parts of the psyche and social body through various measures that force individuals to “forget” their “natural” tendencies, but Fromm suggests that these social pathogens are difficult, if impossible, to eradicate. Fromm convincingly argues that if people could, in fact, “forget” these desires, then dystopian works would not consistently feature nonconforming lead characters. These individuals have, for whatever reason, resisted the vaccinations and treatments meant to eliminate sociocultural illness; they are afflicted with superstrains of these specific pathogens, which “naturally” permeate our existences (both physically and psychologically). I agree with Fromm’s assessment that dystopian regimes fear that “human nature” does, in fact “have a dynamism” which resists authoritarian measures to limit individuals’ explorations of love and individuation. It is these tendencies that I propose as particularly problematic in the eyes of dystopian

governments. The rulers specifically regulate inclinations that might lead to nonnormative (as in, “post-Lapsarian”) manifestations of these “natural” human desires. Though Fromm asserts that these control mechanisms create “an inhuman society,” I believe that these targeted eradications are more nuanced than a simple human-inhuman dichotomy. Rather, I argue that dystopian governments supposedly regulate their constituents’ “human nature” in order to minimize the proliferation of cultural epidemics that might prevent society from attaining a professed utopian ideal. Further, I assert that this stated Edenic aspiration is moreso a ruse by which the rulers maintain certain hierarchical power structures (through the selective norming of specific “inherent” human qualities) than it is a true guiding force in the legislation of these nations.

Though many moving parts comprise the relationship I propose between germ theory and dystopian literature, I hope that I have clearly delineated these dynamics. In short, I assert that one can read germ theory from a cultural perspective, in that it suggests (an) omnipresent invisible proliferative Other(s) which resides on/in the human body. To dystopian governments, these pathogens are various naturally occurring human tendencies that have the potential to prevent the realization of a utopian society, and one afflicted citizen affects the overall fitness of the nation. As a result, these regimes are determined to contain these threats, so that unregulated human inclinations do not proliferate and challenge the governments’ ability to maintain the professed utopically-aspirational status quo.

Though both Orwell’s and Huxley’s (totalitarian) dystopian governments apply the tenets of germ theory in their attempts to maintain social stability, each of these regimes utilizes different tactics. Broadly speaking, Orwell’s society prevents pathogenic

proliferation through an antiseptic approach. Big Brother eradicates individuals' "natural" tendencies towards love and individuation so that no traces of these potential diseases remain; perceived cultural germs cannot cause disease because Big Brother eliminates their presence through strict monitoring and control of citizens in every realm of life. However, when these antiseptic attempts are unsuccessful, Big Brother treats afflicted citizens with specific antibodies (intense treatments that neutralize the pathogenic threats) in order to prevent an epidemic. Alternately, Huxley's World State attempts to "inoculate" or "vaccinate" citizens against perceived social pathogens by forcing individuals to develop microbe-specific immune responses to them. The government constantly and intentionally exposes individuals to controlled forms of the supposed cultural germs, so that truly "lethal" illnesses do not arise. As a result of this attitude, the government, led by "World Controllers," teaches individuals to engage in copious acts of sexuality, to play games that are unimaginably complex, to spend money constantly, and to partake in *soma* (the "perfect" euphoric drug) whenever possible. Thus, Huxley's dystopia is (seemingly) one of pleasure and indulgence.

Critic Neil Postman eloquently describes this tension between Oceania and the World State in his article entitled "Amusing Ourselves to Death." With one titular sentence fragment, Postman captures the dystopic essence of Huxley's *Brave New World*, as, to the reader, these citizens seem simultaneously blissful and tragic. Postman's analysis continues:

Orwell warned that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother...is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity, and history. As Huxley saw it, people

will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think. (Postman 14)

This remark elucidates the dystopian aspect of Huxley's pleasure-obsessed society. Individuals "love" and "adore" the limitations placed upon them; the "cure" to their own germs comes from within their bodies. The World State does not subject citizens to Listerian antiseptic (or Orwellian "deprivation") measures. Instead, individuals' targeted overexposure to social pathogens allows them to create unconsciously their own antibodies. This unawareness occurs because pathogen exposure is so omnipresent and pervasive that it becomes part of routine daily life for World State citizens; they receive several doses of the vaccine, so they do not need to work intentionally to develop their own immune systems. Additionally, in this society, World Controllers send vocally nonconforming individuals to isolated locations (usually islands), where they commune with other "vaccine"-resistant society members. There are no attempts to heal these nonnormative characters. Rather, the government determines that they are simply incapable of forming the desired antibodies. Meanwhile, the World State maintains its existing order; Huxley's dystopian regime contains the epidemic.

Huxley and Orwell both use germ theory to inform their presentations of dystopian societies. Primarily, these worlds highlight authoritarian regimes that norm citizens into upholding specific status quos. Dystopian governments, according to the authors, maintain power by parsing certain aspects "human nature" as inherently dangerous to civilization. In order for individuals to participate in normative (dystopian) society, they must submit themselves to significant disease control mechanisms. Anyone who does not conform to these regulations cannot become "civilized" in a dystopian

world. Specifically, Orwell and Huxley suggest that sexuality and individuation are the two aspects of “human nature” that are most threatening to the survival of existing society – these human qualities are pathogens in dystopian worlds.

II) SEXUALITY AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

Dystopian governments are obsessed with the supposed pathogenic dangers of unregulated sexuality and familial dynamics. In the novels I have chosen to discuss, each ruling class regulates these relationships with extensive legislation. Given the pervasiveness of this attitude, my reader might understand why I argue that each of these regimes perceives sex and love as critical existential threats to its ability to “civilize” (read: norm) constituents. Though Orwell’s *Big Brother* and Huxley’s *World State* treat this pathogen differently, the underlying principle is nevertheless the same: love, which the governments suggest is the emotional component of sexual and familial relationships, is both “natural” (thus difficult to suppress) and extraordinarily dangerous in its potential to usurp the regimes’ dicta that claim to maintain a “civilized” social order.

This omnipresence contributes significantly to the governments’ medically aggressive treatments of this perceived threat; Huxley and Orwell suggest that sexuality is among the few germs for which no definitive cure exists. As a result, regimes state that they must mitigate its impacts as best they can, though its total eradication is impossible. As Thomas Horan explains, “[dystopian literature] suggests that the libido is the part of us that can’t be fully colonized” (Horan 10). This comment, while evocative of the germ theory-reminiscent notion that the sexual impulse is stubbornly invincible, is simultaneously indicative of other social undercurrents that I plan to explore. Specifically, Horan’s description of “libido” as the *one* “part of us” that cannot be “colonized” implicates a governmental force whose role includes norming not just sexual

impulses, but also all other facets of an individual identity.⁶ Thus, sexuality (as well as other “natural” human tendencies) is a pathogen that dystopian regimes believe they must eradicate in order to fully “colonize” their “naturally” uncivilized constituents.

Furthermore, this peril of inherent nonnormativity is compounded by the supposed power that accompanies free explorations of one’s sexuality. According to critic Thomas Horan, a romantic pursuit is self-serving: “The fundamentally unpredictable and often illogical affinity for one sexual object” can in no way satisfy the agenda of a totalitarian government, nor can the regime control it (Horan 14). While a normative (in mainstream Western culture) sexual endeavor includes two individuals, Horan argues that it is a far more selfish activity than it initially seems. Rather, Horan believes that it is an exploration of self and an opportunity for the individual to claim his/her own identity. He describes this quality as the “redemptive potential of sexuality” (Horan 9). Horan suggests that unrestricted sexual experiences hold within them the ability to transcend the “civilizing” mandates of these dystopian governments. He later refines this point, explaining,

The present is both the point in time at which oppression is imposed and the moment at which rebellion becomes possible. Realizing the volatility of the present helps clarify why sex is perceived as such a danger to these totalitarian regimes. The orgasm is, after all, a completely immediate experience. (Horan 29)

⁶ I disagree with Horan’s comment that social pressures cannot “colonize” the sex drive. After all, countless individuals conform to socially normative expectations of (chaste, cis-gender, hetero-)sexuality despite inclinations otherwise. This desire, though, simply cannot be *eradicated*; however, it is certainly colonized in Western culture.

In referring to “the present” as “volatile,” Horan alludes to the time-sensitive nature of pathogenic threats. He implies that the ideological notions and physical sensations which “immediate experiences” (like sexual encounters) evoke rapidly dissipate into the surrounding environment if a confining force does not regulate them. When authoritarian governments control the “orgasm,” Horan argues, they completely “oppress” the individual; however, citizens assert their sexualities to “rebel” against the regime. Individuals can use their sexual experiences in order to assert themselves gradually against their totalitarian oppressors; thus, sex becomes a political tool, as well as a personal act.

Horan suggests that these perceptions of sex inevitably relate to matters of procreation and nuclear familial structures. He reminds the reader that the biological imperative of sex in a heteronormative society is to produce offspring; if the sex drive exists, then, in the context of this reading, the desire to create children and families should, too. Though on a personal level, I do not agree with this mentality, I agree with its application in regard to this specific literary framework. While theorists of dystopian literature have generally abstained from extensive commentary regarding the inherent power of normative family structures, they occasionally refer to it in passing. In this project, I will discuss the family group (including the parent-child dynamic) as a manifestation of sexuality that authoritarian regimes perceive as threatening enough to regulate in its entirety.

Taken in tandem, these ideas substantiate Horan’s notion that “sexual desire is an irrational and therefore threatening impulse that can never be fully appropriated” (Horan 3). Additionally, remembering (hetero)sexuality’s biologically procreative role, the

nesting impulse that (traditional Western discourse insists) arises upon the creation of a nuclear family is an extension of sexual activity. Classic dystopian authors, as well as their critics, believe that sexuality is both ineradicable, and also extremely powerful in its capacity for rebellion. As such, perhaps my reader understands why I have chosen to classify sexuality as a particularly problematic pathogen in dystopian societies.

i) "THERE WILL BE NO LOVE, EXCEPT THE LOVE OF BIG BROTHER": Redirecting Sexuality in 1984

In *1984*, Orwell suggests that one can only gain true power by inflicting pain on others; hence, Orwell implies that individual happiness challenges the ruling class's authority. This regime ("the Party") perceives enjoyable sex as one such threat and has decided to neutralize its power through total suppression. Because the Party has not yet succeeded in its ultimate goal of altogether eliminating the sexual impulse, it has been forced to develop strategies that somehow redirect it. By examining the ways in which the Party addresses sexuality, and then exploring its manifestations through the eyes of Winston (Orwell's protagonist), the reader can understand the powerful nature of sex in this society. I propose that, in *1984*, unimpeded sexuality is simultaneously pathogenic on three levels: politically, socially, and personally; to Orwell's regime, physical sexual experiences can evoke ideologically proliferative nonnormativity.

Before I analyze Winston's experiences of his sexuality, I must discuss the Party's attitude toward these interactions. Orwell's appendix, "The Principles of

Newspeak”⁷ addresses the Party’s legal definitions of sexuality. In this world, one’s sexual life “[is] entirely regulated by...*sexcrime* (sexual immorality) and *goodsex* (chastity)... that is to say, normal intercourse between man and wife, for the sole purpose of begetting children, and without physical pleasure on the part of the woman; all else [is] *sexcrime*” (Orwell 306). The correlation between sex and marriage is of note, as it indicates Orwell’s treatment of sex and family as inextricably linked. Additionally, the Party classifies sex as a biological necessity for society’s continued physical existence; however, sexuality must not present any emotional rewards. Officially, the Party only endorses procreative heterosexual attempts that are entirely devoid of joy. While the Party acknowledges that the male’s physical satiety is necessary for so-called successful sex to occur, it prefers to minimize this feeling.

Throughout the novel, the Party addresses sex as a “natural” urge that must be separated from direct experiences of pleasure. On a fundamental level, it disseminates this ideology by ensuring that the citizens of Oceania associate non-procreative sex with shame and barbarism. Here, Orwell suggests that shame must accompany any “uncivilized” behavior – shame and debased humanity are intrinsically linked. Winston communicates this dynamic in his discussion of the proles, whom the Party exempts from its moral mandates. He explains, “...they were allowed to follow their ancestral code. The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished...as the Party slogan put it: ‘Proles and animals are free’” (Orwell 72). This moment is particularly revelatory of the Party’s belief of sex as a “natural” instinct. This description of sexual desire as “ancestral” indicates that it is an inherent, basal

⁷ I will discuss Newspeak more thoroughly in Chapter III.i.

characteristic of humans, rather than a novel socially constructed ideal. While the Party believes that sexuality is an inevitable aspect of human existence, though, it insinuates that “unpunished promiscuity” is somehow subhuman. Proles enjoy their orgasm-filled sexual experiences and so do “animals.” This idea suggests that, in Oceania, “natural” expressions of promiscuous sexuality are inherently “uncivilized.” Individuals who do not submit their “ancestral” sexual proclivities to Big Brother’s norming influence are animalistic; their sexual pathogens must be eradicated through antiseptic measures if they want to participate in normative “civilized” society. While Big Brother insists that these individuals are culturally diseased (and thus, susceptible to deaths that Party members evade), Orwell implies that this “uncivilized” state – being “free” – is actually a “natural” human virtue; the author suggests that authoritarian governments infringe upon individuals’ “freedom” by regulating their sexuality and forcing them to believe that this impulse is somehow barbaric.

The reader sees this theme further manifest itself in the coexistence of prostitution with Party doctrine. Winston comments, “Tacitly the Party [is] even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which [can] not be altogether suppressed. Mere debauchery [does] not matter very much, so long as it [is] furtive and joyless, and only [involves] the women of a submerged and despised class” (Orwell 65). As I have previously discussed, the Party insists that sexuality is inevitable; the government cannot ignore these impulses. When eradication attempts fail to “altogether suppress” the supposedly unavoidable sexual “instinct” – when the pathogen of sexuality is too resistant to Big Brother’s antiseptic – the Party attempts to ensure that illicit sexual encounters are irrevocably sullied with negative emotional associations; it is constantly

symptomatic of nonnormativity and cultural disease. Consorting with prostitutes might otherwise be an erotic encounter, but in this society, it necessitates interactions with “the women of a submerged and despised class,” so that even clandestine explorations of sexuality are deflated through pervasive associations with the “animalistic” Proles. Additionally, these sexual needs are exclusive to men; women are simply the vehicles through which Orwell’s (exclusively heterosexual) men explore their overtly violent sexual impulses. As a result, Orwell’s male-centric totalitarian regime promotes the systematic belief that sexuality, while it is undeniably naturally occurring, is a “primitive” inclination that Party members must associate with shame. In having the pathogenically ineradicable instances of sexuality appear shameful, Big Brother allows individuals to self-regulate their own cultural illnesses. The germ is not as powerful because citizens are aware of it, so they refuse to let it fully infect them. Meanwhile, in Orwell’s emphasis on Oceania’s overt misogyny, he implies that biases against female explorations of “natural” sexuality are qualities of dystopian worlds. So perhaps this moment is indicative of Orwell’s feminist leanings.

Because the Party is so determined to limit the scope of sexual experiences, it has created several departments within the bureaucracy that address this issue. Among these units is the Ministry of Love, which (intentionally) is anything but enjoyable. Winston explains that “the Ministry of Love...[maintains] law and order,” and that, of all the ministries in Oceania, “The Ministry of Love [is] the really frightening one...It [is] a place impossible to enter except...by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests” (Orwell 4-5). While this juxtaposition of love and fear is poignant, I find it more fruitful to explore Orwell’s use

of double entendre in this passage. In order to “enter” this place of love, one must first penetrate several physically harmful barriers. Even this metaphorical copulation is riddled with danger and pain, and then rewarded with “law and order,” rather than pleasure or even a simple physical refractory period in which one can pause momentarily. Later in the novel, Winston admits, “One [does] not know what [happens] inside the Ministry of Love, but it [is] possible to guess: tortures, drugs, delicate instruments that [register] your nervous reactions, gradual wearing-down...and persistent questioning” (Orwell 167). This moment reinforces the notion that love (of any kind) in Oceania can be neither enjoyable nor peaceful. Even the metaphorical climax of “penetrating” the Ministry of Love results, at best, with the unknown. More likely, though, it is extraordinarily unpleasant torture and unwanted intimacy through machines that analyze one’s “nervous reactions.” Through this rhetorical juxtaposition, the Party attempts to control individuals’ perceptions of sex. It juxtaposes “love” and “pleasure” with their definitional antonyms; on a lexical basis, rhetorical antibodies neutralize the antigen of sexuality.

The Junior Anti-Sex League is another of the Party’s such bureaucratic subdivisions. This governmentally controlled youth group “[advocates] complete celibacy for both sexes” (Orwell 65). Members of this organization wear a “narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League” (Orwell 10). This identifying feature is especially notable in its reminiscence of Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*. Though both societies value abstinence, the 19th century text places this red fabric on a woman’s torso in order to brand her an adulteress, while Orwell’s scarlet uniform is one of pride. This parallelism is reiterated later in the novel, in an episode where Julia, standing in a

clearing with Winston, removes her sash, which is a direct elicitation of Hawthorne's illustrious novel. Regardless of the specific ways in which each society uses this badge to promote sexual puritanism, this association is one that Orwell has evoked deliberately in order to establish the legislative convictions of the Junior Anti-Sex League.

As I have previously argued, sexuality and family structure are considerably entwined in the literary reading of germ theory, and the Party treats them as such. One of the ways that the Party addresses this issue of familial love is through the careful regulation of parent-child relationships. Winston mentions this policy, explaining, "people [are] encouraged to be fond of their children in almost the old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, [are] systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations" (Orwell 133). This strategy suggests that, like the primal sex impulse, the supposed instinct to bond with one's offspring is particularly resilient, and so the Party cannot fully eliminate it through traditional Listerian antiseptic measures. Instead, the government permits its continued existence in a very specific manner that is reminiscent of antibody-antigen relationships. Irredeemably pathogenic parents want to foster loving relationships with their offspring, but this threat is mitigated through the children's direct opposition to any displays of nonnormativity in these adults; children actively promote antibiotic measures. Additionally, the children in this passage are similar to Party members in the aforementioned prostitution scenes, while the adult Party members here are correlatively prole-like. The Party cannot eradicate the children's (and their parents') "natural" proclivities to bond and to cohabitate with their families; however it ensures that this treatment-resistant pathogen is socially normed through careful psychological manipulations. Children are

“systematically turned against” their supposed “natural” inclinations to love their parents; the Party indoctrinates children into “civilized” society by implying that “old-fashioned” (read: unregulated) parent-child relationships are diseased and thus incompatible with social normativity. Children’s relationships with their parents become encounters with a “submerged and despised” group. While the Party “systematically” inculcates children into its ideology, it leaves adults, like proles, to behave in “the old-fashioned way”; they follow their “ancestral code” and they remain “free.” This parallel structure is indicative of the Party’s consistent attempts to limit expressions of sexuality where it cannot altogether eliminate them.

Though I have discussed the ways in which the Party regards sexuality as a pathogen it must quarantine, I have not demonstrated why, specifically, it does so. The Party perceives the threat of sexuality to be multifaceted; however, it is primarily concerned with the interrelatedness of sex and power. Late in the novel, O’Brien, a member of the Inner Party, tells Winston that “Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation” (Orwell 266). According to the Party, (unlegislated) sex is inherently pleasurable, so this passage suggests that subjects of totalitarian rule cannot be sexual, as this quality poses a threat to unmitigated power. “Pain” is an antonym of “pleasure”; this rhetorical opposition suggests that the former is an antibody for the (pathogenic) latter. Further following this relationship, individuals whom the Party has cured of their pleasurable sexual experiences are now normed – they embody a neutral, pathogen-free state of being. This ideal existence, the Party believes, is susceptible to governmental displays of “power”; one’s “natural human virtues” (i.e. resistance to rampant authoritarianism), Orwell suggests, are entirely incompatible with the goals of totalitarian

regimes. O'Brien, describing Party goals, admits that in the future "there will be no love, except the love of Big Brother...All competing pleasures will be destroyed" (Orwell 267). This competition between "pleasure" (namely, sex) and the Party further alludes to the former's pathogenic potential. The mere presence of non-governmental "love," the Party suggests, is capable of diminishing the ruling body's influence. "Pleasure" directly "competes" with Big Brother's "civilizing" powers; as a result, the Party knows it must apply stringent antiseptic measures to "destroy" deviant (pathogenic) expressions of "love," else they develop into revolutionary ideations.

Orwell expounds on this idea with the help of Julia, Winston's love interest. She explains, "It [is] not merely that the sex instinct [creates] a world of its own which [is] outside the Party's control" (Orwell 132-133). Though this concept of totalitarianism through control of sexuality is interesting, it is novel neither to Winston nor to my readers. Julia elaborates, "What [is] more important [is] that sexual privation [induces] hysteria, which [is] desirable because it [can] be transformed into war fever and leader worship" (Orwell 133). In this moment, Orwell reveals what the Party perceives as sexuality's true pathogenic potential. Like literary theorists and directors of afterschool specials, Orwell acknowledges that sex is not just the physical act of sex; it, he implies, is inherently powerful on a level that transcends its physical realities. If sexuality's "privation" enables fundamental psychological changes like "hysteria," then its mere existence is equally powerful, if not more so. Further, the use of "hysteria" further correlates physical and psychological illness. In her book chapter on the condition, Elaine Showalter explains that "hysteria" has perpetually referred to an affliction of correlated bodily and mental origins (Showalter 14). As the word is etymologically related to the

female uterus, its history is riddled with (misogynistic) implications of anatomy and extreme emotions. One moment of such emotional extremism occurs during Hate Week, which is a festival of nationalism. On the sixth day of the Party-sponsored celebrations of war, Winston observes “the great orgasm... quivering to its climax” (Orwell 180). This transmutation of physical sexual reality, a “great orgasm,” to political orthodoxy reiterates this perceived notion that sex is inextricable from emotions and, therefore, politics. Furthermore, sex itself is a biologically proliferative act; if, by eliminating acts of sexuality, the Party can elicit “war fever and leader worship,” then successful sexual encounters must generate even more psychological effects; one causes others.

Additionally, it is particularly interesting to note that normative (read: de-pathogenized) expressions of sexuality induce “fever,” a physical symptom of systemic infection. In Orwell’s dystopia, the government eliminates “natural” experiences of sexuality in order to “civilize” its constituents. Then, this deprivation results in a “fever,” which is a socially norming quality. Given these narratorial relationships, Orwell implies that one’s “natural” sexuality, left unrestricted, is associated with health. Meanwhile, totalitarian regimes eliminate it in order to induce a “fever,” which is evocative of germ theory and physical infection – elevated temperatures are the ways that the body fights infection. So in Big Brother’s intentional incitation of mass “fever,” Orwell implies that the dystopian regime forces individuals to combat their “natural” pathogenicity by causing them to contract “fevers” that will destroy the potential infection. While the Party insists that sexuality is a pathogen, Orwell believes that governmental attempts to legislate it cause symptoms of poor social health. Regardless, Orwell includes this episode in order to

suggest that sexuality's potential to become a nationalistic "fever" – a symptom of pathogenic presence – is why the Party addresses this quality in the ways that it does.

Now that I have established how the Party modifies sexual impulses, as well as the apparent motivations for these policies, I turn my attention to their manifestations in Winston. Particularly, I will trace how Winston's relationship with sex develops throughout his successive dalliances with Julia. Initially, these encounters are solely interpersonal power plays in which Winston's internalization of Party doctrine is often apparent. As his experience of authentic sexuality increases, though, Winston begins treating sex as a personally fulfilling endeavor. It becomes pleasure-driven, emotionally significant, and even medically beneficial. In this way, Winston's relationship with sex exemplifies the Party's fears. Once Winston begins having illicit sex, he embraces an ideology that is entirely independent of Party protocol. The physical act of sex brings with it a rapidly proliferating ideological revolution in Winston's mind; the Party's attempts to induce a "fever" did not destroy his sexual pathogens.

When Winston first meets Julia, his only conceptions of sex are those that the Party has instilled in him; he associates his "primal" urge of seduction with hatred and barbarism, rather than pleasure. He describes hallucinations in which "he [flogs] her to death with a rubber truncheon. He [ties] her naked to a stake and [shoots] her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He [ravishes] her and [cuts] her throat at the moment of climax" (Orwell 15). Each of these images is simultaneously violent and overtly sexual, which further suggests Orwell's belief that violent, overt misogyny is characteristic of dystopian worlds. First, a truncheon is a weapon that is indisputably phallic in appearance. Orwell further implies this sexual connotation with the use of a "rubber

truncheon,” which gives the otherwise inert weapon some malleability that is highly reminiscent of the human phallus or a sex toy. This perception of sex as an agent of death is a direct product of Party teachings. Winston reiterates this idea in his desire to “cut her throat” mid-orgasm. At this point, Winston still believes that passionate sex is necessarily destructive; this passion must be hatred, rather than love. Also, it demonstrates his belief that sex is an act of power. Julia’s hypothetical orgasm subjugates her in Winston’s mind. It is only during the “climax” that he asserts his dominance and kills her. His hysteria is misdirected; Winston’s cultural nonnormativity means that his “sexual privation” incites increasingly pathogenic ideations that “fever” cannot overcome. Orwell’s ambiguity regarding the possessor of this orgasm is especially notable, as it suggests that this moment is even more male-centric than it initially appears. Additionally, the reference to Saint Sebastian is an allusion of martyrdom. This Christian martyr was, in fact, bound to a stake and impaled with arrows. Saint Sebastian, though, survived this attack. If one perceives Julia to be the personification of pleasurable sexuality, then this reference suggests Winston’s internalized Party-conforming belief that sexuality itself is nearly impossible to eradicate fully, much like Saint Sebastian is nearly impossible to kill.

Winston continues thinking about his animosity towards Julia, but turns his rhetoric to his own feelings, rather than his projected actions. Winston explains that “he [hates] her because she [is] young and pretty and sexless, because he [wants] to go to bed with her and [will] never do so” (Orwell 15). At this point, Winston associates his forced chastity (his inability to sleep with Julia) with his desire “to go to bed” with her, which suggests that his sexual relationships are largely power-based; he only wants to sleep with Julia because he cannot do so. Additionally, Julia’s “sexlessness” is another source

of anguish. This quality is either a commentary on Julia's gendered characteristics, or her potential sexuality. In this context, I believe that Orwell describes Julia as "sexless" in order to evoke the latter, rather than the former; she is "sexless" in that she appears chaste, rather than androgynous. By not presenting as an actively sexual person – by displaying socially normative (a)sexuality – Julia arouses Winston. As O'Brien suggests, power and pleasure are competing qualities; consequently, Julia's overt chastity inspires in Winston feelings of hate and a desire for dominance, which culminates in Winston's sexual attraction to her. This moment is a poignant continuation of Winston's sex-based rage, in that his inability to consummate his and Julia's relationship provides the aforementioned "hysteria" that the Party aspires to evoke.

Orwell further reveals Winston's internalization of Party sexual ideals in his description of the regime's attempts to stifle this impulse. Orwell's narrator explains, "The Party [is] trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it [can] not be killed, then to distort it and dirty it. [Winston does] not know why this [is] so, but it [seems] natural that it should be so" (Orwell 66). While, in this moment, Winston offers a poignant assessment of the Party's treatment of sex, his comment that this inclination is "natural" is highly revelatory of his own beliefs. He realistically understands that the Party is attempting to modify sexuality in a fundamental way, but he does not perceive these changes to be problematic, as sex is "naturally" dirty and diseased – unregulated, it is pathogen-riddled. Rather, Winston has accepted Party propaganda that presents a "dirty" image of sex; furthermore, he asserts that this artificial construction is the ultimate standard of appropriate sexuality. As such, though Winston acknowledges the Party as a separate entity from himself that is

modifying his attitudes toward romantic encounters, he nevertheless exposes his susceptibility to this governmental influence.

This pervasive effect manifests itself even when Winston ponders the possibility of acting on his sexual desires. Describing his relationship with his (ex)-wife, Katharine, Winston admits that “what he [wants] more even than to be loved, [is] to break down that wall of virtue, even if it [is] only once in his whole life. The sexual act, successfully performed, [is] rebellion. Desire [is] thoughtcrime” (Orwell 68). These thoughts are particularly revelatory of Winston’s initial beliefs about sex. He again alludes to the interconnectedness of sexuality and Party politics in his comment that “successful” sex is an act of “rebellion,” and contemplations of its execution are “thoughtcrime.” Thus, Orwell indicates that, at this time, Winston largely perceives enjoyable sex as a tool of political subversion. Furthermore, when Winston discusses sex on a personal level, it is still an act of dominance. He aspires more to dismantle his wife’s “wall of virtue” than to reap the emotional rewards of such an interaction. This image of breaking down a wall is notable in its connotations of complete destruction, as “successfully [performing]” this task even once results in the removal of a barrier. Additionally, it implies Winston’s belief that he can infect Katharine with his pathogenicity, which he believes will proliferate rapidly and cause her to lapse⁸ into the nonnormative existence he is currently experiencing. Further, this allusion indicates Winston’s innate understanding of sex’s hyperbolic ramifications; he recognizes that accomplishing this physical act allows him to undo Katharine’s sense of her own morality. While Winston does not yet seek personal

⁸ Or “pre-Lapse,” if you will (see: Rabkin).

enjoyment from sex, he nonetheless perceives it as a source of power over his partners and, on a larger scale, resistance against Big Brother's norming influence.

When he and Julia finally consummate their relationship, Winston still treats sex as an assertion of his own dominance. Describing the encounter, Orwell explains, "she was utterly unresisting, he could do what he liked with her. But the truth was that he had no physical sensation except that of mere contact. All he felt was incredulity and pride. He was glad that this was happening, but he had no physical desire" (Orwell 120). This frustration of Winston's corporeal pleasure is remarkably resonant in its juxtaposition with his apparent emotional satisfaction. In this way, Winston's enjoyment, which he acknowledges through his admission of gladness, is merely a function of Julia's "utterly unresisting" nature; he finds this encounter fulfilling because he's able to "do what he [likes] with her," even though he himself does not possess any "physical desire." As such, Winston does not yet comprehend the physical merits of sex, as he is too deeply entrenched in the power dynamics that it appears to promise him. His feelings of "incredulity and pride" further reinforce this notion. While both are typical responses that accompany a "successful" sexual experience with a perhaps elusive partner, Winston articulates them despite his lack of physical pleasure. He is more proud of his power over Julia, his submissive conquest, than he is of his new relationship itself. Hence, Orwell emphasizes that one-upmanship determines Winston's initial conception of sex; it is a means of self-empowerment by way of the debasement of others. This male-centric belief, Orwell implies, is a facet of a dystopian world; again, Orwell alludes to his own feminist leanings.

These interpersonal power dynamics underscore Winston's additional preliminary belief regarding the politically rebellious nature of sexuality. His post-coital account of Julia's and his first tryst overtly elucidates these simultaneous ideologies. As Winston lies beside Julia, "he [reaches] out for [her] discarded overalls and [pulls] them partly over her" (Orwell 126). While Winston's actions appear selfless on first glance, in that he is (chauvinistically) protecting his partner's modesty, they are nevertheless indicative of his continued support of power-based sexual dynamics. By specifically "partly" covering Julia's naked body, he affirms his dominance over her. If he were truly interested in maintaining his partner's modesty for her own sake, he could have concealed her body in its entirety. Instead, he chooses to reveal it in a display of superiority – he selectively protects her in order to reaffirm his perceived power over her. Winston then explains his own perceptions of their encounter, stating, "Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act" (Orwell 126). This characterization, though it is a confident assertion of Winston's "political" rebellion via intercourse, implies Winston's convictions regarding the interpersonal competition inherent in sexual encounters, as well. This passage concludes with the declaration that this dalliance is simply resistance against the government, but Orwell has embedded within it syntactical constructions that suggest a more nuanced duality. The incongruous juxtaposition of "their embrace" with "battle" is notable in its ambiguity, as the reader cannot determine if Julia and Winston are fighting against the Party or against one another. Additionally, in Orwell's specific inclusion of the personal pronoun "their" to describe the action, he further implies a shared experience between Winston and Julia. Perhaps the "battle" is also indicative of Winston's struggle against the norming

mechanisms that Big Brother has imposed. Maybe Winston is grappling with the tension between his own “natural” affinity for mutually enjoyable sexual experiences and the “civilizing” influences of the authoritarian regimes. Given Winston’s previous depictions of dominance over Julia, his anti-governmental inclinations, and his desire to overcome his own socialization, all explanations seem equally plausible. Winston further refines this notion in the second clause of this sentence, in which he posits “the climax” as a “victory.” In this case, he uses parallel syntaxes, which emphasizes his exclusion of a personal pronoun (“the climax” vs. “their embrace”). Thus, this moment is a singular pursuit over which Julia has no claim; rather, it is Winston’s climactic victory over Julia, over the Party, and over his own socialization. Together, these images present Winston’s first sexual experiences as assertions of power against his partners and also the government, while he himself reaps neither physical nor emotional gratification from them; however, his sexual experiences continue developing in him the ideological nonnormativity that the Party (fearfully) anticipates.

As Winston continues physically exploring his sexuality, it becomes increasingly rewarding, both physically and emotionally; this multidimensional proliferation is indicative of sex’s pathogenicity. In a later meeting with Julia, Winston “[can] feel her breasts, ripe yet firm, through her overalls. Her body [seems] to be pouring some of its youth and vigor into his. ‘Yes, I like that,’ he [says]” (Orwell 136). While Winston has previously separated physicality from sexuality, he now perceives the two as inextricable and enjoyably so. He describes Julia’s body as “ripe,” which, though it evokes images of both fertility and consumption, is a relatively positive depiction, rather than a distasteful one. Additionally, she entices him even “through her overalls.” Winston no longer

associates his sexuality with his ability to remove and then (partly) cover Julia with her clothing; instead, it is a physical experience that he enjoys regardless of his power over her attire. Furthermore, he accepts a passive role in this connection. Winston allows Julia to “pour” aspects of her body into him, which is an explicit metaphorical inversion of the logistics of their heterosexual relationship. Additionally, it implicates the idea that she is somehow infecting him with her cultural pathogenicity; he accepts her illness-causing germs. Thus, in endorsing his own submission, Winston implies his newfound understanding of power dynamics as secondary to shared physical experiences of sexuality. In fact, it rejuvenates him and renders the Party’s stated healthful benefits ineffective; Winston contracts no fever to fight off the supposed infection, but his sexual nonnormativity nevertheless causes bodily improvements.

Winston’s now-corporeally beneficial sexual experiences accompany emotional transformations, as well, which further exemplify the unimpeded rate with which sex can overwhelm the Party’s conditioning. When Julia cancels a date, Winston becomes “violently angry. During the month that he [has] known her the nature of his desire for her [has] changed. At the beginning there had been little true sensuality in it... But after the second time it was different” (Orwell 139). His admission that the premise of their relationship now encompasses “true sensuality” is particularly revelatory of this trend, as it insinuates that Winston’s previous feelings toward Julia were, to some extent, inauthentic. Additionally, “sensuality” is simultaneously evocative of emotional intimacy and physical sensation. By correlating these two ideas, Orwell suggests that Winston now perceives sex as physically enjoyable, as well as psychologically rewarding. He continues describing this change, noting, “The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling

of her skin [seems] to have [gotten] inside him, or into the air all round him. She [has] become a physical necessity” (Orwell 139). As in the previous description of Winston accepting Julia’s physical influence, this moment constructs Winston as a passive recipient. In this iteration, though, Julia is not actively “pouring” herself into him; rather, her mere existence is enough to permeate Winston’s being. While earlier Winston had chosen to permit her active efforts, he now imbibes her “smell,” “taste,” and “feeling” despite Julia’s lack of active attempts to this effect. Winston’s understanding of sex has changed such that its effects pervade every aspect of his existence; he cannot even breathe “the air all round him” without absorbing it. Hence, it has pathogenically proliferated and has entirely overtaken Winston’s bodily experiences of reality. The deprivation of this “physical necessity” upsets Winston until Julia “[gives] the tips of his fingers a quick squeeze that [seems] to invite not desire, but affection...and a deep tenderness” (Orwell 139). This statement makes a poignant connection between the physical and emotional aspects of this dynamic. Winston clarifies the oft-repeated “desire” in order to separate it from “affection,” suggesting the developing intricacy of the latter as a distinctly psychological category characterized by romantic, rather than purely sexual, bodily entanglements. While Winston is interested in the physical benefits of sex, Orwell suggests that the protagonist is now attracted to the “tenderness,” as well. It is remarkable that this transformation has occurred in the course of a single month and only two sexual encounters, especially in light of the years of careful conditioning that the Party has instilled in Winston. As such, the rapidity of these changes is indicative of the all-encompassing and proliferative nature of sexuality of which the Party is wary.

The pinnacle of this transcendent process manifests itself in Winston's physical wellbeing. As he and Julia continue their affair, Winston experiences a series of medical improvements. He "[has] dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He [seems] to have lost the need for it. He [has] grown fatter, his varicose ulcer [has] subsided...his fits of coughing in the early morning [have] stopped" (Orwell 150). This passage offers no explanation for these changes, save for correlating them with Winston and Julia's relationship. Through continued expressions of his sexuality, Winston's gin addiction has waned significantly. Explaining why Winston is no longer intoxicating himself, Orwell carefully implies that this protagonist previously had a "need for it," which implies that alcohol was a necessary medication, of sorts.⁹ Now, though, deviant sexuality has replaced the medical effects of gin. Furthermore, sex has contributed to his physical growth, as well as the various aforementioned emotional developments. Orwell overtly communicates this information through his description of Winston as "fatter." Additionally, it somehow mitigates his varicose ulcer, which are notoriously difficult to treat and to prevent. It is of particular note that Orwell chooses to diagnose Winston with a varicose ulcer, rather than the more well known peptic ulcer, as the former has an innate physiological cause (malformed venous valves), while the latter is primarily a result of bacterial colonization from ingested food. Winston's nonnormative sexuality could have served as an antibiotic-analog; however, Orwell chooses to parse it as a remediator of anatomical defects. The cessation of his morning "coughing fits" is similarly interesting in Orwell's choice of language. In referring to these events as "fits," Orwell implies a certain psychological component, which echoes the interconnectedness of physicality and

⁹ I will discuss the role of alcohol in Chapter III.i.

emotionality as they pertain to sex. Meanwhile, Winston's affair with Julia has quelled his extreme emotional pitfalls, as well as his medical problems. As such, sex, which Winston had initially perceived as a separate entity from physicality, has developed into an act that is physically enjoyable, not just immediately, but also on a broader scale; it has literally healed him of his various ailments. In describing this effect, Orwell suggests that Winston's deviant sexual experiences are pathogenic in their ability to transcend authoritarian constructions of normative "civilized" society; sexuality is pathogenic to rulers' power dynamics and multidimensionally beneficial to the individual in a proliferative way.

ii) *"EVERYONE BELONGS TO EVERYONE ELSE": Sexual Indulgence and Brave New World*

The government of Huxley's *Brave New World* maintains control of society through careful conditioning and large-scale hedonism. Consequently, it is able to mitigate threats by excessively indulging various desires, rather than by suppressing them. Particularly, this regime (which Huxley names "the World State") ensures that sex pervades daily life in order to eliminate its anarchic appeal. By making sex so abundant, the World State minimizes its revolutionary potential; instead, recreational sex is a performance of good citizenship. Furthermore, Huxley's novel suggests that constant sexual gratification is a necessity of a stable society. In this way, politically rebellious expressions of sexuality in the World State are characterized by moderation and monogamy, rather than the execution of the acts themselves, as is seen in Orwell's *1984*. The World State fears that any moderate (and thus supposedly emotionally significant)

performances of sexuality threaten society's continued existence. Unlike Orwell's Oceania, Huxley's World State does not want a "fever" to destroy the pathogen of sexuality because this temperature-based infection control does not force the body to produce its own antibodies to this threat. Given these trends, I argue that in *Brave New World*, unregulated (read: restrained) sexual explorations are pathogenic in their ability to incite personal feelings of discontent that usurp the hyper-indulgent conditioning this society has instilled in its citizens. While this system might seem more resistant to pathogenic expressions of sexuality than is Orwell's, Huxley suggests that the "natural" human drive for monogamy is pervasive, and that individuals who are vaccine-resistant can never become part of normative society. I will delineate this dynamic by first presenting the World State's philosophy about sexuality, then by exploring how this attitude is manifested in various characters, and finally by tracing the fates of characters who deviate from this prescribed path.

The eminent minds of the World State concisely communicate the regime's ideology in their conversations with John the Savage, a Shakespeare-obsessed adolescent male who has just arrived in this society for the first time. Helmholtz Watson, an elite academic, poignantly tells the *Othello* aficionado, "you can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy...they're blissfully ignorant of passion...they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about" (Huxley 187). This statement is revelatory of this government's overarching philosophy regarding the necessity of copious sexual partners. Huxley suggests that "passion" and multitudinous bedmates are mutually exclusive categories. More specifically, his regime insists that citizens avoid monogamous sexual exploits, as this behavior results in

“lovers,” rather than emotionless physical pleasure, which is supposedly “happy”-making. By contrasting blissfulness and “passion,” Huxley further insinuates that, in this world, the latter is an undesirable quality, which ends in tragedy. As a result of this unsuitable result, this society endorses the extreme abundance of sexual relationships so that they no longer evoke strong feelings (be they positive or negative), which might result in “social instability” and “tragedies.” In this way, the World State communicates its perception of the pathogenic potential inherent in monogamous explorations of sexuality. More specifically, in the World State, sexual (hyper)indulgence vaccinates individuals against the onset of “passion,” a cultural disease that arises due to physical monogamy.

Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller, further discusses the importance of sexual exploration. He refines the sentiment that Helmholtz has already presented, telling John that “chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can’t have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices” (Huxley 202). While Helmholtz had stated that “happy” and stable societies are free of strong feelings, Mustapha more clearly delineates these causal dynamics. He explains that “chastity” begets “passion,” but he extrapolates further, conflating the latter with “neurasthenia” through the use of parallel syntaxes. Thus, Huxley’s government equates “passion” with a medical malady that is characterized by systemic fatigue and anxiety. Through this diagnosis, Huxley suggests that in this world, sexual abstinence is a draining force, while sexual hyperactivity allows for society’s continued existence. Additionally, it is interesting to note this medical terminology in light of Sigmund Freud’s analyses of

“neurasthenia” as a sexually induced ailment that is reminiscent of hysteria. More specifically, Freud (whom the World State idolizes nearly as much as they do Henry Ford) states that neurasthenia results from coitus interruptus (Freud 39). In other words, Freud develops the notion that sexual privation, a form of chastity, directly causes neurasthenia. Then, Huxley’s dystopian government hyperbolizes this sentiment to insist that only *copious* sexual indulgence can prevent the onset of neurasthenia, a biopsychological illness. Mustapha continues, reiterating Helmholtz’s emphasis on social stability. He succinctly communicates the World State’s overarching philosophy regarding the indulgence of sexuality with his comment that “a lasting civilization” needs “plenty of pleasant vices.” The alliteration in the second half of this sentence specifically accentuates the importance of “plenty” of such outlets, rather than few. Furthermore, it is particularly notable that Huxley deliberately uses the word “vices,” as this word is laden with connotations of immorality. By describing an act of good citizenship with a term of depravity, Huxley reconstructs the latter as a positive trait (similarly to how he redefined “passion” as a destructive force). In this way, Huxley suggests that totalitarian regimes perceive excess debauchery as an essential component of social normativity. In order to participate in “civilized” dystopian society, one must engage in several “vices” that “human nature” only desires in moderation. Huxley implies that unregulated sexuality, which is typically “naturally” monogamous, creates strong interpersonal emotions that dystopian governments insist pose an existential threat to society; in the World State, monogamous (read: “natural”) sex is a pathogen that brings about the lethal disease of passion, and the only treatment for this affliction is vaccination with copious indulgence.

Huxley expresses this sentiment not only in the aforementioned conversations with John, but also in the World State's propaganda. This regime employs "hypnopaedia" (sleep-teaching) to inundate sleeping individuals with government-endorsed mantras, and society members frequently recite these propagandized sound bytes.¹⁰ In these constant repetitions, hypnopaedia becomes a vaccine against the various "natural" pathogenic ideations that arise in citizens. Lenina Crowne, the novel's central female character, reminds her acquaintance, Bernard Marx, of a hypnopaedic lesson. When Bernard bemoans the lack of passion in his life, Lenina retorts, "When the individual feels, the community reels" (Huxley 80). This sentence, which Lenina applies as an immediate response to Bernard's (sexual) nonnormativity, is a concise summary of the idea that Mustapha Mond and Helmholtz Watson explicate for John. Instead, though, Lenina robotically recites its essential implications for her. This statement's connotations are incredibly significant, but the lyrical rhyme scheme nevertheless lends it a playful tone that normalizes and perhaps even trivializes this sentiment. Regardless, the government ensures that "individuals" understand that their feelings harm the "community" at large. Here, Huxley implies that a single person's deviant experiences of reality threaten the World State's supposed norming influence. Further, Huxley reminds his readers that totalitarian governments are more interested in the fitness of the overall social body than they are in the well being of the "individual." As a whole, this catchphrase ensures that citizens of the World State understand that the pursuit of passion, which I have already analyzed as a byproduct of monogamous sexuality, is destructive on both a personal

¹⁰ I will discuss hypnopaedia more thoroughly in Chapter III.ii.

level, and also a larger scale. This hypnopædic sentiment is simply an aurally enjoyable vaccine-based reiteration of this notion.

The World State correlates this perceived pathogenicity of monogamy with that of family dynamics. As a result, it physically separates hypersexual behavior (which is socially normative) from biological reproduction.¹¹ Mustapha Mond discusses the bygone days of “viviparous” reproduction (Huxley 22) and explains that “The world was full of fathers – was therefore full of misery; full of mothers – therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts – full of madness and suicide” (Huxley 34). This statement is highly revelatory of the connections this society draws between deviant sexuality and family formation. In stating that pre-World State humanity was full of “mothers” and “therefore... chastity,” Huxley implies the inextricability of these two ideas in their “natural” states; where there are parents, Huxley suggests, there is sexual monogamy. Through this explicit connection, Huxley’s World State likens motherhood to “chastity,” which is an understandable, albeit limited, extrapolation of these concepts, in that highly individualized sexual experiences characterize both of these dynamics. Further, the World State describes the existence of mothers as a “kind of perversion,” which further imbues these relationships with a sense of nonnormative sexuality. Hence, I will treat motherhood as an extension of monogamy, both of which are pathogenic in *Brave New World*. Meanwhile, it is poignant to note that “fathers” are related to an all-encompassing emotional “misery,” while “mothers” are simply (sexually) “perverted.” This subtlety ensures that no men in the World State even

¹¹ It accomplishes this task through the use of artificial machines that replicate the human gestational process, and then children mature in government-regulated factory-like facilities.

contemplate the possibility of happiness in any part of their lives if they become fathers; for women, motherhood only destroys their sexual normativity. Huxley continues to express the destructive nature of this moderation in his comment that it creates “misery,” “chastity,” and “madness and suicide.” These qualities are all personalized and individualized experiences, but are still representative of the proliferative destruction that accompanies monogamous sexual relationships. The final comment that moderate sexual activity culminates in “suicide” suggests that these undesirable emotions eventually escalate into lethal action, which is reminiscent of proliferative pathogenicity. Additionally, Western discourses about sexuality typically oppose “sadism” and masochism, rather than “sadism” and “chastity.” In replacing the concept of self-inflicted pain with a word that evokes notions of monogamy, Huxley’s World State constructs “chastity” (a supposed virtue in traditional Western society) as an act of deviant self-torture. Furthermore, Huxley’s inclusion of “sadism” in this list of unwanted traits reiterates the World State’s insistence that (physical) sexual experiences create personal feelings that continue to grow exponentially, until they adversely affect other community members. After all, motherhood begets “sadism,” which is one’s control and injury of others. As a result, this passage succinctly links the existence of family structures to “natural” sexuality (read: chastity), both of which result in personally detrimental emotions and actions, as well as interpersonal harm and power dynamics, which might threaten the government’s ability to inflict its own mandates upon individuals. Thus, Huxley effectively communicates his treatment of monogamy as a naturally-occurring proliferative pathogen.

Now that I have established the World State's philosophy regarding sexuality, I will discuss a few of the ways it encourages the execution of these actions. As previously mentioned, Huxley's society utilizes psychological conditioning in order to create model citizens. One such technique includes the sexualization of prepubescent children. The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning brings a tour group to observe a pair of seven-year-olds playing "a rudimentary sexual game," in which one "little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play" (Huxley 28). It is significant that Huxley's narrator parses this sexual exploration as "rudimentary," as this phrase suggests that there are multiple levels of achievement in this facet of the human experience. Additionally, the World State implores that individuals perceive sex as a "game," which is a departure from the aforementioned more serious private discussions that World State leaders conduct in private, regarding the perception of sex's extraordinary potential. This description of "ordinary erotic play" is similarly trivializing. Again, Huxley's regime describes sex in casual terms, but the juxtaposition of "ordinary" with "erotic" is especially notable, as the former is a statement of the mundane, while the latter implies a highly charged emotional component. It is not typical pleasure; rather it is an elevated and fetishized experience. As a result, Huxley creates a society in which sex is "ordinary" (hence, normative and capable of unconsciously producing cultural antibodies) when it is "erotic." In turn, the World State requires its citizens believe that, in order to conform to the status quo, they must constantly aspire to attain the next goal in this game of eroticism.

The World State ensures that society members perceive sex as commonplace by further embedding it in recreational pursuits. For example, Lenina, on a date with Henry

Foster, listens to “Calvin Stopes and his Sixteen Sexophonists,” observing as “the sexophones [wail] like melodious cats under the moon, [moan] in the alto and tenor registers as though the little death [is] upon them...their tremulous chorus [mounts] towards a climax” (Huxley 65). While Huxley never explicitly defines what a “sexophone” is, its wordplay on “saxophone” is fairly overt. In this way, he establishes the pervasiveness of sex in this society, as even passive sensory experiences (bodily normative individuals, after all, do not have to exert effort in order to hear music, and they cannot pause their auditory capacity) are evocative of sexuality. Additionally, Huxley uses highly sexual terms in order to describe this concert, during which these personified instruments attain an orgasm. The sexophones “wail” and “moan” as their “tremulous chorus [mounts]” them. These verbs are all typical of graphic depictions of sexual acts. The sexophones approach the “little death,” an allusion to the French idiom for orgasm (“la petite mort”), until the band finally reaches its “climax.” In its use of sexual terms to describe a nonsexual act, this depiction is reminiscent of Orwell’s account of Hate Week. The two differ, though, in that Lenina and Henry are passive observers of this displaced sexuality, while Winston’s peers engage in it. In this way, the sexophones function as pornography, rather than the medium through which citizens actually sate their own sexual desires; sex pervades life in the World State, even during pursuits that are not overt sexual (or “Hate Week”) outlets. As a result, the World State’s inundation of citizens with an abundance of sex in every aspect of their daily lives ensures that sexual indulgence is a multifaceted vaccine that, in normative individuals, perpetually prevents the germination of “passion” that the World State fears in monogamous encounters.

Huxley contrasts these embodiments of sexual excess with insinuations that monogamous relationships are uncivilized. When Lenina and Bernard visit the savage reservation (where they later meet John), she is appalled at the sight of two women breastfeeding their infants. Meanwhile, Bernard attempts to scandalize her as much as he can, “[going] out of his way to show himself strong and unorthodox” (Huxley 94). He exclaims, “What a wonderfully intimate relationship... And what an intensity of feeling it must generate! I often think one may have missed something in not having had a mother” (Huxley 95). In Bernard’s conviction to appear “strong and unorthodox,” he reveals precisely which ideals cannot exist in Lenina’s and his society. Specifically, this concept of motherhood is entirely incompatible with their values. Using extreme language, Bernard implies that intimacy and intense feelings are abhorrent in the World State; the former is “wonderful,” and he punctuates the latter with an exclamation, which reinforces this extremism. Even in his attempt to emulate supposedly savage ideals, though, Bernard reveals his own aversion to such unconventionality. He explains that “one” might be lacking the benefits of maternal influence, but he is unable to apply directly this statement to himself. Instead, he comments on an ambiguous member of “civilized” society. Thus, Huxley suggests that in this world, motherhood, which is a manifestation of monogamy, is so savage that implying its personal benefits, even facetiously, is impossible. As a result, monogamous relationships, which the World State treats as pathogenic in their evocations of psychological nonnormativity, cannot coexist within the framework of the World State’s supposedly civilizing influence.

Brave New World continues examining this dichotomy through the eyes of Linda, John’s mother. This woman spent most of her life in the World State until an ill-fated trip

to the savage reservation where she was accidentally abandoned and later gave birth to John. Exasperated with her condition, Linda shouts at her son, “Turned into a savage... Having young ones like an animal... If it hadn’t been for you, I might have gone to the Inspector, I might have got away. But not with a baby. That would have been too shameful” (Huxley 108). This claim implies that giving birth is uncivilized enough that it undoes Linda’s humanity. This one display of monogamy – of her sex-based connection to a single individual – is so pathogenically powerful that Linda’s years of conditioning are rendered obsolete, and she is “turned into a savage,” rather than a “civilized” member of society. Huxley bolsters Linda’s perceived loss of her civilization with the comment that she is now an “animal.” As such, she believes that her inherent nature has changed so that she is now irrevocably subhuman. By showing that Linda’s (unwilling) acquiescence to the “natural” tendency for bearing and raising offspring has prevented her from remaining a normative society member, Huxley indicates the irreconcilable tension between “human nature” and “civilized” society that totalitarian frameworks create. Further, Linda is cognizant that her status as a mother is immiscible with her return to society, as indicated in her comment that John is the only reason she cannot “[get] away” from the savage reservation. She states that revealing the product of her deviant sexual experience (as in: John is the evidence of her social misdoing) has entirely prevented her from regaining her “civilized” human quality. Thus, Huxley indicates that, to the World State, monogamous displays of sexuality (like giving birth), while “natural,” threaten the existence of normative “stable” society.

When Linda finally returns to the World State, she must address this incongruity. She confronts the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (John’s father), and says,

“‘Yes, a baby – and I was its mother.’ She [flings] the obscenity like a challenge into the outraged silence; then ‘...If you knew how awful...But he was a comfort to me, all the same’” (Huxley 129). This moment is further indicative of this society’s aversion to monogamy, in the use of the harsh language Linda uses to describe John. Rather than a person, he is an “it,” and Linda “flings” her “obscene” reference to motherhood at her audience; in the World State, Huxley suggests, one’s social normativity dictates one’s supposed humanity. John is *subhuman* because his conception was not “civilized”; instead, it was “natural.” Huxley implicitly argues that authoritarian regimes require one to sacrifice notions of “natural” sexuality in order to become “civilized” and human. Additionally, this episode shows the power of these individualized (read: monogamous) relationships. Though Linda has been conditioned to despise motherhood entirely, she is conflicted. This relationship has not only separated Linda from society, but also has begun to replace her conditioning with a different ideology. John has become “a comfort” to her, despite her description of him (and her relationship with him) as “awful.” She perceives her motherhood as obscene, and she refers to John as an impersonal “it,” but he is nevertheless a source of her fulfillment. Meanwhile, her comment is met with “outraged silence,” which is a notable word pairing. This image suggests that Linda’s new beliefs are so incompatible with this society that no one can engage in this conversation. They are “outraged,” but unable to respond vocally due to the sheer absurdity of this situation. As such, while Linda believes that she has retained some of her conditioning (which she communicates through her disdain for her status as a mother), this breakdown in communication indicates that this monogamous relationship has completely usurped her socialization. Thus, Huxley implies that the World State

treats monogamy as incompatible with “civilized” society, and also it is pathogenic in its ability to undo social conditioning.

Huxley continues exploring the destructive potential of monogamous relationships in his description of Linda’s ultimate death. John stands by her hospital bed and becomes enraged when he realizes that Linda is dreaming about sex with a man from the reservation. Huxley explains that John “[is] angry because she [likes] Popé, he [is] shaking her because Popé [is] there in the bed – as though there [is] something wrong, as though all civilized people [don’t] do the same? ‘Everyone belongs to every...’ Her voice suddenly [dies],” and John finds the head nurse, claiming, “Something’s happened. I’ve killed her” (Huxley 175). This moment is particularly poignant because John has not physically killed his mother. However, John believes that he has contributed to her death in his refusal to let Linda redeem herself as a “civilized” person – as a normative World State society member that pursues hypersexuality and recites hypnopaedia. In her last breaths, Linda attempts to engage in the erotic play to which her “civilized” society has conditioned her, but John interrupts this promiscuous reverie in order to remind Linda of her individualized (read: monogamous and socially nonnormative) obligation to him. He feels threatened by his mother’s thoughts about another man, and so he prevents her explorations of them. John interferes with Linda’s recitation of the oft repeated “everyone belongs to everyone else,” and it is because of this disruption that she ultimately dies. She is unable to complete her normative ritual of sexual indulgence, and must return to her binds of relative monogamy – to her maternal obligation. As a result, she cannot live in this society, and her act of uncivilized sexual moderation ultimately causes her death. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that John’s refusal to condone Linda’s attempted

self-norming results in her death; his cultural illness actually infects her to the extent that it kills her.

Throughout the novel, Huxley emphasizes the relationships of monogamy with World State civilization. His government ensures that citizens copulate copiously as a vaccine against the various cultural illnesses that pathogenic “natural” sexual experiences evoke – in the World State, sexual hyperactivity ensures that society remains stable. Meanwhile, Huxley presents images of emotional, physical, and societal destruction in tandem with explorations of monogamy (which includes individualized familial relationships). Therefore, Huxley suggests that dystopian governments perceive “natural” sexuality as pathogenic in its ability to compete with “civilizing” mandates. World State society mitigates this influence through the excessive indulgence of sexual impulses, and this treatment is largely successful, in that the only characters who embody monogamous tendencies are those who have not lived in this society for extended periods of time. Ultimately, when placed within this community, these individuals suffer due to their deviations from the promiscuous ideals. In this way, Huxley’s *Brave New World* implies that totalitarian regimes perceive “natural” unconditioned sex as a lethal pathogen. Individuals who do not accept vaccination mechanisms and consequently do not adhere to the social sexual norms that these governments mandate become emotionally, physically, and culturally ill due to the pathogenic proliferation of this “natural” Other. Monogamous (read: pathogen-riddled and “natural”) individuals cannot survive in Huxley’s World State.

I argue that Huxley and also Orwell portray sexuality in this way in order to question the compatibility of “human nature” with totalitarian societies. Considering the

traditional Western notion that our obedience of a social code separate humans from animals, it seems that both Orwell and Huxley are toying with the ways that different forms of government might oppress us by mandating our conformity to certain ideals. Dystopias force us to norm our “natural” sexuality because it is incompatible with “civilization.” Therefore, these authors imply, authoritarian governments will force us to sanitize or vaccinate our sexual “human nature” in order to become “civilized” people. Dystopian characters that escape these governments’ anti-pathogenic sexual conditioning ultimately meet catastrophic ends, but is following the prescribed social order really preferable? If so, both Orwell and Huxley suggest that exploring one’s sexual autonomy in a totalitarian society is among the most powerful tools s/he has to subvert this influence.

III) INDIVIDUATION

The second pathogen I have chosen to explore addresses the “natural” human tendency to craft an individual identity. This chapter addresses the process of individuation as it pertains to orienting oneself in a social hierarchy, as well as examining the impact of language and recreation. More specifically, in this chapter, I argue that dystopian regimes perceive individuals’ explorations of social stratification, language, and recreation as the fashioning of a subversive “inner self.” In regulating these pursuits, societal leaders limit constituents’ abilities to think about undesirable (as in, anti-establishment) ideals. Explaining the supposed danger of individuation in an authoritarian society, Rabkin states, “Individuality must be repressed because it invites a malleable social structure” (Rabkin 94). This statement succinctly communicates the supposed major fear of the dystopian regime: instability. “Individuality” creates a “malleable social structure” through the implication that a given citizen is self-interested and, therefore, wants to pursue (successfully) personal interests; those who are invested in their own fulfillment do not prioritize social unity, so they cannot serve the agendas of the authoritarian regime. Therefore, in dystopian novels, an “inner self” is pathogenically proliferative in its causation of nongovernmental personal agendas. Further, these citizens’ rulers treat people who explore their “natural” human “individuality” as sources of culturally nonnormative contagion. Consequently, when people explore their own senses of self through unregulated pursuits of individual interests (including the subversion of social hierarchies), they develop allegiances to themselves, rather than to the regime; the dystopian governments fear that revolutionary thought (perhaps even *free* thought) may emerge and proliferate pathogenically. According to mainstream Western

capitalist discourse (which Orwell, Huxley, and their contemporaries seem to endorse), a unique identity is a “naturally” occurring prized possession, and its very existence is incompatible with any non-capitalist forms of government (which, conveniently, these authors parse as totalitarian regimes). Taken in tandem with my previous analysis of the ways that dystopian regimes perceive individuation as pathogenic, this commentary implies that Huxley and Orwell explore themes of individuation as a pro-capitalist social notion. They imply that any non-capitalist government will construct individuals’ supposedly virtuous, inherent, individuated “human natures” by parsing these unique identities as social pathogens; “individuality,” which capitalist societies value, becomes an agent of disease under alternate forms of government.

Further, recalling Rabkin’s discussion of Edenic ideals, one can read this process of cultivating an “inner self” as an overtly post-Lapsarian quality. Through Eve’s adherence to her “natural” proclivity for independent thought (read: not obeying Adam), “God” banished humans from the Garden of Eden; individuation caused the Fall, and it is this tendency that dystopian governments aspire to eliminate. Consequently, individuals’ exploration of their own unique interests and goals (a claimed capitalist virtue) prevents the prolonged re-attainment of pre-Lapsarian bliss twofold: this pursuit is incongruous with the utopic ideal, and, additionally, it subverts the control that totalitarian regimes have over their constituents. While dystopian novels feature public communications alluding to the former, discourse about the latter is almost exclusively confidential. I argue that in privatizing these motive-based conversations, Huxley and Orwell further insinuate that all non-capitalist governments are malevolent, that achieve their agendas by

teaching citizens that their “natural” and “virtuous” human qualities are, in fact social pathogens in need of obliteration.

In order to eradicate this socially damaging threat, Orwell and Huxley show that dystopian governments attempt to permeate their subjects’ senses of individual identity. Several critics have expounded on this tactic. Regarding the role of social strata, critic Brett Devido comments, “A class-based society is one of the central components of a functioning hierarchy” (Devido 7). This statement concisely communicates the attitudes that both Huxley and Orwell demonstrate throughout their novels regarding the incompatibility of individuality with totalitarianism. The dystopian regimes assign citizens to rigid “class-based” systems. The governments consistently emphasize that they rely upon these social distinctions in order to maintain the “functioning” of “society” as a whole; subversions of social strata, both the Party and rulers of the World State argue, will cause the downfall of the entire society. They insist that even a single individual’s pursuit of different social class will proliferate pathogenically and result in total destruction.

Schell clearly links the dystopian governments’ attempts to preserve social order to germ theory. She says, “the greater the role allocated to disease in human evolution, the more inflexible social structure is seen to be” (Schell 814). In this comment, Schell suggests that “inflexible social structure” arises due to a germ theory-informed fear of disease. As society increasingly fears the “natural” pathogenicity of humankind, it creates more rigid social hierarchies in order to defend against the disease carrying, naturally-occurring Other. Further, Schell’s insinuation that this “inflexibility” increases due to further allowance of germ theory suggests that these societies do not fear strictly

biological pathogens; rather, there is a distinctly social response to a perceived past threat, as the understanding of “human evolution” is inherently reflective, rather than current. Schell implies that germ theory is a humanistic lens through which governments perceive the potential for cultural disease to somehow halt the progression of “human evolution.” As a result, “inflexible social structure” emerges as a dystopic defense mechanism against the pathogenic development of an “inner self.”

Quoting Hannah Arendt, Horan states, “Totalitarianism.... eliminates the distance between the rulers and the ruled...and achieves...the permanent domination of each single individual in each and every sphere of life” (Arendt qtd. in Horan 11). This statement explores the ways that dystopian leaders aspire to enter the minds of their constituents by “[eliminating] the distance” between them. Thus, individuals do not have control of their own identities. Instead, these governments attempt to infiltrate “each single individual[’s]” psyche, and then to project their own ideals into citizens’ personal value systems. Arendt suggests that the governments are only satisfied when they entirely exact this agenda upon “each” person in “every” aspect of existence. This effect cannot wane temporally, though; dystopian rulers must “[permanently] dominate” their subjects in every way. I argue that the primary emergences of this subversive “inner self” which Arendt discusses occur through subversions of social hierarchies, the uncontrolled use of language and explorations of leisure activities, including drug use and entertainment media.

Critic Neil Postman discusses the dystopic attention to free time. Particularly, he emphasizes the role of television and other visual media. He states, “Television has little tolerance for arguments, hypotheses, reasons, explanations, or any of the instruments of

abstract, expositional thought... And so what can be shown rather than what can be thought becomes the stuff of our public consciousness” (Postman 15).¹² In this excerpt, Postman suggests that screen time treats the pathogen of free “thought.” Citizens passively receive “the stuff of our public consciousness,” rather than developing their own autonomous systems of understanding, which threaten the government in their potentials to be “abstract.” Thus, dystopian regimes force upon individuals the acceptance of concrete ideological notions, which Postman defines as not “reason”-based, through the pervasiveness of television. By inundating the community with television, the government ensures that constituents internalize its desired (read: supposedly anti-“human nature”) political ideals through the guise of entertainment. Additionally, though Postman discusses television as the primary means by which dystopian rulers limit one’s development of an “inner self,” I will expand on this notion to include other recreational media in the novels I discuss. I believe that this “strain” of individuation and treatment manifests in the “natural human tendency” to occupy all free time.

Elsewhere in his article, Postman astutely links television with rhetorical potential, both of which are major regulatory targets in *1984* and *Brave New World*. Postman comments,

television is not merely an entertainment medium. It is a philosophy of discourse, every bit as capable of altering a culture as was the printing press. Among other things, the printed word created the modern idea of

¹² Though Postman’s analysis might seem outdated to a modern audience with access to talk shows and subjective news reporting, his mid-1980s article adeptly communicates the discursive role of television during the time that Huxley and Orwell wrote their novels.

prose, and invested exposition with unprecedented authority as a means of conducting public affairs. Television disdains exposition, which is serious, sequential, rational, and complex. (Postman 18)

This analysis correlates visual media with spoken “discourse” in a way that concisely draws upon the supposed fears of dystopian regimes. Postman calls his reader’s attention to the notion that dystopian regimes use television to limit citizens’ abilities to engage in open “discourse.” He argues that television is an antibody against our “natural” supposedly-pathogenic affinities for “discourse,” “exposition,” and “prose,” all of which result in critical thinking through the cultivation of “sequential, rational, and complex” thought processes. The first of these descriptors indicates the dystopian regime’s fear of its citizens thinking in an ordered way. The second – this idea of “rationality” – is reminiscent of traditional Western discourse that elevates humans above animals via our supposed ability to reason. Television, a tool of dystopian control, eradicates an essential part of our humanity (by mainstream Western standards). Additionally, Postman implies that (dystopian) television neutralizes our “natural” proclivity for “complex” thought that incorporates multiple discursive threads. Together, these three qualities of “free thought” (“sequential, rational, and complex”) render it pathogenic in the eyes the dystopian government; however, to a traditional Western audience, they are among the characteristics fundamental to human exceptionalism. Finally, Postman comments that dystopian governments use television to suppress “exposition,” the process by which one literally *exposes* alternative realities than those perpetuated by oppressive governments.

I agree with Postman’s perceptions regarding language’s (i.e. “prose”) generative potential in dystopian texts, as well as these governments’ desires to eradicate this threat,

and the ability of television to accomplish this task; however, I resist this critic's insinuation that television is the primary means by which the ruling bodies limit contrarian thought. Dystopic attention to television is indicative of the overarching tendency of these regimes to ensure that governmentally sanctioned leisure activities are the only ones with which citizens engage.

Furthermore, while social stratification and television (and its various incarnations) do, in fact, serve a major role in infiltrating citizens' senses of individuality, dystopian regimes simultaneously recreate and repurpose language to achieve the same goals. *1984* and *Brave New World* both include the creation of specific language systems that serve to impair individuation and, consequently, free thought. In exploring this effect, Gainer quotes critic George Lakoff, who insists, "words draw you into their worldview. That is what framing is about. Framing is about getting language that fits your worldview. It is not just language. The ideas are primary — and the language carries those ideas, evokes those ideas" (Lakoff qtd. in Gainer 157). In his argument that "language" conveys and constructs ideology, Lakoff emphasizes both the pathogenicity and the curative potential of one's lexicon. He explains that specific word choices can limit individual understanding of "ideas" and the formulation of a "worldview." Hence, in order for a dystopian government to enforce upon citizens its particular system of ideals, it must employ verbiage that communicates only these values. Additionally, constituents cannot develop their own language that disseminates (or "carries") nonconforming "ideas." This tension is indicative of the dually proliferative power of rhetoric in dystopian worlds. It is simultaneously a counter-governmental pathogen and one of the cures for the cultural illness it creates. Unlike sexuality, neither its

overindulgence nor its suppression can eliminate the ideological epidemic that language poses; instead, dystopian regimes must rely upon the careful regulation of words in order to prevent the supposedly revolutionary individuation of citizens.

Drug use is the fourth general factor contributing to individual identity and free thought that I have chosen to explore. Though there is not an abundance of secondary source information regarding this trend, it is extremely apparent in both *1984* and *Brave New World* that dystopian governments perceive in their citizens a proclivity for indulgence in alternate experiences of reality that the rulers must regulate through its satiation. I argue that, by permeating even these escapist activities, the dystopian regimes further reveal their pathogenic perceptions of the “inner self.”

As is typical of the works I explore in this project, Huxley and Orwell explore different strategies in order to attain the same end. While both authors present (totalitarian) regimes that regulate social hierarchy, leisure activities and language, Huxley’s World State emphasizes excess, while Orwell’s Big Brother limits free thought through demands for temperance. Overall, though, both authors effectively eliminate the separation between the rulers and the ruled, as Arendt proposes. As a result, the governments all but ensure that the emergence of an “inner self” is impossible; individualized experiences of social roles, language, and free time are unattainable for individuals who remain part of normative society.

i) *“WE SHALL SQUEEZE YOU EMPTY, AND THEN WE SHALL FILL YOU WITH OURSELVES”*: Antiseptic Eradications of the Self in 1984

In 1984, Orwell’s government prevents its citizens from developing free thought by eliminating any opportunity that might lead to this effect; like his attitude towards sex, Big Brother insists that temperance should permeate explorations of individuality. This moderation primarily manifests itself in the language that the rigidly stratified citizens of Oceania are permitted to use (“Newspeak”), but the recreational activities that they may pursue and the alcohol to which they have access (“Victory Gin”) significantly contribute to this dynamic, as well. Additionally, the television-alikes (“telescreens”) in Orwell’s society function overtly as tools of oppression, rather than mediums of entertainment. Meanwhile, Big Brother’s regime upholds a strict social hierarchy that normative, “healthy” citizens do not even dream of subverting. Together, these factors entirely limit the scope of thought with which citizens can engage; they prevent people from pursuing self-interested experiences of which the regime does not approve. Thus, Big Brother uses restrictive mind control as a Listerian antiseptic to ensure that no members of the population develop supposedly pathogenic “inner selves.”

Orwell consistently expresses this goal of eliminating the potential to develop individual identities. While this attitude is palpable throughout the novel (in the regulation pervading pursuits of language, recreation, and drug use), I find it necessary first to orient my reader regarding the ways that Orwell’s government explicitly communicates this ideology, as well as its relationships to germ theory, before I analyze its specific manifestations. A particularly elucidative moment occurs when Winston reads the “Book,” which is the guiding text of the Brotherhood (the questionably existent

revolutionary group that Winston and Julia join). The Book concisely states, “The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought” (Orwell 193). This one sentence effectively clarifies the logic underscoring the Party’s regulation of its citizens’ recreation and lexicon. The second expressed “aim” is the one that most directly impacts the lives of Oceania’s constituents. The comment that the Party aspires “to extinguish” free thought is notable in its implication that quality is a particularly resilient threat. While it is not a specifically living entity, it is nevertheless a “burning or shining” force that is difficult to eradicate (“Extinguish, v.”). Further, Orwell suggests that the Party wishes not just to eliminate “independent thought,” but in fact, to render the mere “possibility” of it nonexistent. In this way, the Party reveals its beliefs regarding the pathogenicity of “independent thought.” If this quality were not a progressive condition, then it would be sufficient for the government simply to eliminate the symptom itself (the “thought”). Instead, though, the Party fears the proliferative potential of this destructive pathogen. It must find a means to halt the progression of this germ, and to ensure that this treatment is sufficiently powerful to overpower any particularly resistant forms of the cultural pathogen, so that this process eliminates the bug “once and for all.” Meanwhile, the Party’s first expressed “aim” further alludes to germ theory. This comment implies that the regime (and Orwell) understand that “the earth” does not include just citizens of Oceania. Rather, Big Brother’s government aspires “to conquer” the nonhuman (read: “uncivilized”) parts of the world, in addition to the “independent thought” of its own constituents.

Orwell further elaborates on the correlation between germ theory and independent thought during Winston's confrontation with O'Brien in the Ministry of Love. The protagonist, on whom the Party's treatments have proven ineffective, harbors an "inner self" that the government fears. O'Brien tells Winston, "You are mentally deranged... Fortunately it is curable. You have never cured yourself of it, because you did not choose to.... Even now, I am well aware, you are clinging to your disease under the impression that it is a virtue" (Orwell 245-246). The language that O'Brien uses in this moment is highly evocative of germ theory. The Party representative informs Winston that his nonnormativity by way of an interior nongovernmental identity has caused a "disease" that is "curable." These phrases provide direct connections to the scientific principle that I use to guide this research project. It is very clear that, according to O'Brien, literal microbes do not cause Winston's illness; instead, it is a "disease" due to "mental" pathogens. Thus, the Party, through the voice of O'Brien, explicitly correlates an "inner self" with germ theory. Further, O'Brien comments that Winston believes his "disease" of individuation "is a virtue," which is reminiscent of the frequent insistence of "mentally ill" or socially deviant individuals (in mainstream Western discourse) that their nonnormativity is the primary marker of their own identities. O'Brien's statement is simultaneously an address to Orwell's readers, who have likely related to and supported throughout the novel Winston's desire to maintain an identity independent of the regime. In commenting that this aspiration is "mentally deranged" and definitively not "virtuous," Orwell implies that his readers (and Winston) idealize individuality, but this quality is inherently incompatible with "civilized" society. In Oceania, an "inner self" is a socially

nonnormative, naturally arising pathogen that develops into a debilitating psychosocial “disease.”

This conversation progresses, and O’Brien tells Winston how the Party intends to treat the protagonist’s diagnosed illness. He explains,

Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves. (Orwell 256)

This policy is indicative of ways the Party perceives “ordinary” manifestations of one’s inwardly focused “human” existence as pathogenic. While it is poignant to note that O’Brien’s (and the Party’s) understanding of a threatening “inner self” entails typically gratification-laden concepts such as “love,” “friendship,” “joy,” and “laughter,” I draw my reader’s attention to the less valiative (and, perhaps, more self-interested) characteristics of “curiosity,” “courage,” and “integrity.” These latter qualities are not typically associated with pleasure; therefore, Orwell insinuates that the Party perceives these arguably neutral human tendencies to be as destructive as those that evoke traditional sentiments of joy. “Curiosity” implies one’s interest in his/her surroundings, which, if fulfilled, allows this person to develop a coherent sense of individual identity. As Gainer explains, “We know what we are because we know that we are not them” (Gainer 23). Thus, Winston’s “curiosity” allows him to “know what [he is]” through his comparison of himself to the world around him. Hence, O’Brien insists that “curiosity” is a facet of “natural” pathogenic human existence that contributes to the disease of an anti-

societal “inner self.” While “courage” is more overtly self-serving than “curiosity,” it is nevertheless interesting that the Party perceives it as a threat. Acts of “courage” are typically nerve-racking, in that one must push beyond his/her typical self-imposed social boundaries. Hence, “courage” is inherently *not* enjoyable, but it is still self-empowering; it further individuates “uncivilized” people. In this context, “integrity” functions similarly to “courage.” Together, these acts of “curiosity, courage, [and] integrity” serve as behaviors that, while unenjoyable, are still pathogenic in Oceania. Due to the potential of these qualities to counteract the government’s stated civilizing influence, the Party decides to sanitize Winston’s (and other’s) his “ordinary” human nature. O’Brien explains that the Party will accomplish this task through the total elimination of these pathogens, so that Winston will “never again... be capable” of expressing them; the Party plans to kill Winston’s “ordinary human” existence. In this passage, Orwell overtly alludes to this this idea of death-oriented “civilizing” antiseptic measures. O’Brien explicitly states that the elimination of Winston’s aforementioned pathogens will cause “Everything [to be] dead inside” the protagonist. Further Winston “will be hollow.” Thus, Orwell suggests that in order to become a normative society member, Winston must suffer the death of his “ordinary human” nature. In Orwell’s dystopia, the government must entirely expunge the pathogens contributing to an inner self (rather than vaccinating against them) in order to “civilize” its citizens. Once the Party has accomplished this task of eradicating the “natural” pathogens that contribute to individuals’ senses of self, it will “fill [them] with [itself].” This statement suggests that the Party’s ideology cannot coexist with alternate identities; rather, it can only “civilize” those whose “natural” proclivities for unique identity formation have already been

eliminated. Once the Party has created this *tabula rasa*, it can entirely “fill” constituents with its ideal identity. This strategy bears extreme ideological resemblance to the current practice of treating cancer patients with chemotherapy and radiation in order to cure them from the mortal threats that are growing in their bodies. Further, this total replacement of self with government is hyperbolically reminiscent of Arendt’s theory regarding the minimization of distinction between the rulers and the ruled. In Oceania, this treatment only works if residents are pathogen (i.e. individuality) free, though. In the eyes of the Party, the people cannot become civilized until they have lost their inclinations to individuate. I argue that Orwell’s government achieves this end through the regulation of social hierarchy, language, and free time.

I begin my discussion of the Orwellian pathogenic emergence of an “inner self” with the ways that the Party regulates social strata. As I previously mentioned, Oceania contains three social groups: the Inner Party, the Outer Party, and the proles. Party propaganda constantly parses the proles (who are largely illiterate) as animalistic; meanwhile, Party members are “civilized” and human. By maintaining this rigid hierarchical order, the Party aspires to eliminate individualized pursuits of self-knowledge; the Party insists that a regimented society results in a collective groupthink mentality. The Book concisely states, “For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves” (Orwell 190). This comment overtly links social equality (particularly, as it pertains to “leisure”) with the perceived pathogen of free thought. I find it particularly interesting to note that Oceania’s social hierarchy is a response to equal pursuits of “leisure.” This connection suggests that an

inflexible (read: inequality-based) class structure is a preventative measure against the universal “enjoyment” of leisure; without strict social boundaries, oppressed people “[will] learn to think for themselves.” Though the Book states that the proles are most at risk for pathogenic development of free thought, the rest of Orwell’s novel suggests that the Party truly fears that Party members might become socially “literate” and capable of unique identity formation. For the most part, Orwell’s government does not interfere in the daily lives of the proles. They, supposedly uncivilized animals, are left to their own devices (and their own pursuits of leisure); meanwhile, Party members are subject to significant legislation regarding acceptable language and entertainment.

This tension between the “civilized” Party members and the “animalistic” proles manifests several times throughout the novel. A particularly representative exchange occurs when Julia meets Winston at the secluded apartment where they indulge much of their illicit affair. She arrives at the apartment carrying forbidden goods like coffee and sugar, and reveals to Winston, “It’s all Inner Party stuff. There’s nothing those swine don’t have, nothing” (Orwell 141). This comment is an especially poignant inversion of typical social roles. To the revolutionary, nonnormative Julia, the “Inner Party” is comprised of literal animals. They are “swine” – greedy and unclean beasts. Further, Western dialogue typically addresses animals as inherently *subhuman*. Therefore, Julia’s remark that Inner Party members – the legislators of “civilized” behavior – are all “swine” is particularly loaded. Again, Orwell implies that adherents of socially normativity have lost part of their humanity; “human nature” and civilization are mutually exclusive in Oceania.

This episode continues when Julia applies makeup. Winston sees her cosmetic-laden face for the first time, and remarks,

She must have slipped into some shop in the proletarian quarters and bought herself a complete set of makeup materials... The improvement in her appearance was startling. With just a few dabs of color in the right places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine. (Orwell 142)

This reflection is further indicative of the relationship between the proles and a “natural” human affinity for individuation that the Party perceives as a pathogenic threat. Though Julia is physically covering her face using makeup, she is indulging her own beauty; the act of applying makeup is inherently self-interested – behavior that the Party insists contributes to individuation. To Winston, though, Julia’s donning of “proletarian” goods vastly “improves her appearance.” If this enhancement were only superficial (if Julia were *only* “very much prettier”), Orwell would not have included it. But instead, the author carefully notes that Julia’s newly-“improved” appearance is primarily due to the makeup’s ability to make the woman “become far more feminine.” Using a commodity that only the “uncivilized” proles possess has caused Julia to actually “*become*” more feminine – a more individuated human. She now has her own (binarily established gender) identity instead of being an indistinguishable Party member; this departure from normative civilization renders her more “human” and more unique. While throughout the novel, Orwell generally implicates his own feminist leanings, this moment gently implies his fear that dystopian regimes will prevent women from engaging with their own “natural” femininity because they cannot wear makeup; he subtly alludes to his own

beliefs that women *need* makeup in order to be happy. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that this dalliance in prole enrichment activities means that “leisure... [is being] enjoyed by [Julia and proles] alike” (recall Orwell 190). Given that Julia is subverting the acceptable social hierarchy in this specific way, it follows that she might “learn to think for [herself],” which the Party fears is a major pathogenic threat. Hence, Julia’s makeup application is an act of political and social rebellion. She challenges the rigid social boundaries and then enjoys herself as a more individuated “natural” human; therefore, she, in the eyes of the Party, is a pathogenic threat to civilized society.

Orwell reinforces this notion that Julia’s makeup application is a politically subversive act that implies that the Party is subhuman. She tells Winston, “In this room I’m going to be a woman, not a Party comrade” (Orwell 142). This statement implies that social normativity (Party membership) precludes “natural” humanity (gender binarism). All Party members are supposed to use the term “Party comrade” in order to refer to one another. Calling peers “comrades” suggests a militaristic camaraderie; individuals are fellow citizens, rather than friends. When Julia states that her socially normative identity and her status as a “woman” are necessarily contradictory, and that wearing prole-provided makeup allows her to become a “woman,” Orwell cements his opinions regarding inherent incompatibility of “natural” humanity and civilization. In order to become “human,” Julia rejects her stratified society and pursues her own interests. This self-interest and subversion of the social hierarchy culminate, Orwell suggests, in her attainment of free thought – Julia is culturally ill. The author demonstrates this pathogenic proliferation in punctuating this scene with Julia and Winston’s capture by the Thought Police. Maintaining the confines of the social hierarchy, Orwell implies, is

necessary to prevent the onset of pathogenic free thought and the development of an “inner self.”

Though an inflexible social order is an important antiseptic component of Orwell’s dystopia, language is, too. As I have previously discussed, rhetoric is hugely evocative of ideology. Given this relationship, I find it poignant to continue my discussion of individuation in *1984* with the language that the citizens of Oceania use. Specifically, I will explore the role of “Newspeak” (the super-state’s official language) as a treatment for the illness of an “inner self” that arises due to the pathogen of free speech. Though Orwell frequently discusses the specific grammatical tenets underlying this language, I will focus my analysis on Newspeak’s contagion-based ideological goals. Additionally, I will provide my reader with a few examples of this Party-sanctioned lexicon.

“Language and the freedom to express words cognitively is a threat to The Party,” critic Brett Devido frankly states (Devido 79). This sentence concisely summarizes the ways that Orwell’s government perceives free speech. I encourage my reader to note Devido’s specific emphasis on the risk of communicating “cognitively,” a phrase that implies the Party fears the potential of free thought that accompanies speech. To the Party, language is a living proliferative pathogen that it must kill (so that “everything will be dead inside”), lest it create “cognitive” processes that override the government’s control. As a result, Orwell’s government creates a language called “Newspeak” that narrows the rhetoric available to individuals; Newspeak separates speech from free thought.

Devido uses Orwell's own words to explain further the concepts underlying Newspeak. *1984*'s author states, "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible" (qtd. in Devido 79). Here, Orwell clearly establishes two overarching goals of his fictional language. The second of these aspirations is the one to which I alluded in my previous analysis – that of dystopian regimes limiting the "modes of thought" with which individuals can engage. This phrase directly correlates, in the author's own words, the connections that he perceives between speech and thought. Orwell suggests that dystopian regimes believe that, if individuals can only speak government-approved phrases, then they can only think government-approved thoughts. Orwell, though, does not necessarily support this notion; after all, he portrays multiple governmentally resistant free thinkers. Regardless, Orwell's several depictions of socially normative Newspeak adherents suggest that Newspeak (ideally) serves as an antiseptic-analog against both free thought and free speech.

Meanwhile, the first half of Orwell's remark suggests that Newspeak indoctrinates Oceania's citizens into the approved "world view." By stating that Newspeak can only communicate "proper" mental and social behaviors, Orwell implies that language perpetuates the Party's conception of civilized society; in order to be "proper" and cultured, one must use Newspeak. Under Big Brother's rule, Orwell shows, the only alternative to normative civilization, is death. The Party *has* created Newspeak in order "to provide a medium of expression" for socially normative individuals. With this phrase, Orwell implies that, before this language, there was no other way for citizens of Oceania to convey their embodiment of "civilized" ideals; language actually

“civilizes” their “naturally” pathogenic human existences. Further, Orwell suggests that in *1984*, appropriate language use enforces social norms through vocal iterations of acceptable “mental habits” – sufficiently repeating “proper” physical speech results in governmentally condoned ideological effects, as well. This statement posits normative psychological being as a product of Newspeak. Additionally, it conflates mental fitness with social fitness – a trend that pervades literature of this time. Only individuals with “proper” mental functioning communicate in Newspeak; only *they* can perpetuate the rhetoric and ideology of which the government approves. Furthermore, people who are ill – those who are not pathogen-free – must be “[squeezed] empty” before they can speak the same language as their fellow citizens. Overall, though, Orwell suggests that Newspeak sanitizes against the pathogen of free speech, which, in turn prevents free thought and, ultimately, an “inner self” from developing. As a result, the author implies that under totalitarian governments, people must subject their language-based “natural” individuated selves to aggressive antiseptic measures. In Oceania, socially “healthy” individuals are pathogen-free; therefore, they think normatively (as in, pro-governmentally) because they do not have rhetorical freedom.

In *1984*, Orwell uses the voices of his characters to convey this attitude. Syme, one of Winston’s coworkers in the Ministry of Truth, discusses Newspeak with the protagonist. He says,

Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly *one* word, with its

meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. (Orwell 52)

This statement reiterates the notions that Orwell himself candidly discusses in his reflections about the novel. Through Syme, Orwell reminds his reader that the Party uses Newspeak not just to “narrow the range of thought,” but in fact to direct it precisely. The Party believes that this carefully constructed language replaces pathogenic words (that result in “thoughtcrime” and even new lingual expressions) with germ-free ones. Orwell’s government creates this supposedly safe lexicon by subjecting all vocabulary items to Listerian antiseptic treatment, thus eliminating all dangerous “subsidiary meanings.” This phrase is indicative of the perceived pathogenicity of language in that the Party insists each word elicits several other meanings. The concept that the English language proliferates as it evokes ideological changes is a well established linguistic tenet (Kibbee 47–48) . Further, this passage in *1984* reinforces this notion in the suggestion that the Party only approves words once it has “rubbed out” their virulence. This word pairing is reminiscent of physical cleaning and sanitization; as a result, Orwell suggests that his totalitarian government perceives unregulated rhetoric as physically contaminated.

In *1984*, Orwell’s government suggests that only it can disinfect language so that citizens do not suffer the ideological ramifications of lingual pathogenicity; the Party presents itself as the agent of infection control. Without Big Brother’s influence over rhetoric, residents of Oceania will (supposedly) remain germ-laden through their engagement with inappropriately “broad” thought; as Kibbee implies in his article about linguistic theory, individuals’ language use determines the scope of their mental

ideations. In this passage, Syme also introduces the reader to “thoughtcrime.” He claims that Newspeak will eliminate this behavior of nonnormative ideation; thus, this specific language functions as a long-acting antiseptic. When it is used properly, Newspeak ensures that words do not mutate into their pathogenic, socially nonnormative forms, and thus do not imply more than one “concept” each. Newspeak simultaneously sanitizes the “natural” pathogenicity of free speech, and continues working to ensure that this tendency towards “broad” thought does not reoccur.

I now turn my attention to specific key phrases of Newspeak. In Syme’s discussion of the ideology guiding this state-sanctioned language system, he mentions “thoughtcrime.” Elsewhere in the novel, Orwell (through Winston’s voice) describes it as “The essential crime that [contains] all others in itself. *Thoughtcrime*, they [call] it. Thoughtcrime [is] not a thing that [can] be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they [are] bound to get you” (Orwell 19). Via this definition, the Party instills in its citizens important aspects of its germ theory-centric socially norming ideology. The simple word “thoughtcrime” simultaneously alludes to the perceived pathogenicity of nonnormative thought processes and to the inescapable “civilizing” government that protects individuals from their own “natural” states. In Orwell’s dystopia, the act of “thoughtcrime,” in which one’s own mind contemplates ideas that resist the government’s ideals, is worthy of prosecution. In fact, it “[contains] all [other crimes] in itself.” This clause suggests that all criminal (read: nonnormative) behaviors result from pathogenic “thought.” More specifically, I argue that unregulated language, recreation, and other activities are functions of free thought –

i.e. “thoughtcrime.” These (arguably) smaller acts of nonnormativity are symptomatic of the greater pathogen that the Party perceives as one of its major threats.

This “thoughtcrime” need not be conscious rebellion, though. In fact, at the end of the novel, Winston meets his neighbor, Mr. Parsons, in the Ministry of Love. The man tells Winston that his children reported him for “thoughtcrime” due treasonous phrases he uttered in his sleep. Given this information, Winston’s use of “concealed” in his definition of “thoughtcrime” might indicate multiple types of deception. One could interpret this statement as Winston suggesting that each person might try to hide “thoughtcrime” from the government for as long as possible. I believe that this potential analysis, while valid, does not account for the simultaneous perception of oneself as inherently riddled in existentially-threatening germs – it does not account for the dystopian notion that one is scared of his/her own human nature. It simply indicates that people attempt to hide their “natural” states from the norming government. Rather, I believe that the Party’s definition of “thoughtcrime” implies that each individual has nonnormative ideations that are somehow “concealed” from him/herself; people cannot see the Others that pervade their lives. These pathogenic thoughts proliferate, though, and one cannot suppress them “forever,” as germs typically multiply until they cause disease. Orwell’s subsequent sentence reiterates this concept, and mirrors these ambiguous readings. I believe that the object of “dodge” and the pronoun-antecedent of “they” are intentionally vague, as Orwell further alludes to multiple commentaries about this relationship. If one were to unsuccessfully “dodge” the Thought Police (the official enforcers of legal thought processes), then this sentence would suggest that the Party’s power is unbounded; regardless of one’s development of inner thoughts and, ultimately,

an “inner self,” Orwell’s government will eliminate the distance between itself and the ruled (as Arendt discusses). The Party will catch (“get”) all thought-criminals, and it will correct this unsocial behavior. Alternatively, one might attempt to “dodge” one’s own nonconformist thoughts. This reading suggests that free thought (which “[contains] all other [crimes] in itself”) grows and develops, despite the individual’s attempts to escape it. Eventually, these pathogenic sentiments overcome the person, and infect (“get”) him/her.

Applying both of my readings of this passage in tandem, Orwell implies that Party suggests that free thought poses an existential threat to the individual. This (totalitarian) government simultaneously reinforces the notion that only its own forces can eradicate this toxic germ. So, according to Orwell, the Party insists that the residents of Oceania must rely upon the regime, in order for them to remain safe from the lethal pathogen of their own psyches.

Many “thoughtcrime”-avoidant Newspeak phrases revolve around the concept of “doublethink.” Winston defines this word as

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which [cancel] out, knowing them both to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy [is] impossible and that the Party [is] the guardian of democracy... consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you [have] just performed. (Orwell 35)

To guide my analysis, I draw my reader's attention to the ways that Orwell's constructed language "[induces] unconsciousness" in those that speak it. Newspeak is a specific treatment for the cultural pathogen of free thought. It accomplishes this task through "carefully constructed" verbal control, though; infection control can only occur when the antiseptic is specifically formulated to treat specific germs. Orwell reiterates this concept of pathogen eradication in the multiple descriptions of ideological pairings "which [cancel] out." This sentiment is reminiscent of antigen-antibody binding, in which one intermolecular puzzle piece (a manmade antibody) interlocks with a pathogenic one (a naturally-occurring antigen) in order to neutralize the biological threat (Charles A Janeway et al.). The Party's antigen-specific antibodies are "lies" that complement "complete truthfulness"; the simultaneous "repudiation" and embracing of moral values; and the "[belief in the impossibility of democracy]" concurrent with trust in the Party as "the guardian of democracy." Overall, these groupings are pairs of contradictory "opinions" and "logic." They are exact lexical antonyms of one another, and the artificially (read: socially) constructed antibodies effectively negate the "natural" pathogenic free thought that non-Newspeak language creates. Though Winston calls this process one of "hypnosis," it is moreover an act of unconscious, norm-enforcing medical treatment. By using "doublethink," people will not realize that they have corrected for their supposed pathogenicity. Meanwhile, the Party suggests that without "doublethink," "thoughtcrime" will occur, and people will lapse into their apparently inherent animalistic, uncivilized states, and an Edenic existence will never become possible. Newspeak evokes the Party's civilized ideals through the careful exclusion of "natural" pathogenic cognitive tendencies.

While the Party aspires to instill in its citizens a profound fear of nonnormative rhetoric, this treatment is not always effective in suppressing naturally occurring propensities for free thought. Winston perpetually exemplifies the archetypal social nonconformist, and his interactions with Newspeak are correspondingly indicative of this relationship. When Winston's criminal thoughts begin to manifest, he turns to his diary as an outlet to mitigate the outbreak of this cultural illness. At one point, Orwell tells his reader that Winston "[has] written it down at last, but it made no difference. The therapy [has] not worked. The urge to shout filthy words at the top of his voice [is] as strong as ever" (Orwell 69). This moment further implies the germ theory-informed attitude that pervades the novel. Winston attempts to treat his pathogenic socially nonnormative ideology by providing a lingual "therapy" for this energy. He crafts a non-Newspeak physical transcript in the hopes that it will assuage his disease – he tries to drain his metaphorical abscess. However, this psychologically informed "therapy" can "[make] no difference." In Orwell's dystopia, only germ theory-based antiseptic measures can overpower the mind's "natural" pathogenicity. In fact, by appeasing his illness, Winston unintentionally contributes to the spread of this contagion. Writing in his diary simply causes Winston to feel "as [strongly] as ever" this nonnormative "urge to shout filthy words." Language evokes ideology, which then evokes language. Devotees of Newspeak think socially normative thoughts and continue communicating in Newspeak; individuals who write freely in their diaries think socially ill thoughts, and eventually want "to shout filthy words at the top of [their voices]." Though Devido insists that Winston's "pen functions as a tool of liberation, and the written word a safe haven for his inner thoughts. The process of writing gives Winston a small sense of hope in what is otherwise a

hopeless environment,” I resist this idealistic analysis (Devido 86-87). I agree with Devido that “the written word” provides Winston with an outlet (a “safe haven”) for his nonnormative “inner thoughts”; however, I find it too simplistic to state that writing only provides Winston with a “sense of hope” in this world. Instead, I believe that writing “liberates” the protagonist’s “inner self” to the point of uncontrolled contagion. It affords the young man some reassurance, but an unavoidable sense of foreboding underscores this unregulated language use; he frequently states that he is the “dead.” Winston knows that nonnormative lexical indulgences will result in either his physical death, or the loss of this “natural” human impulse in order to become a “civilized” member of society; he uses these concepts interchangeably, though, which suggests that he perceives both fates as equally damning. Either way, Orwell implies that Winston cannot retain his supposedly intrinsic human nature and also maintain his status as a member of normative society. In order to live in a non-capitalist society, Orwell suggests, one must lose certain elements of his/her humanity. In this instance, Winston must sacrifice his free speech, as it contributes to free thought; autonomous cognition precludes social normativity.

In Orwell’s dystopia, the government perceives entertainment and free time as equally powerful contributors to the pathogenic emergence of an “inner self” as it does free speech. In his dissertation, Devido succinctly conveys this attitude. He explains,

The Party is the police, courts, army, and the prisons. In fact, at no point are there even any recreational activities or groups to join, not to mention the total lack of downtime to do so. Outside of the Proles, every aspect of existence is associated with the Party in *1984*, including the family and politics. (Devido 3)

Devido's comment is particularly astute when taken in tandem with Arendt's discussion of dystopian governments' attempts to eliminate the distance between themselves and the ruled. Devido's analysis summarizes the non-lingual and non-hierarchical behaviors that the Party perceives as contributors to pathogenic individuation; it accounts for some of the remaining distance between the Party and the residents of Oceania. Devido's statement that the Party manifests itself in the legal systems that regulate citizens' behavior ("the police, courts, army, and the prisons") is not particularly novel; however, his further commentary that there are no "recreational activities or groups to join" and that there exists an absolute "lack of downtime" during which one can pursue these activities is far more elucidative. In elevating "recreation" and "downtime" to the same level of control as militaristic regulatory institutions ("police" and "army") Devido suggests the Party makes commensurate deviant leisure-time pursuits and overtly anti-governmental acts. Orwell's "police, courts, army, and the prisons" equally regulate "every aspect of existence," whether it be "recreational activities" or, similarly dangerously, treason. In Oceania, Devido suggests, "civilized" individuals (read: people who are not the base, animalistic proles) must "[associate] every aspect of existence" with the government. The pathogenic development of an "inner self" through free time is as politically subversive as is unregulated rhetoric and also outright treason.

One of the methods the Party employs to "associate" itself with "every aspect of existence" is the telescreen. This device is a pseudo-television that the Party utilizes as a control mechanism. Winston describes it,

The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely... The telescreen received and

transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision... he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment... You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and... every moment scrutinized. (Orwell 2-3)

This account is particularly revelatory of the ways the Party subjects entertainment media to antiseptic controls. In naming this device the “telescreen,” Orwell deliberately plays on the “television.” While the former is tool of spying, the latter is a household item used as a major source of entertainment. Etymologically, though, there is little difference between the connotations of “telescreen” and “television.” In fact, Oxford English Dictionary suggests that they are essentially interchangeable, or that the former is an abbreviation of the phrase “television screen” (“Tele-, Comb. Form”). Given this etymological kinship, I argue that Orwell intentionally alludes to a popular tool of downtime enrichment as a form of mind control in order to assert that the Party perceives entertainment and free time as pathogenically causative of the development of an “inner self.” The statement that it “[receives] and [transmits] simultaneously” is further indicative of this relationship, as Orwell’s reader sees that the telescreen provides citizens with government-sanctioned visual and aural programming at the same time that it relays similar sensory information about each resident. As a result, the telescreen functions as another antigen-antibody pair similar to the ones Winston lists in his description of “doublethink”; the telescreen simultaneously entertains and observes, so that citizens are

not overtly conscious of this control mechanism. Further, the telescreen eliminates any disconnect between residents of Oceania and the Party because no one can “[shut] it off completely.” Instead, it constantly provides a medium of decontamination for any nonnormative citizens. Eventually, the “habit” of constantly portraying socially normative behavior under duress becomes “instinct.” In this way, the Party’s telescreen successfully overrides the “natural” human tendency to individuate, as it culminates in the replacement of one’s natural state with a socially constructed behavioral ideal.

Later in the novel, Orwell further refines the Party’s pathogenic attitude that underlies the pervasive implementation of telescreens. The Book (of the Brotherhood) states, “A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone... The characteristic movements of his body are all jealously scrutinized... any nervous mannerism that could possibly be the symptom of an inner struggle, is certain to be detected” (Orwell 210-211). This description highlights the perceived social illness of which one’s “characteristic” self is perpetually capable in Oceania. According to the Brotherhood, the Thought Police constantly observes Party members to ensure that no “inner struggle” – no “inner self” – manifests. The comment that this development produces a “symptom” reinforces the idea that an “inner self” is a pathogen-induced disease. Orwell implies that his totalitarian regime fears the “natural” process of individuation will occur when individuals are left “alone” to pursue recreational like traditional television programming. Additionally, the comment that the Thought Police “*jealously* scrutinizes” (emphasis added; additionally, Orwell provides the subject of this passive construction in an excerpted section) is particularly notable. It implies that members of the Thought Police (who embody perfect

normative socialization) feel somewhat unfulfilled in their own pursuits. The agents of this supreme “civilizing” force are, in fact, jealous of the “characteristic movements” of their socially deviant peers; they identify (and resent) their own deficiencies regarding these qualities. In this moment, Orwell again suggests that in a totalitarian society, there is a tradeoff between “natural” human proclivities for individuation and the attainment of a socially normative ideal. One cannot achieve both, and the embodiment either one results in a perceived lack of the other.

In addition to coopting the role of television as an entertainment form, the Party also controls the ways in which citizens pursue other forms of recreation. Primarily, the government emphasizes the importance of group activities that actively reinforce people’s subservience to Big Brother. Winston relays,

It was assumed that when he was not working, eating, or sleeping, he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreations; to do anything that suggested a taste of solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself was always slightly dangerous. There was a word for it in Newspeak: *ownlife*, it was called, meaning individualism and eccentricity.

(Orwell 82)

The Party’s aversion to “solitude” emerges in several facets of everyday life. Most succinctly is the Newspeak phrase “ownlife.” I have already discussed the ideological implications that accompany the use of Newspeak words, so I will not repeat that analysis here. Instead, I focus my reading on the Party’s pairing of “individualism” and “eccentricity” as “dangerous” qualities. Etymologically, “eccentricity” indicates that something is off-center or that it deviates from an established norm. Given this definition,

here the Party equates “individualism” with nonnormativity and imbalance; an “inner self” is inherently deviant in the eyes of the Party. Further, Orwell suggests that his government perceives a simple “taste of solitude” as sufficiently pathogenic to cause the development of an individuated identity. In order to prevent this illness, Big Brother endorses only “communal recreations.” This emphasis on mass participation is reminiscent of Foucault’s conception of panopticism, in which systemically incarcerated individuals surveil one another in order to ensure that no one deviates from the norm. Further, this attitude implies that herd immunity can protect individuals from their naturally occurring nonnormativity that results in the development of pathogenic and proliferative individuation; “civilized” group activities ensure that no citizens lapse into nonnormative self-interest.

While *1984* includes several examples of recreational group activities for adults, I turn my attention to the socializing outlets the Party provides for children, as I believe they are more revelatory of the ideological ramifications to which Orwell alludes throughout the novel. Winston discusses the adolescents of Oceania, observing,

by means of such organizations as the Spies they were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel against the discipline of the Party. On the contrary, they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother – it was all a sort of glorious game to them. (Orwell 24)

This passage overtly relates government-provided extracurricular social activities to people's loss of humanity. Though Winston only explicitly names "the Spies" as one of the groups that "civilizes" younger generations of Party members, he mentions that it is nevertheless representative of other "such organizations." Specifically, the Spies is a collective of Party adolescents who report to the government any socially deviant behavior they observe (particularly that of their parents). Winston's characterization of this club (and the greater body it represents) is riddled with incongruent juxtapositions. The Spies turns children into "ungovernable little savages," but "[produces] in them no tendency whatever to rebel" and causes them to "[adore]... the worship of Big Brother." It is poignant to note that the children's socialization dehumanizes them; it causes them to become "little savages," rather than "little humans." Concurrently, though, they become devotees of "the Party and everything connected with it." In the rest of this work, Orwell indicates that the Party perceives itself as a civilizing force through its targeted eradication of social pathogens (such as individuation and sexuality). In stating that the Spies is an extracurricular group that produces "little savages" who "worship... Big Brother," Orwell (through Winston) suggests that becoming "civilized" by way of conforming to (totalitarian) governmental ideals causes people to lose parts of their supposed intrinsic humanity. Recreational pursuits in *1984* eliminate the possibility of individuation and remove fundamental elements of "human nature" while they simultaneously reinforce notions of governmental idolization. The "little savages" about whom Winston speaks participate in "songs" and "processions," they make "banners," and they love group "hiking" – activities typically associated with positive notions of human exceptionalism and culture. These "civilizing" embodiments of the Party's

“discipline” also include “drilling with dummy rifles,” “yelling of slogans,” and “the worship of Big Brother.” The first two of these activities are violent practices. They do not suggest any underlying reason (a “unique human virtue”), and they are not typical of “civilized” behavior. In grouping devotion to Big Brother with these qualities, Orwell implies that the hero worship of a governmental figure is not a desirable human pursuit (though the Party insists it is absolutely necessary in order to become “civilized”). Further, this behavior causes one to become a “savage” through the loss of a unique inner self. While this process satisfies the Party and its stated agenda regarding the inherent pathogenicity of its citizens, Orwell suggests that sacrificing individuation for the sake of social normativity is not a noble choice for the individual.

Unregulated indulgence in alcohol is the last factor that the Party implies contributes to the pathogenic development of an “inner self.” This regime controls alcohol use by creating its unique brand of liquor, and embargoing all other types. The Party-approved “Victory Gin” is far from enjoyable, though. Before Winston’s ultimate fate undergoing treatment for his social nonnormativity in the Ministry of Love, he describes his experiences drinking Victory Gin. Orwell’s narrator states,

It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. Winston poured out nearly a teacupful, nerved himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine... The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber clove. The next moment, however... the world began to look more cheerful. (Orwell 5)

This account suggests that Victory Gin is a medical treatment for the “natural” human tendency to seek out alternate experiences of reality. The Party ensures that its specially created liquor brand does not create an enjoyable parallel universe, though; it is certainly not a hallucinogen. Rather, Victory Gin forces its consumers to perceive the existing world as significantly “more cheerful.” It is unclear whether this effect is due to intoxication or simple relativism. Winston describes the alcohol as “sickly” smelling, “shock” inducing, and pain causing. It is therefore incongruous that Victory Gin is a “medicine” for him. If Winston had merely mentioned its unpleasantness in passing, Orwell’s reader might be more susceptible to understanding Victory Gin as a simple medical treatment. Instead, though, it is “nitric acid,” and several other physically destructive descriptors. Given these perhaps excessive negative terms, I argue that, while Victory Gin serves a medical purpose in Orwell’s dystopia, it is more “*like* a dose of medicine” than an actual “dose of medicine.” More succinctly, I argue that the Party provides citizens with this liquor so that their “natural” human tendency to seek out drugs and alcohol is appeased; however, Victory Gin is a placebo treatment, as it does not provide enjoyable alternate perceptions of reality. It is nevertheless effective against this “natural” tendency to harbor an inner self through explorations of substance use, though, as it perpetuates the Party’s agenda even in its name. Devido explains, “Orwell’s Gin... [helps] celebrate victory when nobody knows why Oceania was ever at war in the first place” (Devido 86). By evoking the concept of nationhood even in the nomenclature used to describe this drug, the Party verifies that its drugs serve an expressly Oceania-based celebratory function. In comparison to the experience of drinking this Gin, experiencing albeit nonnormative life in Oceania is “cheerful” for pre-treatment Winston.

After he emerges from the Ministry of Love, though, Winston has a very different perception of this alcoholic vice. He drinks it, and explains, “The stuff grew not less but more horrible with every mouthful he drank. But it had become the element he swam in. It was his life, his death, and his resurrection. It was gin that sank him into stupor every night, and gin that revived him every morning” (Orwell 293-294). For normative Party members (which now includes Winston), indulgence in Victory Gin is an exercise in doublethink. It gives Winston “his life, his death, and his resurrection”; it provides him a series of contradictory thought processes that further instill the Party’s agenda. For the newly-“cured” and “civilized” Winston, Victory Gin no longer produces a “more cheerful” outlook on the world because the Party has finally eradicated his upwardly aspirational, pathogenic “inner self.” Now, Victory Gin guides Winston’s entire Party-centric experience of life. It is a continuation of the antiseptic doublethink that pervades normative Party rhetoric. Winston physically ingests this now-functional (as opposed to its relative ineffectiveness pre-treatment) medicine and does so “unconsciously,” as the Party desires. Consequently, Victory Gin is now an “element he [swims] in” rather than a “dose of medicine.” This successful antibody for his pathogenic pursuit of drugs simultaneously provides a “stupor” – a temporary suspension of sensation – and it then “revives” him. However, it does not provide him a medium through which to explore his idealistic “inner self” because this pathogen no longer exists in Winston’s being; the Party has completely normed him. Thus, Victory Gin does not create for Winston an enjoyable alternate perception of reality; it is instead an unconscious, yet perpetually “more horrible” treatment against his “natural” pathogenicity and the “inner self” into which this tendency proliferates.

ii) “A GRAMME IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN A DAMN”: *Vaccinations Against Individual Identity in Brave New World*

In order to address the pathogenicity of the “inner self,” Huxley’s World State utilizes a very different strategy than does Big Brother. As is typical of *Brave New World*, excessive indulgence pervades individuals’ explorations of recreation and uses of language. This attitude underscores the government-endorsed drug use (“*soma*”), multisensory movie experiences (“the feelies”), and infinite repetitions of moral message-laden catchphrases (“hypnopaedia”). Like Orwell, though, Huxley depicts a highly regimented social hierarchy. The World State simultaneously employs these four tactics in order to ensure that no citizens cultivate personal identities that might conflict with government-endorsed ideology. Though Huxley does not directly depict the supposed risks of nonnormativity in each of these categories, he nevertheless consistently alludes to this fate through the attitudes of World State representatives. Hence, Huxley’s reader is able to discern the World State’s fears regarding unique identities. Rather than an Orwellian impairment of individuation by limiting the resources available to individuals, Huxley’s *Brave New World* provides characters with seemingly endless options, and a profound contentment with the options available to each social class; the regime excessively fulfills any inclinations for enrichment, so that government-sanctioned choices are the most convenient. Thus, each of these options perpetuates the World State’s professed utopian aspirations.

First, I will briefly describe the social hierarchy that Huxley creates in order to prevent citizens from individuating. In her collection of essays about *Brave New World*,

Katie de Koster reveals that, on a fundamental level, “the World State removes [a] dangerous tendency toward individual identity by making sure that not even one’s name distinguishes one from other citizens” (de Koster 124). de Koster refers to the World State’s policy to name all citizens after famous political leaders, manufacturers, and scientists, and to combine approved names so that there is repetition across the population. For example, Lenina Crowne receives her first name from Vladimir Lenin; Benito Hoover has two namesakes: Benito Mussolini and Henry Hoover. As a result, the World State attempts to ensure that, even on the basis of name, no one can “distinguish” him/herself from others in a meaningful way. However, I resist de Koster’s suggestion that a unique name solely contributes to a “dangerous tendency” of individuation that is inherent to human nature. After all, many children in Western society share identical first names, and the first day of kindergarten does not frequently result in major existential crises (for the most part). Meanwhile, though, I agree with de Koster’s implication that people’s “individual identities” cause them to orient themselves in relation to one another. In the case of *Brave New World*, people’s namesakes are the society’s idols; therefore, citizens with identical nominal origins are grouped together as similar “types.” As seen through the naming of World State citizens, Huxley again suggests that the concept of individuation frightens the dystopian regime

On a larger scale, Huxley’s society is extremely similar to Orwell’s in its perception of a flexible social order as pathogenic. Mustapha Mond (the Resident World Controller) concisely states, “The optimum population... is modeled on the iceberg – eight-ninths below the water line, one-ninth above” (Huxley 190). This principle results in the World State’s creation of several distinct social castes, rather than the mere three

that Big Brother endorses. Huxley's world includes Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons; and each caste contains "plus" and "minus" subdivisions. Each group differs in dress, career, and even conditioning. This process of socialization begins in government-created gestation centers, where Epsilons receive significantly less oxygen than their Alpha counterparts. Devido extrapolates, "[withholding oxygen] creates a lower class who accepts their positions because they are without the mental capacity and wherewithal to question it" (Devido 4). This comment is reminiscent of an antiseptic treatment. Lower caste individuals do not have a pathogenic desire to individuate because they have been subjected to a preventative medical treatment that renders them incapable of possessing this cultural pathogen. They "are without" the potential to reject their society's rigid social order because this germ has been eliminated from their fundamental existence.

Additionally, each caste is exposed to different environmental stimuli in order to select for socially desirable traits. For example, Epsilons who work in the tropics are taught to enjoy heat through selective exposure to temperature stimuli.¹³ Thus, members of each social group enjoy their specific governmentally assigned roles. The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, explains, "that is the secret of happiness and virtue – liking what you've *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny" (Huxley 16). This comment demonstrates the attitude that pervades the World State's social hierarchy. Normative individuals do not (pathogenically) individuate for two different reasons. First, they undergo Listerian antiseptic measures that prevent them from aspiring to participate in other castes. Then,

¹³ Excessive cold application (both prenatal and throughout childhood conditioning) forces them to prefer hot locations.

each predetermined caste is exposed to various vaccinations that encourage certain behaviors and dissuade others. Ultimately, they “like their unescapable social destiny,” despite the sense of foreboding that accompanies this statement. Through the Director’s voice, Huxley implies that World State citizens have no choice in the matter. They must sacrifice their inherent human nature – their proclivities to choose social groups, free language, and recreational activities – in order to become “happy.” They *must* like their destinies because, apparently, this fate is “unescapable.” The government is perpetually more powerful than the individual, and Huxley’s World State refuses to let its citizens socially individuate from one another because this behavior might cause the development of a culturally pathogenic “individual identity.”

Before I discuss the leisure-time manifestations of the World State’s aversion to an “inner self,” I find it poignant to introduce my reader to the linguistic strategies that the regime utilizes. Huxley in *Brave New World*, like Orwell in *1984*, has crafted a novel-specific lexicon. While Orwell’s Newspeak limits the scope of language, though, Huxley’s hypnopaedia (“sleep-teaching”) emphasizes the internalization of specific phrases. More specifically, citizens of this society, as part of their state-controlled upbringing (read: conditioning), listen repeatedly to recordings of moral mottos while they sleep. As a result, the World State does not restrict free thought by overtly limiting the rhetoric available to its constituents; rather, it accomplishes this task by carefully inundating individuals with desirable syntactical structures. As a result, World State citizens believe they have a choice in their (inevitable) uses of hypnopaedic sentiments. In David Sisk’s contribution to Katie de Koster’s collection of essays, he concisely explores the lexical disparities between *1984* and *Brave New World*. Sisk explains,

“Where Huxley portrays a society that has impoverished language by suppressing meaning, George Orwell paints a grim picture of one that suppresses language in order to destroy meaning” (de Koster 128). Though I am hesitant to accept fully Sisk’s analysis of hypnopaedia, I largely concur with his readings of Newspeak and hypnopaedia. As I have discussed in the previous section, Orwell does, in fact, “[suppress] language in order to destroy meaning.” After all, the stated purpose of Newspeak is to limit the words available to citizens so that they cannot even contemplate transgressing governmental mandates. Meanwhile, hypnopaedia does not eliminate any vocabulary from the World State’s lexicon. Though some previously non-valuative words are sullied in the advent of Huxley’s dystopian regime (ex. “mother” in Chapter II), the language overall is undiminished. Additionally, I am unsure about Sisk’s insinuation that hypnopaedic repetitions “suppress meaning” of vocabulary, as these messages elicit behavioral modifications in nearly all citizens. As a reader, though I agree with Sisk’s comment. In my experience reading Huxley’s selected hypnopaedic sentiments, each subsequent repetition carries less profundity. I notice myself skimming over heard phrases – the language truly becomes “impoverished” and meaning is “suppressed” for the reader. Therefore, I argue that Sisk is partially correct in his analyses of controlled language in *1984* and *Brave New World*. Particularly, I agree with his opinion that Orwell and Huxley use different approaches to attack the identical pathogenic potential of uncontrolled rhetoric in a dystopian setting. Specifically, Huxley, as is typical in *Brave New World*, explores language in excess in order to prevent its undesirable proliferative consequences.

Hypnopaedic sound bytes pervade Huxley's novel. Characters recite these oft-rhythmic quips at the appropriate social or emotional cues, so that they immediately rectify any deviation from ideal behavior with a reparative socially normative motto. In this way, hypnopaedia is a vaccine against the perceived disease of an "inner self" that the pathogen of free speech causes. While normative members of society easily receive this preventative measure and produce the desired antibodies that correct any accidental pathogenic ideations (as in, they repeat hypnopaedic phrases), nonnormative individuals do not. Particularly, of Huxley's treatment-resistant characters, Bernard Marx is notoriously averse to hypnopaedic refrains; however, I believe that through the lens of germ theory, it is significantly more interesting to trace the development of John's rhetoric.

Before I address the specific manifestations of hypnopaedia (and then nonnormative language use), though, I will examine its ideological foundation, as the World State describes it. In the novel's beginning, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning leads a group of students through the nation's nursery-analog. He describes the necessity of hypnopaedic lessons,

But wordless conditioning... cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behavior. For that there must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopaedia.

The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time. (Huxley 26).

In this moment, a mouthpiece for the government correlates language and actions. He insinuates that hypnopaedia is extremely useful in its ability to "inculcate" all facets of individuals' behavior. The Director's verb choice is particularly interesting in its

connotations of force, as it reminds the reader that this cultural germ is pervasive, resilient, and threatening. Huxley implies that the World State cannot simply change “complex courses” of unconditioned human existence; instead, it must “impress [ideas] on the mind... by emphatic admonition” (“Inculcate, v.”). “Wordless” means of control do not eradicate the pathogen of nonnormative (and potentially anti-governmental) actions; this comment reminds Huxley’s reader that rhetoric supposedly informs all behavior. Though discourse dictates actions, the Director insists that this language not have a rational foundation; he believes that hypnopaedia should not have “reason,” lest it invite meditations on its ideology. After all, Western discourse constantly mentions that humans are unique because we can “reason” and animals cannot. Therefore, our supposed “human nature” is to contemplate “rationally,” but Huxley consistently argues that totalitarian regimes eliminate our humanity by selectively eliminating the qualities that elevate us above other creatures. Further, the underlying message to which the Director alludes is that words can only “inculcate” ideology and behavior if they do not provide individuals with a logical framework by which to understand them. Thus, hypnopaedia supersedes rationality – the characteristic that supposedly elevates humans above other earthly beings. The World State classifies this attempt to use language to replace a stereotypically human tendency as a “moralizing and socializing” tool. This comment suggests that only through the abandonment of “reason” can members of Huxley’s *Brave New World* attain the appropriate morality and social tendencies that allow for the professed realization of a utopian Edenic ideal. The Director implies that unaltered language invites rationality and critical thinking (“reason”); moderation causes intellectual fixation, he suggests. Additionally, the Director portrays this behavior as

inherently antisocial and immoral, so that hypnopaedia emerges as a salvational vaccine through which individuals can participate in normative dystopian society.

As the Director continues his explanation of hypnopaedia, he evokes the ideas that Arendt introduces regarding the internalization of governmental ideology. He tells his audience that hypnopaedic teachings continue

Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too – all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides – made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions... Suggestions from the State. (Huxley 26)

This comment reiterates the total (free) thought control to which the World State aspires. The Director explains that hypnopaedic “suggestions” should usurp the independent thought of which each individual is capable; they should vaccinate against “natural” pathogenic free thought by selectively inundating citizens with idealized normative ideations. “At last,” government ideas should comprise each person’s sense of being, so that s/he cannot holistically “judge and desire and decide” the surrounding world without “suggestions from the State.” The replacement of these autonomous actions with State-informed projections (manmade constructions) of reality is poignant in its insinuation that judgment, desire, and decision-making are inherently threatening processes – they are cultural pathogens in Huxley’s dystopian society. Hypnopaedia allows World State rulers to carefully modify individuals’ natural tendencies towards these qualities, and to replace them with lifelong antibodies. Therefore, the World State aspires for hypnopaedia, in its ideal implementation, to entirely prevent deviant experiences of the world from arising in

its citizens. Huxley suggests that hypnopaedia is a vaccine and a treatment against free thought – a “natural” human quality that totalitarian regimes supposedly parse as a cultural illness.

In their everyday lives, and especially when they confront threats to the existing social order, normative society members satisfy the World State’s goals by repeating hypnopaedic sentiments. Some of these concepts are overtly consumer-driven, like the omnipresent “Ending is better than mending,” which implores citizens to replace broken products, rather than to repair them (Huxley 43). Others are morality-laden commands like the aforementioned “Everyone belongs to everyone else”¹⁴ or plays on recognizable tropes, such as “cleanliness is next to fordliness” (Huxley 35; Huxley 93). Alternately, some hypnopaedic messages are abstract principles that the World State demands its citizens accept. Typically, Huxley’s normative characters are highly receptive to all of these messages. During the introductory tour of the Center of Hatcheries and Conditioning, the Director mentions a familiar hypnopaedic phrase. Immediately, “The students nodded, emphatically agreeing with a statement which sixty-two thousand repetitions in the dark had made them accept, not merely as true, but as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable” (Huxley 35). This response is the ideal embodiment of World State language-induced thought regulation. These citizens not only “accept” the ideas to which they have been exposed, but also “emphatically agree” with them. In this way, normative use of language in *Brave New World* actively reinforces the regime’s ideological agenda, rather than just suppressing alternative thought processes (as is seen in *1984*’s Newspeak). Huxley further elucidates this trend in his subsequent description

¹⁴ See Chapter II.ii.

of the students' repetition of the hypnopaedia. He explains that the group finds perceives their "reason"-devoid mantra "as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable." These three extreme descriptors are all synonyms of one another, a rhetorical move that allows Huxley to hyperbolize the students' adherence to World State ideology. Normative citizens, like these students, rarely challenge the guiding principles that they have learned through hypnopaedia; further, they defend these ideas as the ultimate experiences of reality.

Occasionally, though, Huxley shows typically socially normative characters grapple with their hypnopaedic lessons. Lenina Crowne subtly struggles with one of the less tangible hypnopaedic concepts during a date with Henry Foster. After Henry offhandedly mentions the brutal death of a society member, he reminds Lenina that the deceased was happy in life. "'Yes, everybody's happy now,' [echoes] Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years" (Huxley 64). Unlike the students emphatically reciting hypnopaedia with the Director, Lenina merely "echoes" Henry's socially conforming motto. This emotionless delivery indicates Lenina's relative resistance to her hypnopaedic conditioning in this moment. Then, Huxley deliberately reminds his reader about the logistical process necessary to the implantation of these ideas in Lenina's and Henry's minds. By accompanying Lenina's unenthusiastic tone with a clarification regarding the number of times she has heard this phrase, Huxley implies that, though hypnopaedia is massively successful, there is still a vaccine-resistant aspect of human nature that is perhaps impossible to eradicate. Even Lenina, a model citizen of the World State, nearly errs from her pathogen-free life.

Ultimately, Lenina regains her relative normalcy through social and lingual conformity; she never develops a socially deviant “inner self.”

Huxley presents several characters that are lexically (and ideologically) nonnormative; however, I have elected to trace John’s experiences with language, as I find them the most conducive to analyses of germ theory. Particularly, when John first arrives in the New World, he uses his own syntactical constructions. As John struggles to find happiness in this society, though, he increasingly relies upon Shakespearean rhetoric. These heard phrases function as John’s hypnopaedia; however, they are inaccessible to those around him. Eventually, these frustrated attempts at hypnopaedic communication result in John fleeing from New World society.

Incorporating dystopian theories allows for a more nuanced analysis of John’s socially pathogenic freedom of speech. I argue that in using Shakespearean pseudo-hypnopaedia, John aspires to become a normative member of the New World. He recognizes that his own lexicon Others him, so he attempts to use the only hypnopaedia he knows in order to conform to normative society; John wants to treat his deviancy with repetitive language. However, John’s attempt to overcome his ideological nonnormativity through prolific language proves futile. It is an insufficient treatment for this cultural disease, and he is unable to transcend the barriers that separate him from society’s supposed utopian existence.

In the first interactions Huxley’s reader has with John, the young man speaks eloquently, but his language is not overtly reminiscent of others’ syntaxes. His conversations with Bernard and Lenina are coherent, and he only references Shakespeare in passing. As John spends more time in the New World as a social outlier, he begins to

rely more heavily upon alternate lexicons. The first episode in which John acutely engages in this behavior occurs when Bernard has arranged an extravagant dinner party in the newcomer's honor. John, whom Bernard had not consulted about this affair, secludes himself in a room, and refuses to emerge. At one point, John uses the native language of Malpais to respond to Bernard's pleas. "*Ai yaa tákwa!*" It was only in Zuñi that the Savage could adequately express what he felt about the Arch-Community-Songster," Huxley explains (Huxley 146). This moment, while comical, is indicative of the disconnect John experiences in the New World. John, who had perpetually perceived himself as an outsider in Malpais, is now attempting to utilize that language in order to appropriately communicate. Though John rationally recognizes that the English-speaking citizens of the World State do not speak Zuñi, he nevertheless finds it the most promising means of "adequately" expressing himself. In John's perception of Zuñi as the best medium for discussing New World constructs, Huxley suggests that typical (unregulated) use of the English language is inadequate for a normative life in this dystopian society; however, Zuñi clearly is not the ideal choice in this situation. Regardless, by showing the incompatibility of unaltered English rhetoric with "civilized" New World life, Huxley reminds his reader that dystopian communities do not allow for extemporaneous language use. The regime ensures that all members of society understand that their continued existence depends upon the appropriate use of governmentally approved language.

As John feels further alienated, he stops speaking Zuñi, and increasingly recites Shakespeare. The climax of John's Shakespearean interludes occurs when Lenina attempts to seduce him. Appalled, he declares, "Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind

that doth renew swifter than blood decays,” and then insists, “The strongest suggestion our worser genius can, shall never melt mine honour into lust” (Huxley 162-163). As in his attempt to communicate with Bernard about the Arch-Community-Songster, John uses alternative rhetoric to express himself with typical society members. He understands that his own unique identity and language cannot exist in this world, so he attempts to adopt “civilized” mannerisms (read: phrases that he himself has not devised) as best he can. In this way, Shakespeare’s plays function as John’s hypnopaedic handbook. He has read these lines infinite times, and they are the closest approximation he knows to the World State’s hypnopaedia. Like New World mantras, these Shakespearean lines are deliberately and rhythmically composed moral messages. Additionally, it is particularly interesting to note that Huxley chooses for John to recite Shakespeare, a playwright and poet whom Western literary discourse consistently regards as the most superior, sophisticated English writer in known history; Shakespeare represents our highest standards of “civilized” language. So, in iambic pentameter, John reminds himself to value his mind over fleeting corporeal pleasure, and then insists that he will use his inner strength to maintain his chastity and male honor. Huxley’s reader sees John struggle to communicate effectively even in this pseudo-hypnopaedic way, though. John selects portions of different plays: the first excerpted passage John recites is from *Troilus and Cressida*, while the second is from *The Tempest*. This random-seeming amalgam of lines is indicative of John’s continued inability to connect with the socially ideal Lenina, despite his suppression (attempted treatment) of his own ideological and lexical codes in favor of other ones.

Huxley reiterates the hypnopaedic undertones of John's Shakespearean vocal tics in the description of Lenina's reaction to them. She commands the young man, "'Put your arms round me... Hug me till you drug me, honey.'" She too had poetry at her command, knew words that sang and were spells and beat drums" (Huxley 164). The phrases Lenina uses are all typical hypnopaedic mottos to which the World State subjects its citizens throughout their conditioning. In this moment, Lenina is speaking only in prescribed phrases; she relies upon established rhetorical combinations in order to navigate this conversation about sex, rather than speaking extemporaneously. She clings to the "poetry" and music of hypnopaedic English, and maintains her socialization, instead of responding to John with unrehearsed language and feelings. In this way, both John and Lenina are interacting with each other on the basis of hypnopaedia; however, each one speaks a very different type of hypnopaedia, and these dialects are incompatible with one another.

As a result of this breakdown in communication, John further retreats from unregulated expositional speech. By suppressing his "natural" lexical inclinations, John attempts to change fundamentally his typical (albeit cultural pathogen-ridden) human existence. This trend is evident in the nonhuman imagery describing John's reaction to Lenina's hypnopaedia-addled seduction attempts. Huxley explains, "He did not answer, but only stared into her face with those mad eyes. The hands that held her wrists were trembling. He breathed deeply and irregularly. Faint almost to imperceptibility, but appalling, she suddenly heard the grinding of his teeth" (Huxley 165). By dividing John's body into several distinct pieces, Huxley indicates that the man is losing his human integrity. Instead of being a complete human being, John is now reduced to "eyes,"

“hands,” breathing, and “teeth”; he is the sum of his anatomical parts, and he does not appear to have any thoughtful, human “inner self.” Even the adjectives that Huxley uses to modify these corporeal markers indicate John’s nonnormativity. His eyes are “mad,” his breathing is “irregular,” his teeth are “appalling,” and he no longer has ownership of his own hands – they are now “*the* hands.” Though this description of John is not inherently animalistic, it is overtly detached from his humanity. The greatest factor that causes this transformation is John’s adherence to his Shakespearean hypnopaedia. Meanwhile, Lenina has maintained her relative sense of personhood because *her* hypnopaedia upholds the World State’s ideals. Neither John nor Lenina can survive in this society if they use unregulated language; however, Lenina has access to government-sanctioned oratorical (and moral) ideals, while John can never attain this existence. Huxley’s reader realizes that John was not vaccinated against free thought, and his current attempts to rectify this situation with pseudo-hypnopaedia are futile. No one he meets in the New World can identify with his unregulated speech and persona; even Mustapha Mond who has read Shakespeare merely laughs at John’s comments. Further, John’s Shakespearean hypnopaedic inclinations only further this gap, while they simultaneously animalize him – they separate him from his “civility”. As such, Huxley’s reader sees John’s unique sense of self as an insurmountable affliction in this totalitarian world.

While Huxley demonstrates that free speech is one of the human tendencies that dystopian regimes perceive as pathogenic to the attainment of a pre-Lapsarian society, he simultaneously addresses unregulated leisure time and drug use in a similar way. Specifically, the World State ensures that citizens cannot develop “inner selves” through

either language or pursuits of recreation. This regime first utilizes a pseudo-vaccine to prevent this contagion from seizing hold of New World constituents. This technique emulates Pavlov's classical conditioning experiments, and essentially prevents individuals from developing the "natural" human impulses that Huxley's regime perceives as threatening to society's existence. The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning specifically discusses this strategy during the tour at the novel's beginning. The Director, referring to a group of young people mid-conditioning exercise, explains, "They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives" (Huxley 20). The Director's comment that conditioning replaces "instinctive" tendencies is extremely reminiscent of germ theory-based ideology. This phrase suggests that targeted interference can override instinctive (as in, "natural") human existence in order to ensure that people are "unalterably... safe" from their own pathogenic tendencies. According to the World State, individuals' natural state is to indulge their "reflexes" which are inherently *un*"safe." Society members supposedly rely upon the regime to keep them protected from themselves; Huxley's government ensures that its citizens perceive unapproved experiences of the outside world as lethal threats to their own survival. Normative members of the New World accept the conditioned vaccine against "books and botany" and any other recreation-based influences that the regime believes pose an anti-governmental proliferative potential.

Though conditioning provides New World individuals with preliminary vaccine-like defenses against pathogens that result in unique senses of self, Huxley also delineates the treatment-oriented approaches that ensure this cultural disease does not emerge. He

most succinctly communicates this attitude through Director at a later point in this tour.

The Director tells his students,

Now – such is progress – the old men work, the old men copulate, the old men have no time, no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think – or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always *soma*, delicious *soma*, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a weekend, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labour and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl, from Electro-magnetic Golf Course to... (Huxley 49)

This statement effectively elucidates the World State's attitudes regarding the nonverbal components of personal identity formation. Particularly, the World State ensures that citizens have no unregimented time. In traditional Western societies, the elderly (the "old men" to whom the Director refers) typically reside in retirement communities, where the majority of their time is unoccupied; they spend it "[sitting] down and [thinking]," which Huxley's regime abhors in its citizens. By using this typically sedentary social group to illustrate the intentions of World State rulers, Huxley emphasizes this ideology. If even senior citizens "work" and "copulate," then the actions of younger individuals are similarly extravagant, if not more so. Additionally, the Director's comment that no one can have "leisure from pleasure" is especially thought provoking in its succinct elucidation of World State attitudes towards free time. While I have frequently heard my

peers use “leisure” and “pleasure” interchangeably, Huxley clearly differentiates the two. “Leisure” specifically evokes notions of freedom and opportunity, while “pleasure” is indicative of delight and satisfaction. In stating that the World State deprives citizens of freedom from delight, the Director implies the latter is a prescribed medication that prevents one’s pathogenic pursuit of free time. “Pleasure” is a necessary treatment against the cultural diseases that “leisure” time brings about. The specific ideal expressions of “pleasure” to which the World State aspires in its citizens are “distractions” like the “feelies” (movies), “girls” (sex), and “Electro-magnetic Golf” (games).

I have already discussed the role of sex in this society, but in this chapter, I focus my attention on movies and games. While I will more thoroughly analyze these “leisure” replacement activities in the following pages, I first encourage my reader to note that even the nomenclature referring to these activities communicates the World State’s omnipresent regulatory goals. Rather than watching typical movies or playing traditional games, citizens watch multisensory “feelies” and New World-specific “Electro-magnetic Golf.” These activities are only available in this society, and individuals’ participation in them further cements their allegiances to Huxley’s regime. The World State pervades their experiences of “pleasure,” even through the lexicon they use to describe these moments. When a random mutation (an “unlucky chance” occurrence, according to Huxley’s Director) causes nonnormative pleasure-seeking behaviors, individuals use government-mandated drugs to rectify the situation. According to the Director, this drug, “*soma*,” functions in the same capacity as do the multitudinous other “distractions” in which World State citizens engage, however it is a more powerful tool than the others.

Soma staves off the “crevice of time” that might allow for one to develop an anti-governmental “inner self.” *Soma* trips can last for as long as individuals want: a “half-holiday,” “a weekend,” or even “an eternity.” According to the World State, all of these indulgences are necessary components of normative idealized citizenship. It is particularly interesting to note that the Director describes this drug as a means to recoup potentially wasted time, a way to fill this “crevice,” given that traditional Western discourses surrounding drug use parse it as lost time and as medically detrimental. In Huxley’s dystopian society, though, drugs are the most powerful medical treatment available against free time, a pathogen that frequently results in nonnormative (read: countercultural) identity formation. As a whole, this passage illustrates the World State regime’s belief that free time and the ability “to sit down and think” are pathogenic threats to society’s continued ideal existence; the government implies that free time and “progress” are mutually exclusive categories. Time to “think” is inherently anti-progress, according to the Director. As a result, the World State mandates its citizens to participate constantly in government-approved leisure-avoidant activities such as games, feelies, and *soma*.

Huxley continues delineating this ideology when John arrives in the New World. The young man converses with a World State doctor about experiences of free time. Doctor Gaffney, responding to John’s questions about the absence of literature in this society, explains, “If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don’t encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements” (Huxley 138). Unlike Big Brother, the World State does not intend to limit overtly its constituents’ actions; instead, Huxley’s rulers simply “don’t encourage” undesirable behaviors through the careful

emphasis on other forms of entertainment. In this way, members of the New World do not feel that the government is restricting them. Doctor Gaffney's statement, while an important commentary regarding the role of "distraction" in this dystopia, moreover is an extremely apt analysis of the use of the written word and the purpose of "feelies" according to World State leaders. Particularly, Doctor Gaffney implies that writing and reading are undesirable activities because they are inherently "solitary" experiences. Instead, individuals "freely" choose to "indulge" their affinities for "distraction... at the feelies," which are multisensory New World-specific pseudo-movies. Devido further discusses this attitude towards books and movies in his dissertation, stating, "Image has in fact replaced the written word in Huxley's dystopia" (Devido 62). While I agree with Devido's comment regarding the usurpation of written media by the feelies, I resist this critic's notion that these movies are "images" that have merely "replaced" writing in this society. I argue that feelies, which are moving images with sound, scent, and tactile sensations, treat the potential pathogenicity of the "written word" by entirely overwhelming it. In order to treat and contain the contagion that reading creates, feelies must be more than a mere "replacement" for this tendency for "books and botany" (Huxley 20). The feelies are, by definition, more powerful than the germ they seek to treat. Furthermore, if an "image" could function in this capacity, the World State would not have created what Devido later refers to as "mind-numbing skin flicks used to entertain the masses of thoughtless drones that make up the New World" (Devido 58). Given that typical Western discourses articulate literature as high art and a pinnacle of civilization, these "mind-numbing" feelies cannot serve as a replacement for written language. Instead, I believe that this new media creates "thoughtless drones" by acting

antagonistically to books and other ominous “natural” pursuits of free time. The feelies *treat* this proposed human affinity for distraction, rather than simply *replace* it.

In addition to watching the feelies, citizens of the New World also play government-sanctioned games as a treatment against the potential development of an “inner self.” Again, Huxley clearly communicates his regime’s policies about these pursuits through the voice of the Director. During the tour in the novel’s beginning, the man explains games such as the aforementioned “Electro-magnetic Golf,” and tells his students to “Imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It’s madness. Nowadays the Controllers won’t approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games” (Huxley 27). This moment concisely distills the World State’s ideas about recreational activities. “Games” must be consistently “elaborate” and “complicated.” Here, Huxley insinuates that his regime only condones games that pervade individuals’ consciousness, so that citizens focus solely on these leisure-time pursuits; they are not able to divert mental energy to focus on their own interests. Through the guise of extravagance and hyperindulgence, Huxley’s regime limits its constituents’ scopes of thought. The Director suggests that the World State does not find this quality of complexity sufficient to assuage its fears regarding the cultural disease-causing potential of uncontrolled recreation. Rather than merely being “elaborate,” the World State insists that games must “increase consumption,” as well. By mandating consumerism, as well as logistical complexity, the World State ensures that individuals’ participation in these games is a political act. Citizens, become incapable of considering their own self-interests, and simultaneously perpetuate the World State’s

capitalistic ideals by partaking in its distinct hyperconsumerist economy. As a result, in Huxley's novel, normative pursuits of recreation are characterized by extravagant games that further the World State's economic model. Further, the Director classifies any deviant activities as "madness," a term that diagnostically Others all individuals who do not participate in the World State's specific treatment of this pathogen. Thus, nonconformity of recreational pursuits is distinctly *not* permissible in normative New World society. The Director further pursues this pathogenicity of unregulated recreation in his statement that any new game "requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games." This notion is indicative of the World State's perception of free time as a disease-causing germ. Each successive cure must be as powerful, must contain "at least as much" regime-conforming ideology, as its predecessor, lest the pathogen mutate and resist the all-encompassing treatment that the World State has prescribed.

As the Director mentions, though, sometimes a "crevice of time" emerges amongst the "distractions" of feelies and games. In moments like these, New World citizens ingest *soma*, the only physical treatment that Huxley overtly shows his readers. While Orwell's Victory Gin is simultaneously an escape mechanism and a torture tool, Huxley's *soma* treats individuals' proclivities for alternate realities (and perceptions of self) using only bliss. The Director defines *soma* as "The perfect drug... Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant... All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects... Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology" (Huxley 47). According to World State propaganda, indulgence in *soma* does not have any lasting impact on citizens; it is merely the means

by which one can go on a “holiday,” and enjoy oneself. I argue, though, that World State rulers believe *soma* is anything but inconsequential; rather, it is a medical treatment for the perceived natural tendency of citizens to develop individual identities and interests. Though *soma* provides individuals with feelings of “euphoria,” it is simultaneously “narcotic” and hallucinogenic. While the Director describes these sensations in pleasant terms, there lurks an insinuation that the drug powerfully sedates people as they experience the specific alternate realities that the World State condones. Further, by correlating *soma* with “Christianity,” Huxley suggests that there is an ideological component to indulgences in this drug. It replaces the supposed role of a god – it provides a moralizing, universal truth that many people claim is the pinnacle of their religious pursuits. The Director’s final comment that *soma* use does not evoke “mythology” is both disease-informed, and also comical, given the context of this novel. First, he suggests that “mythology” is a negative side effect of unapproved treatments (read: unapproved alternate realities), which implies a medical understanding of reality-based pathogens and their supposed cures.

This statement is humorously hypocritical, though, considering the hypnopaedic “mythology” that surrounds *soma* use. For example, New World citizens are socialized to believe that “Was and will make me ill... I take a gramme and only am” (Huxley 89).¹⁵ This mantra encourages people to believe that a single dose of medicine allows them to transcend the confines of time. The World State forces individuals to think that *soma* indulgence negates the understanding of a past and a future; with *soma*, there is no “was

¹⁵ Another *soma*-centered hypnopaedic verse is “One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments” (Huxley 48). Though this rhyme is endearing, I have elected to analyze one that I believe is more conducive to my discussions of pathogenicity and nonnormativity.

[or] will.” However, this hypnopaedic saying is not true; a “gramme” of *soma* cannot actually prevent the progress of linear time. By constantly hearing and repeating this concept, though, normative World State individuals begin to believe this mythic “truth” about the drug. Furthermore, this instance of hypnopaedia is indicative of the self-interest pathogen that the World State perceives as exceptionally threatening in the government’s insistence that cognizance of the past and future makes one “ill.” So, I wonder, why does the World State think that temporal awareness is so dangerous? The answer lies in the unavoidable self-centeredness that characterizes projections of time. Thinking about the past and future are reflective processes; by way of temporal distance, one is able to situate oneself in these images. Therefore, non-present experiences inherently allow for the emergence of an “inner self,” which Huxley’s World State insists is a pathogen. Consequently, *soma* and the hypnopaedic discourse that surrounds it function as treatments for the “natural” human tendency to escape the confines of a present lived reality.

Normative New World members indulge in recreational activities and use *soma*, per their hypnopaedic teachings. All the while, they are told that “everybody’s happy.” Even in her death scene, a *soma*-addled Linda repeats hypnopaedia and fantasizes about government-sanctioned expressions of sexuality. In contrast, Huxley depicts social Others who tend to eschew these types of recreational pursuits, and who typically do not use *soma*. Particularly, John is the archetypal Other in this sense, as his nonnormativity is not a mutation like Bernard’s or the result of an accident like Linda’s. Instead, John enters the New World without a social caste, and without conditioning. As such, Huxley uses him to exemplify the complex dynamics of an “inner self” that the World State

perceives as so threatening. Immediately after John's hypnopaedic meltdown with Lenina, he rushes to the hospital where Linda dies, at which point he becomes hysterical and attempts to undo the social conditioning of a group of children touring the hospital. After this incident, John speaks with Mustapha Mond, and tells the World State leader, "I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin... I claim them all" (Huxley 204). This declaration indicates John's understanding that his "inner self" and his presence in normative society are mutually exclusive. In order to become "civilized," John the Savage must sacrifice his "natural" impulses for religion, exposition, and emotional and experiential extremes – the human qualities that Huxley suggests unavoidably emerge when one does not adhere to social codes. In this moment, John confronts this tension, and he decides to "claim" an uncivilized life, as none of his attempts to eradicate his social pathogens has been successful.

John realizes that he cannot treat his own nonnormativity, so he embraces a solitary existence outside of this society and its prohibition of his "natural" human tendencies. At the end of this conversation, John decides to spend the remainder of his life on a secluded lighthouse, where he can "escape further contamination by the filth of civilized life" (Huxley 210). This statement is an interesting inversion of the germ theory elements that have pervaded the rest of the novel. John's perception of "civilized life" as a contaminating influence is a direct reversal of the idea that *his* "savagery" is a threat to the New World. Normative discourse in *Brave New World* consistently implies that "uncivilized human nature" poses an existential threat to society and its existing power dynamics. However, by having John state that civilization has literally infected him in an incurable way (after all, John can only "escape *further* contamination"; he cannot reverse

the existing damage), Huxley alludes to his own beliefs about this relationship. Huxley seems to agree with John and the World State rulers that all people share an unavoidable “human nature” that must be culled (or treated) in order for individuals to belong to normative society. Further, nonnormative individuals make the overall social body unfit, and undermine the government’s stated attempts to achieve “happiness” and “progress.” However, in this passage, Huxley suggests that the influence of normative society is extremely destructive for the individual, and particularly for the treatment-resistant Other.

Now that civilization has contaminated John—infiltrated his mind, he cannot live entirely without it. In the novel’s final passages, groups of New World citizens (including Lenina) comes to observe John’s solitary life at the lighthouse; he has become a social attraction. As exponentially increasing droves of society members try to interact with him, to profit from interviews with him, he attempts to separate himself from them by physically whipping himself. Unfortunately for John, this performance simply encourages them. During one of these episodes, “somebody [starts] singing ‘Orgy-porgy,’ and in a moment, they all [catch] up the refrain...and [begin] to dance” (Huxley 219-220). This song, which I did not discuss in my sections about sexuality or hypnopaedia, is a normative World State-sanctioned sex chant. By performing it *en masse* in John’s supposedly solitary sanctuary, this group of New World members has effectively shattered any isolation that John had created for himself; he becomes the subject of their pornographic voyeurism. The ritual proliferates and continues until they “all” are singing and dancing; it is a group activity that directly evokes ties to civilization.

The novel’s penultimate scene occurs hours after this event (in which John’s participation is not privy to the reader). John lies down, “Stupefied by *soma*, and

exhausted by a long-drawn frenzy of sensuality... then suddenly [remembers] – everything” (Huxley 220). This moment shows John’s inability to extricate himself completely from society. Unfortunately, it has contaminated him, and even his conviction to escape it has proven futile. In fact, John’s removing himself from society has somehow resulted in his most “civilized” behavior in the novel. In this scene, Huxley reveals for the first time that John has used *soma*, and he has engaged in sexual play with normative members of the New World. Instead of merely appropriating his own versions of World State teachings, in this instance John has actually experienced “true” socialization – “real” treatment for his cultural pathogenicity – through *soma* and sensuality. Then, the young man awakes, and calls out, “Oh, my God, my God!” (Huxley 220). He not only realizes and regrets what he has done, but also he asks for guidance from *his* god, whose presence the World State forbids. John attempts to ground himself in his distinctly uncivilized “natural” human proclivity for his own unique sense of fulfillment through religion.

This moment immediately precedes the final scene, in which more New World members come to John’s lighthouse to watch him again. He is not outside, though, so they enter the lighthouse. Huxley’s narrator simply describes a pair of feet dangling from the ceiling, moving in circles – John has hanged himself. This ending, though bleak, indicates John’s (and, perhaps everyone’s) struggles to conform to “civilized” society. He does not fit into any distinct category, and he cannot (sometimes *will* not) sacrifice parts of his own unique identity in order to adhere to society’s mandates. His social pathogens are too strong for him to eradicate, or he enjoys them too much to eliminate them from his own identity. Meanwhile, though, John realizes that he has experienced enough time

in civilization that he cannot live outside of it. His final acquiescence to *soma*, hypnopaedic songs, and sex play shows that he simply cannot resist the allure of normative society. As a result, Huxley suggests that John, like all other normative individuals, are trapped. One can either be a part of civilization (and thus sacrifice certain elements of one's "natural" human identity) or one can live entirely outside of society; however, one cannot maintain one's "natural" human tendencies (particularly not one's "inner self"), and still survive tangential to civilization. Huxley implies that one can either normatively conform to social codes or live freely as a nonhuman Savage. Huxley ultimately suggests that Others and normative society are lethally pathogenic to one another.

IV) CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this project, I have demonstrated the relationships between germ theory and the dystopian novels that I elected to explore. However, while I maintain my assertion that germ theory significantly informs these works, I believe it pertinent to consider this dynamic in light of other concurrent societal developments. Specifically, the early- to mid-20th century appearance of dystopian novels in the Western literary tradition paralleled an ever-increasing possibility of world war. The prospect of large-scale international conflict heightened already omnipresent fears of the Other. Given the capitalist structures of British and American societies, this xenophobia alluded to discomfort with the other systems of rule that were increasingly present in international relations.¹⁶ Therefore, many (if not all) canonical British and American dystopian novels feature malevolent communist, socialist, or fascist regimes that oppress “innocent” citizens’ “human nature,” and (in germ theory terms,) parse said qualities as pathogenic. This attitude insinuates that dystopian authors believe non-capitalistic governments deprive individuals of their “natural” humanity

Initially, I was tempted to argue that Orwell, Huxley, and other dystopian authors resist the notion that humans are naturally pathogenic; however, I realize that their arguments against specific forms of government are not endorsements of unlegislated human existence. In fact, these authors never suggest that society can thrive utopically without a norming governmental body, and they even advocate consistently for the

¹⁶ Particularly, the early 20th-century saw the concurrent rise of communism and international military aggression in Russia. Additionally, within several years, the Nationalist Socialist Party, a fascist regime, rose to power in Germany and subsequently invaded much of Europe.

presence of this “civilizing” force. For example, though Huxley and Orwell both depict noble savage communities (Malpais and the Proles, respectively), neither of these environments is without a ruling body. Malpais has a group of elders who punish wrongdoings, and the Thought Police monitors the proles. So, while one might, at first glance, think that “Proles and animals are free”¹⁷ because they are not subject to governmental regulation, Orwell furthermore implies these people have preserved their “freedom” and noble humanity through the *right types* of governmental regulation. Neither Orwell nor Huxley portrays a noble savage who originates from an anarchic society, and I have yet to read a dystopian author who does so.

Given this incongruity, I insist that this genre perpetuates, rather than resists, the notion that humans are inherently pathogenic. After all, if these authors do not believe that we need a government to “civilize” us by controlling certain aspects of our “human nature,” then why do they never portray “virtuous” individuals who are from government-free societies? I argue that this deficiency insinuates the authors’ perceptions that unregulated human experience is inherently incompatible with happiness; without a ruling body to norm us selectively – to protect us against our own nature –, we supposedly cannot survive. Huxley, Orwell, and their contemporaries clearly argue against fascist, socialist, and communist systems of governing. However, they imply that an alternative method of pathogen control is necessary for utopian bliss, and even for society’s continued existence. They suggest that capitalist governments are superior because these societies understand cultural disease in a way that is far healthier for their citizens.

¹⁷ “Freedom,” I argue, is a positive, “natural” trait to Orwell.

While one might think that these notions are relegated to mainstream early- and mid-20th century discourse, examinations of modern pop culture prove otherwise. Particularly, in recent years, age-appropriate dystopian novels have emerged as a staple of young adult literature. Among the most well known are Lois Lowry's *The Giver* quartet (which began publication in 1993) and Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* series (publishing as of 2008). Within the last five years, both of these series have undergone film adaptations (the former experienced significantly less box office popularity than the latter). So, I wonder, why are authors introducing dystopian concepts to increasingly younger demographics? And why are these attempts so successful? After all, *The Hunger Games* is now an internationally known household name; it has, in fact, become a brand. Further, the massive successes of Lowry and Collins's young adult dystopian novels are simply representative selections from dozens of similar early-21st century works.¹⁸

The ongoing obsession with dystopian literature parallels recent scientific advancements in germ theory. Particularly, modern research increasingly focuses on the notion of “beneficial bacteria” – germs that help us thrive in our environments. For example, the early 2000s saw an increase in “functional foods” like probiotics, which contain microbes (read: germs) that maximize nutrient content and increase the stomach's digestive efficiency (Stanton et al. 476). Further, in 2012, the NIH asserted that microorganisms outnumber native human body cells ten-to-one (“NIH Human Microbiome Project Defines Normal Bacterial Makeup of the Body”). These

¹⁸ This trope of dystopian young adult fiction has been repeated sufficiently (perhaps in excess) that it now appears formulaic. See <https://twitter.com/dystopianya> for parody-laden examples of stereotypical moments from young adult dystopian novels.

developments have allowed the public to understand that pathogens are not *just* disease-causing organisms. Rather, many of them are necessary to our survival – without our germs, we could not function. Sometimes, in fact, germs *cure* us, which is demonstrated with the emerging research about fecal bacteriotherapy. In this new treatment, individuals who suffer from *Clostridium difficile* syndromes (gastrointestinal infections) receive transplants of fecal matter from healthy individuals (“Bacteriotherapy Using Fecal Flora”). The “healthy” fecal matter contains bacteria that cure the afflicted individual; bacteria cure the disease. This discovery connotes an ideological shift towards embracing one’s “natural” pathogenicity; our germs are agents of (cultural) health. If we were not inherently germ-riddled, then we could not cure each other’s illnesses. As a result, modern scientific advances imply that our pathogens are frequently productive – germs are not *just* agents of disease.

In comparing these scientific advancements to concurrent developments in dystopian literature, I argue that modern young adult novels like *The Giver* and *The Hunger Games* implore us to maintain our cultural pathogens; we need them in order to survive. Current dystopian literature maintains a perception of our supposedly pathogenic “human nature,” but it argues against the traditional notion that our germs are destructive. More specifically, foundational dystopian texts such as Orwell’s *1984* and Huxley’s *Brave New World* typically conclude with the death, disappearance, or (even worse) norming of Othered protagonists; meanwhile, this new era of dystopian literature consistently features more hopeful endings. The first novel in Collins’s series ends with protagonist Katniss Everdeen facing a massively warm reception from her fellow citizens; Lowry’s *The Giver* shows Jonas, who has run away from his dystopic

community, discovering a new town with all the qualities that he has sought. Through these optimistic final scenes, Lowry, Collins, and their contemporaries diverge from the precedent established by their dystopian predecessors. The modern age of dystopian literature consistently indicates that governments do, in fact, attempt to eradicate our supposed pathogenicity, and that only nonnormative individuals can preserve their “human natures.” However, by featuring adolescents whose Otherness perhaps allows them to change society, these novels are not warnings against other forms of government as much as they are advocates for difference and nonnormativity. Orwell, Huxley, and their peers imply that their readers should fear the influence of non-capitalist rulers, as these unfamiliar modes of ruling impede upon “human nature” by parsing it as pathogenic, and that no one can maintain his/her “humanity” in these societies. Alternately, modern young adult dystopian literature implores readers to embrace their own differences because these nonnormative modes of thought are the only ways to dismantle oppressive regimes; one’s resistance to “civilizing” forms of treatment might allow one to save his/her community.

In dystopian literature, this transition from cautionary tale to depictions of hope suggests that modern dystopian authors (and their audiences) no longer fear the potential of unchecked government influence because this era has already descended upon us. Now, rather than teaching the (adult) public to fear oppressive regimes, these authors are encouraging the next generation to dismantle them. It is, these authors suggest, too late to stave off an impending dystopia that totalitarian governments create. For this reason, young adult dystopian novels perpetually feature pathogen-riddled, nonnormative protagonists who bring hope to their societies – these novels perpetuate hope for an

improved future, rather than fear of a potential dystopian emergence. In the words of Lois Lowry, these novels are written “For all the children/ To whom we entrust the future” (Lowry dedication page). Maintaining our pathogenicity is the only way we can bring about a better society.

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