

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS: THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE  
OF LOVE IN DYSTOPIAN FICTION

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**For my Mom**



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

When searching for examples of love in literature, few people readily list dystopian works as great sources. Dystopian literature, with its connotations of oppression, control, and desolation, fails to conjure up the romantic images that the Gothic, Victorian, and other literary genres emanate. However, the dystopian genre usually revolves around love, whether it be romantic, sexualized love or simple, spiritual love.

Literature and the arts long to capture love, the emotional connection between people, but the emotion is particularly crucial to dystopian fiction. Because of the strong union love forges between people, love is granted a prominent role in dystopian fiction where personal relationships between people are often superficial, actively discouraged, or displaced onto government and media. When love is discovered in the dystopian world, the emotion liberates those experiencing it by breaking their isolating devotion to their governing ideologies in favor of independent, mutual devotion to another person. Even if the lover does not reside in a governmentally oppressive state, love still retains the ability to connect people and alleviate the burden of the world around them. This liberating power causes love to become the motivating conflict in most dystopian fiction: enthusiastically experienced by lovers while aggressively counteracted by the dystopian state.



The very “otherness” of love creates this conflict within dystopian fiction.

Besides the lovers’ inability to conform to the solitary and impersonal dystopian societal structure, which contrasts love sharply with the mandated norm, lovers are also shown in stark contrast to each other. They can be of different social classes, gender, religion, ethnicity, intelligence, age—the importance is that they are always different. Their very otherness in any variety of characteristics is what encourages growth in the protagonist. From the female temptress archetype found in the earliest dystopian novels to the more variant lover of recent works, the beloved “other” stirs within the protagonist new feelings and ideas. However, the “other” cannot be loved for his or her very otherness alone: “Something more is needed for the other to become really an *other*, that is, not just a constant object but someone with his or her own self” (Young-Bruehl 281). The emotional connection of love is the true motivating force promoting change; the otherness of the participants is the example, the template, for personal growth.

It is important to understand that while the lovers can be considered “others” their love is not based on their differences alone. In order to experience growth because of their union and their differences, their love must ideally be a strong combination of emotional and sexual reciprocity. In her article, “Where Do We Fall When We Fall in Love?” Elisabeth Young-Bruehl describes a version of love that combines Freud’s two instinct systems: “the sexual instincts, which serve reproduction or preservation of the species, and the ego instincts, which serve self-preservation” (Young-Bruehl 280). Self-preservation as the motivating force for love is a central Darwinian idea, “adapted by the contemporary neo-Darwinists,” to explain the biological and behavioral basis of love. However, Young-Bruehl looks past the Darwinian dependence on biologically



explainable phenomena, how “the ecstasy of love is located in our nerves,” to a wider state that looks at “obscure psychological phenomena” that dissuade a purely biological origin of love for a more complicated origin:

It seems to me that everyone operates with an image of how sexual passion and attachment, or narcissistic love and anacletic love, can be, ideally, combined. A romantic ideal is a combinatory of sex and love, passion and attachment, pleasure and security, upheaval and serenity, the pull to repeat past excitement and the pull of the future. (Young-Bruehl 283)

Love, then, may be described as an interplay of sexual and ego instincts, the biological and the emotional. One instinct can exist without the other, but neither instinct alone can properly manifest a loving relationship due to the exclusive physical and emotional natures.

Because of this composite of emotional and physical desire, a sexual connotation of love should not be over-emphasized. In his essay, “Revolutions from the Waist Downwards: Desire as Rebellion in Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*, George Orwell’s *1984*, and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*,” Thomas Horan believes “sexual desire has a propulsive ability to promote change even when the sexual relationship itself is curtailed” (314). Furthermore, Horan believes that the earliest dystopian writers “transcend the physical to present sexual desire as a catalyst for spirituality beyond political change” (317). Horan puts too much emphasis on the power of sex; he fails to see that sex cannot be the sole motivating factor due to the inherent narcissism in a purely sexual union.



While sex is a major element of dystopian novels it can be reduced to a narcissistic biological need. Besides reproduction, sexual instincts “aim at pleasure” but without a greater emotional attachment, the pleasure will be entirely narcissistic, “using the other as an instrument of your pleasure, as a means to pleasure yourself.” The sex object is “a mirror or a mean” that reflects a person back on him or herself. In this way the sex object cannot inspire change because the partner only sees his or her own self in the lover; the object cannot be allowed to “have a self” of its own (Young-Bruehl 281). Change cannot happen because one person simply projects him or herself on the other.

However, sex can lead to growth if it moves past the narcissistic stage and acquires an emotional component. Young-Bruehl explains:

Sexual passion alone can only satisfy a narcissist, and then only for a time, as it is—so Narcissus learned—unconsummatable as a *relationship*. Fundamentally, it is not a relationship. But it can open the way for a relationship—for what the evolutionists call an attachment. (281)

This attachment is an emotional connection that bypasses the narcissistic need of the sexual instincts for a desire not just for the self but for the partner: reciprocity.

It is this reciprocity that illustrates my concentration on love as an important, primarily emotional attachment. The ego instincts transform into emotional attachment as the instincts are the means by which we “allow ourselves to be receptive, in which we expect love from another, who, as a real person, can give it” (282). These instincts are not selfish, but rather reciprocal. Because “the fundamental aim of the ego instinct is ‘growing,’ or ‘developing,’ which not only *requires* relatedness rather than aloneness but *is* relatedness,” reciprocity in a relationship is important for relatedness to form (280).



The ability of love to inspire growth and change is based in this reciprocity, the “growing” and “developing” that comes from being in an emotional, receptive relationship. In this way, the “otherness” of the lover can be fully experienced and adopted by the partner.

While I primarily focus on emotional attachments in dystopian literature, I will not limit my scope to purely emotional manifestations of love, such as parental or platonic. Since love is a combination of emotional and sexual reciprocity, the sexual component will be of particular interest as, besides being a natural element of love, it can also “open the way for a relationship—for what the evolutionists call an attachment” (281). Since, as I will argue, the dystopian world fears love, there are often strict regulations on sex because of the ability for sexual relationships to lead to emotional attachments.

In this study, I will focus on two portrayals of love: a romantic, sexualized love and an emotional, sexually-ambiguous love as transformative relationships. This dual focus will be aided by how the dystopian genre changes the portrayal of love, with the earliest dystopian fiction focusing on heteronormative sexual relationships and more recent works portraying love as an emotional state whose sexual component is ambiguous.

To explore the importance of love in the dystopian genre I will review a variety of different dystopian novels. First I will analyze the “holy trinity” of dystopian literature, Zamyatin’s *We* and the novels it influenced, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and then focus on recent dystopian works such as Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx & Crake* and Alan Moore’s *V for Vendetta*. This span will



allow me to show the evolution of love from a heteronormative motivating force to an emotionally universal liberator. Individual chapters will focus on specific books depending on their treatment of love within the story, from early dystopian literature's use of love as an escape from the dystopian world to modern dystopian literature's view of love as a manifestation of nostalgia for the past. I will compare both early and contemporary dystopian fiction by their similar treatment of love in regards to it being a personally and socially destructive force in each dystopian society, a force that must be regulated or systematically destroyed.

In the first chapter, I will look at how love is used to escape the dystopian world. Individual emotional attachments are unusual in a dystopian society reliant on communal conformity and obedience, where "no one is one but only one of" (Zamyatin 8). Individual ideas and allegiances could upset the communal state. Whether they wholeheartedly accept their oppressive governments, like *We*'s D-503, or quietly rebel like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s Winston Smith, characters find freedoms they've never known once feelings of love are introduced.

Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* all focus on protagonists first experiencing the liberating effects of love on their governmentally controlled lives. Some of these effects are welcomed, some cause confusion and guilt, and some cause disgust, yet love is always sought out for its emancipating power over the world around it.

The primary way love provides an escape from the dystopian world is through the very otherness perceived in the emotion and the character initiating the relationship. In her article, "Woman As Temptress: The Way to (Br)otherhood in Science Fiction



Dystopias,” Kathryn M. Grossman analyzes how women in these novels act as the “other” counterpart to the male protagonists. By gender, ideology, and actions, these women physically and mentally embody an antithetic identity that offers the male protagonist a startling new view of society.

The second chapter will analyze the trend in recent dystopian fiction to portray love as a manifestation of nostalgia for the past and hope for the future. The political atmosphere leading up to or following the World Wars, which concentrated predominately on political/military regimes and their abuses of society and culture, influenced early dystopian works. While war is still, sadly, a constant, the focus of dystopian literature has shifted to the advances in science and technology. New breakthroughs in computing, particle physics, and genetics have advanced human civilization rapidly in less than a century, and this rapid evolution is easily contrasted with the relative simplicity of the past.

Dystopian interest in nostalgia for that simplicity can be seen in earlier works, from the Ancient House in *We* to Winston Smith’s frequent trips to the antique store in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. But unlike these earlier works, the dystopian fiction of the last three decades connects the idea of love intrinsically to the past. Love is no longer an unknown, primeval emotion but one that is recognized, searched for, one that has been felt before and that one wishes to feel again. Because love is a known, tangible element in more recent dystopian worlds, the concentration on the blossoming of love is unneeded. Instead, the influence of love can now be explored freely: amongst different types of people, genders, and environments, and even amongst different timelines. The protagonists of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*, Alan



Moore's *V for Vendetta* and *Watchmen*, and the anime *Neon Genesis Evangelion* are all influenced by love that was experienced in the pre-dystopian past. Yearning for this love becomes a yearning for the past where such emotions grew and were nurtured unimpeded by the difficulties of the lovers' present lives.

Even while recent dystopian literature looks to the past it changes the concept of the liberating "other," the sheltered-male/female-temptress dichotomy, to a less gendered relationship. From the female protagonist of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* to the homoerotic subtext of the anime *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, the defined relationship of a specific gender to the tempting "other" is abandoned. The offer of escape from the stifling uniformity and synonymy of the dystopian world becomes independent from the heteronormative sexualized context of earlier dystopian fiction where love is easily confused with lust. Free of a specific heteronormative sexualization, love now becomes an all-encompassing, binding emotion that connects romantic and platonic feelings with sexualized desire and nonsexual ardor, never allowing any one to exist separately from the other. This love is coupled with a nostalgic look at the past to provide new ways to look at love in these novels, ways incorporating the profound effects of parental and platonic love on romantic love in the genre.

The third chapter will look at the methods dystopian societies use to prevent love from forming and thereby threatening the prescribed social ideologies. Since love is often a means to escape from dystopian worlds, the emotion can be seen as a threat to the order of the governing body. At the end of *Brave New World*, Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe, explains to John that "the greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving any one [sic] too much" (Huxley 213). The dystopian



government requires total allegiance from its citizens, an allegiance that is not possible when love is involved. Love turns the allegiance to a government into the isolating allegiance of one person to another person.

Dystopian governments routinely condition sexual instincts as a preventative precaution and discouragement to romantic, loving relationships. Early in *We*, D-503 recalls how his government, OneState, “mounted an attack on that other ruler of the world, Love” by declaring that “any Number has the right of access to any other Number as sexual product” (Zamyatin 22). Sex is often purposefully removed from a romantic nature that could foster love. The pink ticket system in *We* and the governmentally condoned and encouraged promiscuity in *Brave New World* are calculated attempts to alleviate sexual desire yet prevent personal attachments that could threaten the social solidarity the government requires. However, by removing sex from love, the governments mistakenly confuse sex with love, as if one could not exist without the other. This mistake allows for the liberating power of love to manifest itself inside the dystopian state.

If conditioning against privacy and regulating the sex drive do not prevent love from forming, the government seeks out threatening love relationships and destroys them. In Chapter 4 I analyze the methods dystopian worlds use to crush love and redirect loyalty to the government. From the lobotomization of imagination that cures love in *We* to the horrific, breaking torture of the Ministry of Love in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, dystopian governments specifically seek out loving relationships and systematically destroy them in order to insure the participant’s undivided loyalty to the government and its goals.



In conclusion, my thesis will focus on the various ways love in the dystopian world is experienced. I will analyze how love becomes a liberating force in a world built on conformity and oppression and how that very world tries to prevent love from forming or continuing in order to preserve its ideology. Close readings of the classic dystopian works *We*, *Brave New World*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and comparison of these works to contemporary dystopian fiction such as *Oryx & Crake* and *V for Vendetta* demonstrate how the dystopian genre's reliance on love as a motivating force has changed over time. More generally, I will demonstrate how the emotion of love is constantly portrayed as a motivating factor for personal growth and liberation throughout time.



## II. LOVE AS ESCAPE

Individual emotional attachments are unusual in a dystopian society reliant on communal conformity and obedience, where “no one is *one* but only *one of*” (Zamyatin 8). Influenced by the world wars and revolutions of the early twentieth century, the classics of dystopian fiction—Zamyatin’s *We*, Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*—all focus on oppressive totalitarian states that destroy personal freedoms such as privacy, family, choice, and individuality. Only when the male protagonists first experience the liberating effects of love on their governmentally controlled lives do they regain these personal freedoms, even if only briefly. Some of these effects are welcomed, some cause confusion and guilt, and some cause disgust, yet love is always sought out for its emancipating power over the world around it. Whether they whole-heartedly accept their oppressive governments, like *We*’s D-503, or quietly rebel like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Winston Smith, when feelings of love are introduced characters find and revel in a personal freedom they’ve never known. And this freedom, this escape, from the controlling world is always initiated by a female character that fills the role of the temptress, introducing the male to experiences he has never known.

In her article, “Woman as Temptress: The Way to (Br)otherhood in Science Fiction Dystopias,” Kathryn M. Grossman analyzes how women in these novels act as an enticing counterpart to the male protagonists. Grossman explains the power of what the temptress offers:



Instead of merely seducing the male protagonist out of his earthly paradise she charms him into seeing it in a new manner. In other words, she does not just enchant him; she also disenchants him, for it is through her that he comes to know his world for what it really is—an inhuman monstrosity.

(135)

A woman as “the catalyst for a man’s spiritual awakening is a theme as ancient as the story of Adam and Eve” (Saint-Andre 288). However, unlike the original Eve, the dystopian female temptress does not dispel the male protagonist from paradise. Instead, she provides the lowly male protagonist a way out of a false Eden built on enforced conformity and allegiance. Because she encourages the male to view and rebel against the horrors of the world, thereby improving his life, the female character sheds the negative connotation that could be associated with the term “temptress.”

Classic dystopian fiction establishes the female temptress as an “other” figure, different in both gender and ideology from the male protagonist and his dystopian world. While there may be male other/tempter figures found in early dystopian fiction, their brief involvement and influence reduce them to supporting roles. It is only through the love between the male protagonist and the female other that the male protagonist of classic dystopian literature finds means to escape his society. In these works, love is a firmly heteronormative relationship, the standard male/female coupling that is romantic in nature.

While the gender of the female other establishes a basic heteronormative relationship with the male protagonist her otherness cannot be attributed to her sex alone. By ideology and actions, as well as gender, these women physically and mentally



embody an antithetic identity that offers the male protagonist a divergent view of society. Grossman explains how this total otherness, in both body and mind, leads the male protagonist away from his dystopian world:

By her colorful and uncommon vitality, then, the woman disrupts the dreary codes of conformity governing not only the hero's behavior but even his very view of the world and of himself. From the moment that he first recognizes and values the female's mysterious otherness, he begins to differentiate himself as well from the rest of society. Since she is not like other women, he can no longer be like other men. (138)

While it is important that her gender separates her from the male protagonist, she should not be reduced solely to her gender. Her very identity is also disparate from the other women of her society which separates her further from the conformity of the dystopian world, strengthening the very otherness that will draw the male protagonist to her. While the male/female relationship is heteronormative on the surface, her entire antithetic identity is unlike anything he has ever encountered in woman or man. Her sex becomes only a gateway for the male protagonist to experience her startling divergent character through their love.

By first engaging in a heteronormative relationship, the female other can release the male protagonist from the conditioning of his society and invite him to feel an individuality and freedom previously unknown to him. Grossman explains, "The repressed self to whom she beckons eventually emerges and does battle with the self-programmed by his culture" (138). The temptress/other's power of love must overcome the cultural programming, whereby the dystopian society conditions people with a



particular ideology. Such conditioning can be very difficult to ignore, but when it is overcome, a whole new world of freedom is uncovered.

In the opening record of *We*, the male protagonist D-503 expresses his fervent anticipation to “integrate completely the colossal equation of the universe” (Zamyatin 4). Integration into a communal whole with his society is so conditioned into D-503 that he expresses “love” as a communal emotion, not the feelings of an individual: “I love—and I am sure that I am right in saying *we* love—only such a sky as this one today: sterile and immaculate” (5). D-503 does not see himself as an individual but only as part of the greater whole that is OneState. Furthermore, D-503 perceives love not only as a communal emotion shared with his society but also an emotion tied to math, science, and the predictable “sterile and immaculate” order they instill in the civilization of OneState. Everything has a “logical explanation,” and possible variables like love, sex, and envy are reduced to equations and partnered with science to create behavioral controls and regulations (8).

Though D-503 praises the ordered communal existence of OneState, he can feel an undercurrent of primal desire running through the society. Love, lust, envy, anger—and a host of other natural emotions—are repressed behind assigned sex partners and regulations against individual privacy so that OneState can transform romantic and sexual urges into an orderly system that disperses urges while giving opportunity to explore them. Despite this ordered approach, D-503 observes that OneState has not quite eradicated animalistic instincts: “you can still very occasionally hear coming up from the bottom, from the hairy depths, a wild, ape-like echo” (15).



Though D-503 senses this division between ordered commonality and individual desire he does not experience it himself until the introduction of I-330, his female temptress/other. I-330 is immediately contrasted against the other woman in D-503's life, O-90. His relationship with O-90, while governmentally approved, is as emotionally infantile as his descriptions of her. D-503 uses infantile, asexual language to describe O-90, often referring to O-90's "babyish" body with the "puffy crease at her wrist, the way children have" (6). To him, O-90 looks "like such a child, so charming" (38). These descriptions place O-90 in stark contrast to the more sexually mature form of I-330. D-503 is constantly staring at I-330's breasts, though he can never quite say it: "[...] and the warm shadow that undulated in time with the breathing between her . . ." (18).

I-330's nature confuses D-503 upon their first meeting. He becomes "embarrassed and slightly confused" by I-330's flattery and strains to find "some logical explanation for why [he] was laughing" (8). When I-330 questions the very maxim OneState is founded on, that "no one is *one* but only *one of*," with the simple question, "Are you sure?" D-503 becomes flustered and begins to see the difference not only between O-90 and I-330, but between all numbers, men and women:

She [I-330] was to my right—slender, sharp, tough, and springy as a whip: I-330 (now I saw her number). To my left was O, completely different, everything about her round, with the babyish crease on her arm. And at the end of our group of four was a male Number that I didn't know. He bent in two places, like the letter S. We were all different. . . . (8-9)

By outright questioning the primary belief of their society, I-330 immediately opens up a world of nonconformity to D-503. Furthermore, she invites him into such antithetical



ideas by not openly dismissing them herself but by requesting his opinion. Asking “are you sure?” provokes D-503 to consider whether his society’s greatest maxim is indeed true. The discovery of its inaccuracy leads D-503 down the path of self-discovery with I-330 as his guide.

At the beginning of this journey, D-503 does not like I-330 due to the confusion and questions she incites in him. To D-503, I-330 was “as irritating . . . as an irrational term that accidentally creeps into your equation and can’t be factored out” (10). The temptation of her ideas becomes like square root -1 to him—“that irrational root grew in me like some alien thing, strange and terrifying, and it was eating me, and you couldn’t make any sense of it or neutralize it because it was completely beyond *ratio*” (39). This irritation is understandable for someone who looks for a “logical explanation” for every feeling and outright endorses the “unalterable regularity” of his conformity-obsessed society. Yet, despite his irritation, D-503 is drawn to I-330’s uncommon demeanor. When she asks him to go to the Ancient House, D-503 clearly explains his love-hate attraction: “I-330. That woman annoys me, repels me—almost scares me. But for that very reason I said: ‘Yes.’” (26).

Their conversation in the Ancient House stimulates D-503’s feelings for her. While he considers her an irritant, her views start seeping into him, forcing him to see the world in new ways. Her outlook on love will be particularly important to the development of their relationship and his liberation from his society:

As we were going up the wide, dark staircase, I-330 said: “I love her, that old woman.”

“What for?”



“I don’t know. Maybe for her mouth. Maybe for nothing at all. I just do.” (27)

I-330 tells him she feels guilty because “one shouldn’t love ‘just because’ but ‘because of’” yet the guilt does not stop her; it is more a safety precaution, a conditioned response to gently introduce the ideas to him. He is irritated at her thinly-veiled antithetical beliefs and even threatens to inform the Guardians, the protectors of social orthodoxy, about her. However, he does not alert them as her introduction of such intriguing ideas leads him to feel passion he has never felt before: “I remember how I was trembling all over. I should have . . . I don’t know . . . grabbed her, and—what? I don’t remember. But I felt that I had to, I don’t know, *do* something” (30). D-503’s desire for I-330 now extends to primal sexual urges. This passion shows that D-503 is not much different than one of his “hirsute ancestors” a link suggested by his hairy hands, a physical quality he is embarrassed by due to its animalistic symbolism. He may see his “paws” as an embarrassing throwback to early humans and animals, but from those “hairy depths” the “wild, ape-like echo” emerges, showing that you can remove the man from the wild, but not the wild from the man (23, 15).

D-503’s love for I-330 becomes more pronounced as his interest for her grows. “I can’t do without you,” he says after not seeing her for days. He is so consumed by desire to be with her and her unconventional thoughts that he believes he is physically sick and even visits a doctor who informs him he’s “in bad shape” because he’s “developing a soul,” the term OneState uses for individuality (86).



In his essay, “Zamyatin and Rand,” Peter Saint-Andre sees this connection between the love D-503 has for I-330 and his struggle with difficult mathematical concepts as a sign her influence is helping him “discover his soul”:

... as the leader of the rebellious Mephis (whose name is an abbreviation of Mephistopheles), she holds out to him the forbidden fruit not only of passion but of ideas that are unheard of in the Single State [OneState] (especially challenging mathematical concepts that intrigue him since he is the State’s greatest mathematician as well as the designer of the first rocket ship). (290)

I-330’s introduction into D-503’s life serves to awaken this wild nature in him and his behavior strays from ordered logic to carnal emotion. D-503’s love for I-330 allows him to break fully from the mathematically and scientifically ordered existence of OneState and find his individual self, his “soul.” Only when he meets I-330 and falls in love does D-503’s concept of love evolve from a communal sentiment for order to a solitary desire for emotional unions.

Zamyatin’s *We* became a type of “Ur-text for all twentieth-century dystopian novels,” especially influencing Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Saint-Andre 287). Both novels borrow elements from *We*: Huxley offers us a scientifically advanced society that promotes communal promiscuity while Orwell expounds upon the control of privacy to give us Big Brother’s ever watchful eyes. Both novels also use a female temptress/other character to provide the love a male protagonist needs to fight against his controlling society. However, the liberation Huxley and Orwell’s temptress/other women incite in their male protagonists is vastly different.



In *Brave New World*, the character of Lenina might be difficult to describe as a temptress figure as, unlike *We's* I-330, she does not consciously invite John, the Savage, into viewing the world in a different light. Nevertheless, her very otherness is alluring to John and prompts him into not only visiting her civilized world but also "seeing it in a new manner" (Grossman 135). Lenina does not tempt him to leave the dystopian state; she tempts him to join it. However, by loving her, John witnesses the corruption and decadence of her society and, disgusted by it and her actions, gains the power to reject the temptations Lenina represents.

By virtue of his parents, John is biologically a product of the civilized world but Linda's accident and abandonment in the reservation prevented him from being exposed to the oversexed, consumerist world of his parents. While he was never accepted by the archaic residents of the reservation because of his pale skin, the rural atmosphere and social ideology of the reservation inhabitants are all John recognizes. The information John knows of the outside world stems from his mother's stories and what he reads in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. So, from the moment John first sees Lenina, she is different from any woman he has ever known:

He had seen, for the first time in his life, the face of a girl whose cheeks were not the colour of chocolate or dogskin, whose hair was auburn and permanently waved, and whose expression (amazing novelty!) was one of benevolent interest. (Huxley 111)

It is the clichéd "love at first sight": John immediately falls for Lenina, his "angel in bottle-green viscose, lustrous with youth" (129). When Bernard invites John to leave the primitive reservation, the only world he has ever known, and come with them to see the



civilized world John is excited to go not only to see the places his mother could only tell him about, but because Lenina will also be there. His instant love for her prompts an explorer's excitement for his journey and, quoting from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, John joyously exclaims, "O brave new world that has such people in it," a line as ironically delivered in the novel as it is in Shakespeare's play (130).

John's happy sentiment will not last long for the new world he discovers is more hell than heaven. John is treated as a curiosity—a civilized man actually born of woman, not conceived in a test tube, and raised in a more primitive world. He is even referred to as "the Savage" more than by his given name (144). John also witnesses the empty pleasures of the mood-elevating drug *soma*, especially through his mother's fatal "*soma*-holiday" (143). Technological wonders hold no delight for him; they are more likely to frighten him instead. Once he is introduced to the products of their mass-produced human propagation, the staggering numbers of identical clones of the lower castes all performing the same tasks, he relinquishes his wonder for disgust. John mutters once again, with "some malice of his memory," Shakespeare's line, "O brave new world" as he watches the multitude of worker-clones before "violently retching" (148).

Despite his disgust, John continues to brave this new world because of his love for Lenina. While Lenina likes John and admits, "I like him—more than anybody I've ever known," she is unable to express deeper feelings because her social conditioning stressed only sex, not love, and the emotion is foreign to her (159). Lenina knows only guiltless promiscuity, not any type of emotional attachment, so when John asks for commitment through marriage and monogamy, Lenina thinks it "a horrible idea!" (174). Lenina only knows sex and offers herself to John as one last temptation. Regardless of



their mutual feelings, John rejects both her and the ideology she represents by grabbing her shoulders and crying out, “Whore!” (177). This is not the last meeting between Lenina and John, but it is the revelatory moment when John decides to reject the dystopian world. When offered Lenina’s love, John is offered the corruption and decadence of her society but, disgusted by it and her actions, he gains the power to overcome her temptations.

While Lenina tempts John to accept her corrupted world, Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* returns the female temptress to the opposing position, tempting the male protagonist away from the dystopian world. Orwell provides a female temptress/other figure more reminiscent of *We*’s I-330. Though Winston already opposes his controlling government at the beginning of the book, his love affair with Julia propels him to have new experiences and actively rebel against the government of Oceania.

Julia continues the classic dystopian tradition of making the female temptress an “other.” She not only secretly rebels against Oceania’s strict regulations on privacy and personal relationships but, by doing so, she seems a rarity of her gender because Winston had believed all Party women embrace a strict, boring allegiance to Big Brother and Oceania.

When Julia is first shown, Winston cannot help hate her, primarily because his view on Party women is very negative: “It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy.” Because of this misogynistic belief, “Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her.” Julia had “the atmosphere of hockey fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-



mindfulness which she managed to carry about with her,” and this wholesome, Party-approved behavior Winston cannot tolerate. Her outward persona gave Winston “the impression of [her] being more dangerous than most [women],” and he even believed she “might be an agent of the Thought Police” (Orwell 11). His negative perception of Julia is so strong that, at one point, Winston even “contemplated smashing her skull in with a cobblestone” (111). Only after Julia initiates contact does Winston see her as an “other,” a woman who does not behave like any he has ever known.

Once she initiates contact by tripping in front of him and covertly passing him a note saying “I love you” in front of a surveillance telescreen, Winston no longer feels threatened by her (109). The brave action of passing a personal note to a complete stranger while in front of the ever-watchful telescreens changes Winston’s opinion of Julia immediately. There was no guarantee that he would not inform the Thought Police about her unconventional note or that no one would see the transaction on the telescreen, so Julia’s unorthodox actions show that she is hardly the stereotypically zealous follower of the Party Winston believed her to be. Though he hardly knows her, such actions show a rebellious spirit kindred to Winston’s own; it illustrates the same disloyalty to the Party that prompted Winston to buy and write in his illegal private diary.

Her behavior immediately changes Winston’s opinion of Julia. While he hated her before, now Winston is afraid he’ll never see Julia again, or that she’ll change her mind about him:

He had imagined her a fool like all the rest of them, her head stuffed with lies and hatred, her belly full of ice. . . . What he feared more than anything else was that she would simply change her mind if he did not get in touch



with her quickly. But the physical difficulty of meeting was enormous.

(111)

With Big Brother and the Party ever watchful against private actions, their telescreens and hidden microphones a constant threat, Winston's fears are justified. However "the girl was so evidently experienced that he was less frightened than he would normally have been" (119).

As Winston learns, Julia is very experienced at subverting the watchful eyes of the Party. Outwardly Julia cultivates the appearance of a faithful Party woman, grooming her appearance and public persona so that nobody questions her rebellious motivations:

I'm good at games. I was a leader in the Spies. I do voluntary work three evenings a week for the Junior Anti-Sex League. Hours and hours I've spent pasting their bloody rot all over London. I always carry one end of a banner in the processions. I always look cheerful and I never shirk anything. Always yell with the crowd, that's what I say. It's the only way to be safe. (123)

All her actions—"attending lectures and demonstrations, distributing literature for the Junior Anti-Sex League, preparing banners for Hate Week, making collections for the savings campaign"—are all, in Julia's words, "camouflage" (130). They allow her to look like the perfectly zealous Party follower while secretly disobeying their practices. It is an act good enough to initially fool Winston.

Julia's cultivated manner extends to perceiving rebellious spirits in others. When they first meet privately, Julia tells Winston how she knew she could trust him: "I'm good at spotting people who don't belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against



*them*” (123). This ability to perceive nonconformist behavior in others has allowed Julia to conduct secret affairs “scores of times” (126).

Julia’s unorthodoxy fuels Winston’s feelings for her. He particularly enjoys her passion for sex, an action that Winston erroneously believes the Party is primarily fighting against. “The more men you’ve had, the more I love you,” he tells Julia. Her sexual openness leads Winston to hope that more people are “corrupt” like her, not mindlessly obeying the antisocial doctrine of the Party (127).

While initially he may have been more interested in sex, Winston does develop an emotional attachment to Julia that supersedes physical desire. Winston experiences “a deep tenderness such as he had not felt for her before” after Julia “gave the tips of his fingers a quick squeeze that seemed to invite not desire but affection” (141). The formation of actual loving attachment, and not just a sexual affair, strengthens both their relationship and its liberating effects on him.

Due to Julia’s wide experience at subterfuge, Winston follows her lead. She is the one who sets up their private meetings, giving him detailed directions on what he should and should not do to avoid suspicion. Julia takes the lead in the affair and her ability to simultaneously appear orthodox while covertly rebelling against the Party’s control opens up a world of secret rebellion Winston thought impossible, including their love affair. Before Julia, Winston believed “a real love affair was an almost unthinkable event” (68).

Through his love affair with Julia, Winston gains the courage to reject the impossibilities of his dystopian world and find freedoms he never knew possible. Winston begins by renting out the room over Mr. Charrington’s shop so that he and Julia can have a more permanent and private place together. The thrill of having their own



place, away from the prying eyes of telescreens and Thought Police, encourages both to continue to explore the limitations of their freedom. Julia obtains for them rare provisions—real coffee, tea, and sugar—that only Inner Party officials have access to. More importantly, Winston begins to talk about “engaging in active rebellion against the Party” (153). This desire for continuing the rebellion their love affair started is what leads him to bring Julia to O’Brien’s home and seek out the rebel Brotherhood with which he believes O’Brien is involved.

In addition, her influence in their love affair relieves the melancholy and despair Winston showed at the beginning of the novel:

Winston had dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He seemed to have lost the need for it. He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped. The process of life had ceased to be intolerable, he had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice. (151)

Winston no longer writes anti-Big Brother confessionals in his diary; instead he finds a much wanted peace in the love they share.

Other early dystopian works continue the temptress figure that Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell pioneered. Novels like Ayn Rand’s *Anthem* and Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* include temptress figures, a female “other” who is ideologically different from the male lead and the rest of society. A Russian like Zamyatin, Rand presents in *Anthem* a novel very similar to *We* in its portrayal of a homogenous, pluralistic society that attacks individuality and controls personal instincts in favor of group uniformity. The temptress,



Liberty 5-3000, spurs on the rebellion of the male protagonist, Equality 7-2521. It is one of the few dystopian novels that end affably, with the rebellious couple becoming Adam and Eve figures and pioneering individuality from their personal Eden.

While Rand's temptress, Liberty 5-3000, is the standard romantic counterpoint, Bradbury's Clarisse McClellan does not clearly fit the role of love interest; however, her brief encounters with the male protagonist, Guy Montag, illuminate his dreary world for him. When she asks Guy if he's happy, he defiantly says he is, but with some time and thought he realizes he is very unhappy. When Clarisse shows him how she can use a dandelion to reveal if someone is in love, the results are negative, and she explains, "You're not in love with anyone." Again, Montag is defiant, crying out to Clarisse, "Yes, I am! . . . I am, very much in love!" (Bradbury 52). As with her question about his happiness, Montag is invited to consider whether or not he is in love, and, looking at his wife, he realizes he's not: "he couldn't believe he knew her at all" (72). Montag is clearly fond of Clarisse but, like these discoveries, he is slow to understand the extent of his feelings. With Clarisse's death early in the novel, the extent of his feelings for the girl are never explored but the social rebellion she incites in him by questioning his complacency in his life and in his destructive work leads to his escape from his culturally dead and depraved world.

These classic works of dystopian fiction set up the female temptress as the catalyst for personal change. The love provided by the temptress often turns a loyal, abiding citizen into a nonconforming "other" like herself, creating a regenerative process that will perpetuate a dangerous unorthodoxy. Or, as in the case of Lenina, the temptress acts as an agent of the dystopian world, dangling the pleasures and ease of conformity



over the hardships of personal freedom and responsibility. Whatever the case, escape from the rigid control of the dystopian world is achieved through the temptress figure, and this formula continues from Zamyatin's *We* through the early classics of the dystopian genre. Only recently has the power of the temptress figure been reduced. The emphasis of post-war totalitarianism on the genre has faded along with traditionally heteronormative social customs. Now dystopian literature is no longer concerned with a world where love can never take place, for oppressive totalitarianism has made way for the anxiety of human technological and biological progress. The importance of love in the modern dystopian genre is no longer about *who* loves, but *why* one loves.



### III. LOVE AS NOSTALGIA

While love in early twentieth-century dystopian literature relies on a female temptress figure whose unorthodoxy lures a male protagonist to rebellion, love in more recent dystopian fiction does not adhere to this standard heteronormative romance. Love in contemporary dystopian fiction is varied affection: it can be platonic or romantic, heterosexual or homosexual (if sexual at all), and it rarely defines itself exclusively as one or the other. Love in contemporary dystopian literature is also no longer an obscure emotional state; it has already been experienced by the characters who wish it to be felt again. In this way, love now becomes a manifestation of nostalgia and optimism—a desire for the past where love was once felt and the wish that love can exist again.

Nostalgia can be seen in the earliest dystopian works, from the Ancient House in Zamyatin's *We* to Winston's journeys into the antique store in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While nostalgia is an important element, it does not replace the escape from oppression as the driving force of love in these novels. While government oppression is a continuing issue in dystopian works the focus of love is no longer escape but nostalgia, how past love affects present and future situations.

The shift away from love as escape is partially due to the rapid advancements of science and technology. With advancements in the field of genetics, Huxley's *Brave New World* of perfect humans, mass-produced in factories, seems more and more achievable. The ability to genetically alter forms, be it animal, plant, or even simple



cellular organisms like viruses, is no longer a remote possibility. This advancement has exacerbated the Huxleyesque fear in dystopian literature of a genetic bastardization of life forms that could irrevocably change society and potentially lead to humanity's destruction through the extinction of the human race and the decimation of our world. With humanity teetering precariously on the verge of an apocalyptic extinction, love is no longer used as simple political rebellion but as a desire for a return to the relative simplicity of the past. The desire for return is coupled with a dystopian character's perception of love as nostalgia and his or her desire to recreate the past where the experience of love was strongest.

Two earlier works do not immediately concentrate on the fear of apocalypse, yet their focus on love in totalitarian governments is not one of escape but of nostalgia. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta* serve as transitional novels by incorporating elements of classic and contemporary dystopian fiction. Both are similar to earlier dystopian fiction with their oppressive totalitarian states but their portrayal of love within this state is oriented more toward a return to the past than an act of ideological rebellion.

Set in the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian theocracy, *The Handmaid's Tale* centers on Offred, a woman who is forced into being a handmaid, a reproductive concubine. Her very name shows her position as object: "Offred" means "of Fred," naming her as property of a particular Commander. With all of her rights taken away from her, Offred is reduced to the subordinated position of Handmaid. Her only relief is the stillness of the night, "my own time" as she describes, where she remembers her past life with her husband, Luke, and their daughter (Atwood, *Handmaid* 37). They had tried



to flee the formation of Gilead, but Offred and her daughter were captured and forcibly assimilated into Gilead's social structure. While she has been told her daughter is alive, placed with "people who are fit" to raise her, Luke's fate remains a mystery (39). Offred understands that "he may not be alive," and she continuously expects to see his corpse on the Wall with other traitors. When she does not find him there, her hope for the future where they can reunite continues, fueling her own survival instinct.

At the doctor's office, when the doctor informs Offred "I could help you," Offred's thoughts immediately turn to Luke: "Does he know something, has he seen Luke, has he found [sic], can he bring back?" (60). With no provocation, Offred's mind simply jumps to Luke, which shows his strong presence in her thoughts.

Offred's love for Luke, her reoccurring memories of their time together, helps her find sanity and escape in the oppressive world that treats her like a breeding tool. The idea of Luke and the memory of their love helps Offred retain some semblance of her past identity. Gilead has taken everything away from her, even her real name, but the nostalgia she feels for their love drives her:

I want Luke here so badly. I want to be held and told my name. I want to be valued, in ways that I am not; I want to be more than valuable. I repeat my former name, remind myself of what I once could do, how others saw me. (97)

The memories spur her survival instinct; she will not commit suicide or conform ideologically and lose the little of herself that she keeps in the quiet of the night. Despite her affair with Nick, it is Luke's memory that solely drives this survival instinct as she admits "there's nobody here I can love, all the people I could love are dead or elsewhere"



(103). Though Offred acknowledges Luke may be dead or that he may have been arrested, her belief that he may have escaped gives her enough strength to continue living for their eventual reunion:

Meanwhile I must endure, keep myself safe for later. What has happened to me, what's happening to me now, won't make any difference to him, he loves me anyway, he knows it isn't my fault. The message [he will send] will say that also. It's this message, which may never arrive, that keeps me alive. (106)

Though she does not know his fate, Offred must keep Luke alive in her heart to keep living, as "it's a lack of love we die from" (103). Nostalgia, for Offred, provides her only optimism for a future devoid of oppression, a future that allows her to return to her lost love.

Like the earliest dystopian fiction of Zamyatin and Orwell, Alan Moore's graphic narrative, *V for Vendetta* centers on a traditional rebellion against a totalitarian government. However, like *The Handmaid's Tale*, the portrayal of love is different from earlier dystopian works. Love is not a new, thrilling experience that fuels a desire for escape or rebellion so it can continue. Love's importance is now seen from a nostalgic perspective whereby a character desires a return to the time love can be experienced again.

*V for Vendetta* is set in a near-future United Kingdom after a world-wide nuclear war. The UK has not suffered nuclear attack; however, a post-war totalitarian regime, Norsefire, has gained power and eliminated anyone politically or ideologically opposed to the regime to instill order from "the chaos after the war" (Moore, *V* 211). Political



dissidents, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals were sent by Norsefire to concentration camps where they were executed or used for biological testing. The anarchist protagonist, V, is the only surviving inmate from the Larkhill camp, and Moore develops the story around V's vengeful murders of the surviving Larkhill staff, his methodological destruction of the Norsefire regime, and the love he shares with a girl he saves, Evey Hammond.

V might be seen as an "other" figure, trying to help Evey escape and rebel against her world, but unlike the early dystopian literature's female temptress, there is no sexual or obviously heternormative romance between them to encourage her to rebel. At first, Evey mistakes V's love for her as a sexual, romantic love but V counters by bringing up her past, posing the question "perhaps I'm your father?" (96). Her family was taken by the government during the initial roundup of minorities and political dissidents and she has never seen them again. Evey had questioned whether or not the masked V could be her lost father ("How did you know that I thought . . .") but that did not stop her from considering V a possible romantic love interest. This inconsistency in her character forces V to release Evey from his care, abandoning her on the street with the clear message: "I'm not your father, Evey. Your father is dead." (99-100).

The authorities eventually arrest and torture Evey for any information she may have on V or any terrorist activities she's participated in. Her torture—beatings and waterboarding—is aimed at forcing a confession of her participation in V's murders of the Larkhill staff. Through all this, Evey gains strength from a letter written on toilet paper by a woman named Valerie. Another prisoner, Valerie has written an autobiography on the paper and smuggled it through a crack between their cells.



Valerie is a lesbian, and because of her unorthodox sexuality, she and her lover, Ruth, had been arrested as criminals. Like Winston and Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ruth was tortured into betraying Valerie: “They burned her with cigarette ends and made her give them my name. She signed a statement saying I’d seduced her.” Though this betrayal causes Valerie’s arrest, Valerie writes that she doesn’t blame her because, “God, I loved her” (159).

Through Valerie’s letter, Evey is exposed to a type of love that is a more universal emotional connection than the simple sexualized romance she is most familiar with. Valerie writes: “I don’t know who you are, or whether you’re a man or woman. I may never see you. I will never hug you or cry with you or get drunk with you. But I love you.” (160). Just as she couldn’t blame Ruth for her betrayal, Valerie loves simply because she can, she never “apologised to nobody [sic],” whether it was right or wrong, viewed as heterosexual or homosexual, or even wanted (159). She gives it freely; that is her integrity, and she does not give it up:

. . . but it was my integrity that was important. Is that so selfish? It sells for so little, but it’s all we have left in this place. It is the very last inch of us . . . but within that inch we are free. . . . It’s small and it’s fragile and it’s the only thing in the world that’s worth having. We must never lose it, or sell it, or give it away. We must never let them take it from us. (156, 160)

Unlike *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Winston and Julia, Valerie will not let a totalitarian state break down her integrity by betraying her love.



Because of Valerie's love letter, Evey finally accepts the importance of V's belief that the people should "take responsibility" for themselves (41). Valerie would not betray her love even though the government decreed it illegal and immoral. She knew it was not and she would not betray her integrity by acting as if her love were a crime. Due to Valerie's example, Evey maintains her integrity and does not confess to the trumped-up charges against her. It may mean her execution, but she embraces it. She would "rather die behind the chemical sheds" than give up her integrity and confess (162). This obstinacy to give up love in the face of oppression is similar to how Offred's love in *The Handmaid's Tale* allows Offred to keep her individuality despite the heavy conditioning against such personal freedoms. Through past examples of love, both women hold onto their integrity.

This torture, however, was staged by V himself in order for Evey to understand the importance of integrity. Yet Valerie's love letter is real; it is the same letter V received at Larkhill from the woman confined in the adjacent cell, the same letter that influenced his struggle against a government that oppresses people and removes their freedoms. When Evey asks why he staged her torture, V explains: "Because I love you. Because I want to set you free" (167).

Because of the example of Valerie's love, a love now nostalgic because of its illegality but powerful because of its integrity, Evey begins her life anew. At the end, as V lies dying and the government lies in ruins, he tells her: "This country is not saved... do not think that... but all its old beliefs have come to rubble and from that rubble may we build. That is their task: to rule themselves, their lives and loves and land. . . . Good luck, sweet Eve, I love you" (245). Evey has now symbolically become the traditional Eve,



ready to begin society anew with a greater understanding of the importance of love and integrity.

In 2006, James McTeigue directed a movie version of *V for Vendetta* adapted by Andy and Lana Wachowski for Warner Brothers studios. There were quite a few differences from the graphic novel in the story, but the most prominent was the origins of Norsefire's rise to power. The nuclear war that allowed Norsefire's rise is replaced with a genetically engineered virus that decimates the population of the world. The St. Mary's Virus, named for the elementary school where it first manifested, was engineered by Norsefire itself for use as a biological weapon. By releasing the virus on its own people, Norsefire created a hysteria that allowed its rise to power, generously helped by Norsefire's control of the vaccine. The change to the background of the story highlights the shift of modern dystopian fiction away from totalitarian governments towards a fear of self-destructive, unrestrained biological and technological progress.

While nuclear anxiety still persists, the past nuclear wars of *The Handmaid's Tale* and the graphic novel *V for Vendetta* were only briefly described; the focus is on the totalitarian regimes that rose to power afterward. Contemporary dystopian fiction is more concerned with impending doom, especially that resulting from unchecked nuclear, scientific, and genetic progress that threatens the continuation of the human race. Later works by Moore and Atwood explore these fears, questioning the need and purpose of science and its ability to better humanity and avoid destruction. The worlds of *Watchmen* and *Oryx and Crake* are no longer recovering from world destruction but are on the verge of total annihilation. It is an age of apocalypse and the importance of the past becomes even stronger as hope for the future, any future, is lost. *Watchmen*'s Sally Jupiter says it



best: “Every day the future looks a little bit darker. But the past, even the grimy parts of it . . . well, it just keeps on getting brighter all the time” (Moore, *Watchmen* 36).

Written almost simultaneously alongside *V for Vendetta*, Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* is set in a time and place concurrent with its publication—the United States of the mid-1980s. This United States is similar to our own with one major exception: superheroes do exist, and they have affected the outcome of key moments of the twentieth century. While most costumed heroes do not exhibit any superpowers, the character of Dr. Manhattan is essentially a god, able to create and destroy without effort. Through him, the U.S. won Vietnam, Richard Nixon is now president-for-life, and the world now has technologies like electric cars. Yet, the world is still on the verge of destruction as the United States and the U.S.S.R. teeter on the threshold of nuclear war. It is a war that none of the heroes, even Dr. Manhattan, can stop, as someone is killing or negating the remaining heroes one by one. Laurie Jupiter, the Silk Spectre, finds love with Daniel Dreiberger, Nite Owl. Her love emerges from her acceptance of her past while her future darkens under the shadow of nuclear apocalypse.

Laurie Jupiter, the second Silk Spectre, is heavily influenced by her mother and Laurie’s own relationship with Dr. Manhattan. Laurie’s mother, Sally, the original Silk Spectre, raised Laurie to become a superhero, something she never really cared for: “. . . ten years running round in a stupid costume because my stupid mother wanted me to!” (25). Besides forcing an unwanted career path on her daughter, Sally Jupiter’s past romantic history constantly influences Laurie, due mainly to Sally never revealing to Laurie who her father is. By accepting her mother’s control, Laurie passively lives her own life. Her relationship with Dr. Manhattan suffers from emotional distance, and



Laurie remains little more than a kept woman waiting to be used by him. Laurie seeks meaning in her life but doesn't understand how this passive acceptance of the influence of others affects her. She is left "hopelessly lost in the fog" (275).

Appropriately, Moore uses Nostalgia, a perfume/cologne created by another character, throughout the story to highlight how the past brings Laurie and Daniel together. Through advertisements and even the physical bottle itself, Nostalgia emphasizes the key moments in Daniel and Laurie's relationship, as when Laurie and Daniel first try to make love as a television plays a Nostalgia commercial. Despite their personal problems, Dan and Laurie have found each other and take comfort in their relationship. Through the use of Nostalgia, the perfume and concept, Moore shows how the acceptance of her past allows Laurie to fully love Dan.

When Laurie realizes who her father is, Nostalgia is seen once again. She carries the perfume bottle in her purse when Dr. Manhattan takes her to Mars. Though her purpose is to convince him to return to Earth to help prevent the war, Laurie eventually comes to terms with a realization she has long been suppressing. Manhattan questions Laurie about the worth, the meaning, of humanity: "All those generations of struggle, what purpose did they ever achieve? All that effort, and what did it ever lead to?" (266). Despite Laurie's insistence, Manhattan does not see human life as anything special. The desolate landscape on Mars is more beautiful to him, and he asks her, "Does the human heart know chasms so abysmal?" (275). Throughout the chapter, Manhattan's questioning the worth of human life forces Laurie to question her own worth, and she discusses her memories throughout their conversation. She uses key moments from her past to exemplify that human life is sculpted by unseen forces in the same way as the



Martian landscape. Laurie focuses her memories primarily around her childhood and her interactions with the Comedian, a hero who had attempted to rape her mother years ago. Time and time again, the Comedian appears in Laurie's examples until Dr. Manhattan tells her "I think you're avoiding something" (279). Laurie breaks down as she realizes the Comedian was her father and throws the bottle of Nostalgia from her purse in anger, screaming "No!" (280). This revelation changes Dr. Manhattan's mind about human civilization, and he can once again see the miracle of human life:

And yet, in each human coupling, a thousand million sperm vie for a single egg. Multiply those odds by countless generations, against the odds of your ancestors being alive; meeting; siring this precise son; that exact daughter . . . until your mother loves a man she has every reason to hate, and of that union, of the thousand million children competing for fertilization, it was you, only you, that emerged. To distill so specific a form from that chaos of improbability, like turning air to gold . . . (283)

The realization that, despite all odds, her mother loved a man who had hurt her so badly allows Laurie to see that "just the existence of life" is "significant" (269). When she sees her mother again, Laurie harbors no ill will: "It doesn't matter. People's lives take them strange places, they do strange things" (381).

With the assistance of his artist, Dave Gibbons, Moore also scatters a visual theme throughout the story: a couple, facing each other, embracing. It first appears as spray-painted graffiti on a brick wall, a simple black silhouette of a man and woman kissing. In the midst of his impotence crisis, Dan imagines that he and Laurie embrace during the impending nuclear war, their flesh blasted away until they are two skeletons



kissing in an embrace. The author and artist use the image again, without a heteronormative interpretation, when Ozymandias destroys New York. Here, the image takes on the connotation of a universal love, neither platonic nor romantic. As the physical and psychic blast from his teleported monstrosity obliterates the surroundings, a newspaperman and young boy fall into each other's arms in a protective embrace before they are vaporized.

The final use of the embracing image is tied to the final use of Nostalgia, when Dan and Laurie embrace the past and each other and make love. Laurie demonstrates she understands that "just the existence of life" is significant, when she tells Dan, "I want you to love me. I want you to love me because we're not dead. . . . I want to see you and taste you and smell you, just because I can" (269, 374). When Laurie asks Dan what he smells of, he replies "Nostalgia," and as they kiss, their shadows form the embracing image on the wall behind them (374). Dan may be naming the cologne he's wearing, but he is unintentionally connecting the small, extemporaneous moments of life to the past. The past, their nostalgia, has shaped who they are, but the past is not the driving force of their present existence. By accepting the effects of the past but no longer allowing it to control her, Laurie has learned to live in the present, the here and now where she can smell, taste, and see. Their loving embrace is the manifestation of how the past and present come together and create something new for the future.

The past is also a motivational force in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. Jimmy's past, before he took the name "Snowman," is the sole reason he struggles to survive in his harsh, barren world. His past memories, especially his love for Oryx, spur



him to endure his lonely existence in his post-apocalyptic world and ensure that the Craker species survives and prospers.

Snowman tells his stories in flashbacks to the time he was known as Jimmy. He lived in a future Earth where bioengineering ran rampant, environmental devastation caused havoc, and human culture was controlled by sex and violence. It is a dystopian world of overcrowded excess—but not nearly as bad as the dystopian world that replaces it. For Jimmy's childhood friend Crake bioengineers not only a virus to exterminate the human race, but also bioengineers their replacements, his beautiful, humanoid Crakers. From this second dystopian world, a barren wasteland of the decaying remnants of human civilization, Jimmy survives on nostalgia for what little remains of the world he grew up in.

Jimmy/Snowman's outlook on time is warped: "He doesn't know which is worse, a past he can't regain or a present that will destroy him if he looks at it too clearly. Then there's the future. Sheer vertigo" (Atwood, *Oryx* 147). All alternatives are painful for Jimmy, and, like *Watchmen*'s Laurie, Jimmy considers himself "lost in the fog" (237). Though his present is "bad enough," and his future is seemingly hopeless, it is the past, his "vanished life," that continues to haunt him (265, 105). Jimmy says "he needed to forget the past—the distant past, the immediate past, the past in any form," but he is unable to give up the past entirely because it is his only comfort (349). Jimmy/Snowman is alone, and, though the Crakers can speak, they are too mentally and physically different from *Homo sapiens* to understand the devastation Jimmy experienced, how an entire population, his entire species and culture, was rendered extinct.



Without anyone suitable to talk to, Jimmy relies on the past, particularly his lover, Oryx, to provide him company. Jimmy's love for Oryx remains so strong that he can even imagine she is still with him. "Oryx," Jimmy says, "I know you're there" (110). Her presence is almost tangible: "He can sense Oryx drifting towards him on her soft feathery wings. Any moment now she'll be with him" (238). Jimmy even imagines Oryx speaking to him, as if they could hold a conversation. Oryx's continuing presence suggests that Jimmy is becoming increasingly delusional, but what he believes is that the spiritual presence of his lover helps him continue living in the ruins around him. And more importantly, Jimmy's memories of Oryx's love pressures him to take care of the Crakers.

Jimmy's love for Oryx continues despite her death; it is so strong that he dutifully keeps her last wish that he look after the Crakers if she could not. Jimmy even forgoes suicide in order to keep his promise to Oryx: "Once in a while he considered killing himself—it seemed mandatory—but somehow he didn't have the required energy. . . . He could imagine Crake's amused contempt, and the disappointment of Oryx: *But Jimmy! Why do you give up? You have a job to do! You promised, remember?*" (344). Despite her death, Jimmy/Snowman's love for Oryx remains his constant motivation in his dystopian present. He is adamant he won't betray her. Jimmy continues to hear Oryx's request, "*Don't let me down,*" and this encourages him to continue helping the Crakers as best he can (374).

Like *Oryx and Crake*, Hideakki Anno's *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, "one of the most important and groundbreaking anime series ever created," also shows a dystopian world severely destroyed yet awaiting further devastation (Napier 424). The only nation



to fall under atomic attack, Japan embraces the dystopian genre seemingly because of their “ever-growing mass-culture obsession with end-of-the-world motifs” (420). Like most anime (animated movie or television show), *Evangelion* relies on heavy science fiction elements, especially the standard Japanese obsession with mecha: giant, piloted robots. However, the importance of *Evangelion* is that it “becomes increasingly concerned with the problematic mental and emotional states of the main characters, all of whom carry deep psychic wounds and whose psychic turmoil is represented against an increasingly frenzied apocalyptic background” (425). These “psychic wounds” repeatedly concern how past feelings of love affect the present and future.

The world of *Evangelion* is “caught between two apocalypses, suspended in an intermediary state” (Thouny 113). The events of the series takes place in 2015, fifteen years after Second Impact (First Impact being the meteorite whose impact led to the extinction of the dinosaurs), an event that destroyed most of Antarctica, flooded the world and killed half the population of Earth. Now the surviving civilization is in fear of Third Impact, an event that would wipe humanity off the face of the planet completely. Adding to their troubles is the arrival of the destructive Angels, a group diverse in size and shape but whose genetic composition shows an unusually close similarity to the human species. The organization Nerv creates colossal, biomechanical robots called Evangelions, or Evas, to fight and destroy each Angel that makes contact. As the series progresses, the real reason for the Evas, the true origins of the Angels, and the grand machinations of Nerv lead to an apocalypse that is not only physical, but mental. In the end the protagonist Shinji Ikari, the lonely 14 year-old pilot of Eva Unit 01, rejects a dystopian world of conformity and isolation due to his brief exposure to love.



The storyline for *Evangelion* is “layered, crowded with riddles, arguably overcoded,” but its concentration on the personal developments of characters redeems its dense backstory (Ortega 217). Throughout the 26-episode series, the main protagonist Shinji lives a passive, lonely life of self-loathing. He has been virtually ignored by his father after his mother’s death and the lack of parental affection has made Shinji insecure and withdrawn. Even when he is summoned by his estranged father, Gendo, the commander of Nerv, to pilot Evan Unit 01, Shinji remains passive, relying on others to give him orders and advice.

In episode 24, “The Beginning and the End, or ‘Knocking on Heaven’s Door,’” Shinji meets Kaworu Nagisa, the “Fifth Child” chosen to pilot an Eva. Kaworu’s behavior is contrasted sharply with Shinji’s; he seems relaxed and confident and a knowing half-smile is always on his lips. This is very different from Shinji, who is quiet, nervous, and submissively hunches over when threatened. Kaworu’s nature is the standard “other” of dystopian fiction, though Kaworu does not tempt Shinji and instead flatly tells him what’s wrong with his behavior: “Are you that afraid of other people? Are you that scared of affection?” Kaworu is more teacher than tempter as he blatantly informs Shinji of his problems. Shinji is scared of getting close to others, of getting betrayed or abandoned, and, because he keeps others at a distance, Shinji will never forget “what loneliness is” (“Beginning”).

Yet despite his quick and damning assessment of Shinji’s character faults, Kaworu and Shinji become close friends and Kaworu even tells Shinji, “I love you.” The affection Kaworu shows him blurs the line between platonic and romantic as Kaworu flirts with Shinji, placing his hand over Shinji’s as they sit in the communal bath. When



Shinji says he has to go to bed, Kaworu asks, “With me?” suggesting a sexual interest on his part. Kaworu also tells Shinji, “I was probably born to meet you” (“Beginning”). Shinji enjoys every moment of affection, whether platonic or romantic, for it has been too long since he has felt any affection.

The young men’s relationship is short lived as Kaworu’s true nature is quickly revealed. He is not only the Fifth Child but also an Angel. Amidst the confusion caused by this revelation, Kaworu attacks Nerv headquarters and tries to initiate Third Impact. Eventually Kaworu is unable to start it and implores Shinji, piloting Eva Unit 01, to kill him so he has no further opportunity to initiate Third Impact:

Death of the self, that is the only absolute freedom. Now destroy me.

Otherwise you will be destroyed. Only one life form can be chosen to evade the destruction and inherit the future. And you are not the existence that should die. You need the future. (“Beginning”)

While feeling betrayed and confused by Kaworu’s status as an Angel and his request for death, Shinji ultimately uses his Eva to kill his friend, squashing Kaworu within Eva Unit 01’s fist after contemplating the action in a still scene that lasts over a minute onscreen.

This is an act that initiates his transformation into a stronger, more proactive person.

“Kaworu said he loved me,” Shinji tells his guardian, Misato, “I’ve never, never had such kind words [spoken to me]” (“Beginning”). “I loved him too,” Shinji admits. The

affection he received from Kaworu is something Shinji has lacked since his mother died.

The love that Kaworu gave him will give him the strength to refuse the Third Impact his father, Gendo, later orchestrates.



Shinji has been profoundly affected by the past, the loss of his mother and her love, and his father has been similarly affected by her death. Gendo misses his late wife so much that he not only recreates her, cloning her as the character Rei, but he also seeks to get her back through the Human Instrumentality Project, his version of Third Impact that he initiates in the final two episodes of the series. Instrumentality is the physical disintegration of all humans and the merging of their souls, those alive and dead, into one mass entity. It is a spiritual amalgamation of the governmental maxim in Zamyatin's *We*, that "no one is *one* but only *one of*" (Zamyatin 8). By initiating Third Impact through his Instrumentality, Gendo hopes to be reunited with his love, Shinji's mother, Yui, but at the cost of the individuality of every human being on the planet. Everyone will merge into one hive consciousness without the need for personal thought or emotions. No one will be lonely again.

At first Instrumentality seems advantageous to Shinji because he would be united with others without fear of abandonment, rejection, or betrayal. But because of Kaworu's love for him, Shinji rejects Instrumentality and uncovers the strength to find value in his own life. Shinji believed he "had no value before" he started piloting his Eva, but thanks to the example of Kaworu's love, he realizes "maybe my life could have a greater value." When Shinji declares "I am me!" his self-loathing, passive life disappears. With this declaration, Shinji rejects Instrumentality and accepts his individuality. "I want to continue existing in this world!" he yells, and for the first time, looks optimistically toward the future ("Take Care").

As noted earlier, nostalgia can be seen in *We*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and *Fahrenheit 451*, as well as contributing briefly to other works, but love is still



concentrated as a means of escaping oppression. However, the origin of this movement away from love-as-escape to love-as-nostalgia is set firmly in these early dystopian novels. The nascent interest in the past found in early dystopian works show that “the flow of history was never-ending, and that one phase of human development grows organically out of what preceded it” (Saint-Andre 292). In contemporary dystopian literature, characters are continuously affected by their pasts and the present is firmly rooted in what preceded it. The love characters knew once helps them to preserve their individuality, to continue to survive, and to become stronger persons in the face of their current adversity. Even in the bleakest dystopian world, nostalgia fuels optimism for a future where love can be felt again, unhampered by the forces set on preventing or destroying lovers.



#### IV. PREVENTING LOVE

Since love is often an escape from the harsh control of the dystopian world, it can be seen as a threat to the world itself. At the end of *Brave New World*, Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe, explains to the Savage: “The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving any one too much. There’s no such thing as a divided allegiance . . .” (Huxley 213). The dystopian governments require total allegiance from their citizens, an allegiance that is not possible when love is involved. Love turns the allegiance of a person toward his/her government to the allegiance of one person to another. Such a change threatens the mandated order and loyalty the government demands and, systematically, the government tries to prevent love from forming.

Conditioning, the acquired behavior patterns people learn throughout their lives, is the primary method the dystopian world uses to “keep in check the potentially disruptive effect of love relationships on mate choice and stratification systems” (Goode 38). Dystopian societies condition their citizens to obey zealously their expected societal behavior, especially allegiance to the government. Since love focuses personal allegiance on a person rather than the government, dystopian societies attempt to control privacy and sex, basic pathways to love, by conditioning citizens in specific ways.

By controlling privacy, a dystopian society hopes to eliminate “the subversion inherent in private relationships” (Feuer 86). In his essay, “Orwell Versus Huxley:



Economics, Technology, Privacy, and Satire,” Richard A. Posner explains how “a taste for solitude is inimical to totalizing schemes of governance and social organization . . . because when people are alone they are more apt to have wayward thoughts about their community than when they are immersed in it” (2). This is why many of the totalitarian governments in dystopian novels prevent any individual privacy, by providing glass living quarters and structured itineraries of *We* to the ever watchful wall-mounted telescreens of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Citizens are conditioned to act with a hive mentality. Behavior is expected to be uniform and universal, or, as D-503 says in *We*, “no one is *one* but only *one of*” (Zamyatin 8). While this maxim could as well describe a couple, a relationship is still seen as an individual entity as it cannot include all members of a community. Love not only segregates a couple from their larger community but sets up their relationship as an opposing community, albeit of two, that will no longer remain in the larger whole. Such dissidence, while seemingly harmless, is feared by dystopian governments that equate total allegiance with the retention of social order.

To understand how the dystopian world combats love one must first understand the methods by which it controls privacy. Since any romantic relationship is defined by the private thoughts and actions of its participants, any method used to preemptively or retroactively combat privacy is the underlying safeguard to prevent the formation of personal relationships.

Citizens are often conditioned, from earliest childhood, to believe that it is only natural to be observed constantly. Children in *We*, *Brave New World*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are all conditioned through instruction, or, as in the case of *Brave New World*, hypnopædia, a type of subliminal messaging, to readily accept governmental



doctrine that promotes communal allegiance and awareness over individual freedom and privacy.

Dystopian governments also condition citizens against privacy by regulating personal movements. Reflecting the title of the novel, all the Numbers in *We* move as a solitary entity due to a governmentally mandated itinerary. D-503 describes this itinerary, known as the “Table of Hours,” and explains that it controls every action of OneState’s citizens:

Every morning, with six-wheeled precision, at the very same hour and the very same minute, we get up, millions of us, as though we were one. At the very same hour, millions of us as one, we start work. Later, millions as one, we stop. And then, like one body with a million hands, at one and the same second according to the Table, we lift the spoon to our lips. And at one and the same second, we leave for a stroll and go to the auditorium, to the hall for the Taylor exercises, and then go to bed. (Zamyatin 13)

Mandated actions and attendance at events also appear in *Brave New World* where Bernard must attend “Solidarity Service days” (Huxley 80). As its name suggests, these days function as mandatory meetings where ideological conditioning against privacy takes place, encouraging a solidified society. In a mockery of religious services, Bernard and others sing “Solidarity Hymns” which promote a communal mindset that discourages individual attachments:

*Ford, we are twelve; oh, make us one,*

*Like drops within the Social River;*

*Oh, make us now together run*



*As swiftly as thy shining Flivver. (82)*

Describing people as “drops within the Social River” and pleading for everyone to be brought together into one social entity display conditioning that, while not subtle, ingratiates itself into personal behavior. Appropriately, the Solidarity Service ends with an orgy, a sexual embodiment of the community their service is endorsing.

The most common way for a dystopian totalitarian government to inhibit privacy is by a well-structured surveillance system that allows constant access to individuals and ensures no private moments. In Zamyatin’s *We*, the numbered citizens of OneState live in glass apartments, their daily actions observable from the outside as well as from everyone inside the building. D-503 describes this openly visible existence:

We get to use the blinds only on Sex Day. Otherwise we live in broad daylight inside these walls that seem to have been fashioned out of bright air, always on view. We have nothing to hide from one another. Besides, this makes it easier for the Guardians to carry out their burdensome, noble task. No telling what might go on otherwise. (Zamyatin 19)

The only time Numbers have some privacy is during their “Sex Days,” governmentally approved moments, only about 15 minutes, where sex between Numbers can take place behind lowered blinds. Every other action is open to visible scrutiny by other Numbers or by the Guardians, the organization aimed at finding ideological dissent in OneState.

Without the benefit of glass housing to keep an eye on citizens, the governments in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* nevertheless keep constant surveillance on their citizens through less transparent means. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the government of Oceania monitors its citizens through a



“telescreen,” a sort of propaganda-spewing television that simultaneously transmits video as well as records the actions of those in its presence. The audio of the telescreen may be lowered, but “there was no way of shutting it off completely” (Orwell 3). The telescreen completely removes any privacy from the Party members of Oceania: “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 which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard.” Every member of the ruling Party has a telescreen that monitors behavior, creating an oppressive environment where one would suppose “every sound you made was heard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized” (4). However, a lack of technology does not inhibit the conditioning against privacy. Atwood’s handmaidens do not have telescreens, but they are never able to close their bedroom doors, be in the presence of other men, or completely alone.

Groups whose precise function is to weed out anyone who fails to conform to the conditioning of the society or seeks out antithetic freedoms aid the electronic surveillance. Because antithetic behavior is often fostered in private, these organizations mean to keep a close eye on anyone showing the subtlest signs that diverges behavior from the prescribed, homogeneous norm. Organizations like the Guardians in *We*, the Thought Police in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and the Angels in *The Handmaid’s Tale* are the last line of defense against those ideological nonconformists that find an open or inner privacy to engage in behavior opposed by the government. If conditioning and the normal surveillance fail to prevent unwanted behavior these organizations detect trespassers. Ironically, while their task is to covertly spy on people and remove those with antithetical behavior, these organizations remain private and secretive, to the point



that nobody knows who could be a member. This paranoia further prevents private relationships from forming. No one knows who is a member of these organizations and the fear of being labeled antithetical forces people to remain solitary. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston does not like Julia and believes “that she might be an agent of the Thought Police” (11). As the novel progresses Winston discovers that Julia is far from being an agent of governmental oppression, but the example illustrates how these secretive societies could potentially prevent individual and communal privacy that may breed dissent.

Conditioning people to give up personal privacy and imagine themselves as part of a community as opposed to being a separate entity is the basic conditioning against private relationships, but such conditioning does not solve the problem of the human sex drive. The human sex drive propels the desire that often first leads to private relationships, just as physical intimacy encourages or augments the personal attachment of love. The sex drive may initiate a desire for contact with another person, but, whether leading up to or during the course of the sexual relationship, emotional bonds can form between the partners. Sex can also lead to the conception of children, and the bond of love between parent and child can be a catalyst for further loving bonds to form. The threat of sex leading to the creation, retention, and propagation of love is why sex is as closely regulated as privacy by the totalitarian societies of dystopian fiction.

Humans need social and physical contact with other human beings. In his article “Zamyatin and Rand,” Peter Saint-Andre understands this need as one of many “human universals” or “species wide behavior patterns” (288-89). The sex drive especially includes “family life: the choosing of a mate, the rearing of children by their natural



parents, the sharing of meals among close relatives, etc.” (289). These universals are so engrained in our concept of living that when they are removed they disrupt deep-rooted behavior patterns our species has adopted. Saint-Andre describes the effect removing these universals has within the dystopian novel:

Most every dystopian novel violates these universal behavior patterns through the portrayal of eugenics programs, state rearing of children, communal eating arrangements, and so forth . . . it is precisely such universals that humans find so natural in real life, and thus, so deeply troubling when violated in so-called utopias. (289)

By requiring commitment to partner and family, love naturally comes under attack from a society that requires total allegiance to itself. For this reason, the elements of love—intimacy, sex, marriage, children—are actively fought or controlled in order to ensure allegiance to the society.

While love is not necessarily a part of the human sex drive, love cannot be completely removed from a relationship without breaking the relationship completely; the sex drive needs love as much as love requires the drive. There must be some emotional bond occurring for the humanity to perpetuate itself, and when devoid of love in relationships and especially sex, love can still be found in the rearing of children. As long as this love is present during early development it can generate the ability for people to love, romantically or platonically, later in life. In her essay, “The Roots of Love and Commitment in Childhood,” Margaret Morgan Lawrence explains how knowing and feeling that one is loved “supports, in the older person, the image of herself as lovable and capable of loving” (63). This propagation of love is why every element must be



controlled by the dystopian state, for whether romantic love, parental love, or familial love, affection, once felt, can beget more private relationships. Like the mythical hydra, all heads must be cut off or else the beast of Love will continue to sprout threatening relationship after threatening relationship.

The engrained human need to seek out and produce loving relationships is also attacked not just for the privacy love entails but for the social chaos love can cause. The emotions love and attachment produce, whether pleasurable or heartbreaking, can have volatile effects for a society searching for permanent stability. In *Brave New World*, the Controller explains the great importance of their society's policies against deep emotional bonds: "Stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this. . . . No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, so far as that is possible, from having emotions at all" (Huxley 48-49).

In order to prevent love and other destabilizing emotions, the dystopian world must regulate the sex drive. Sex must be stripped of all intimacy, of the individualized emotional attachments, that pulls lovers out of the communal mindset they are immersed in. Sex must also be separated from the process of conception and childrearing. The sexual strategies used in dystopian fiction show there is no correct attitude toward sexual governance. Posner, speaking of Orwell & Huxley, explains:

The contrast between the two authors' views of the political consequences of a society's sexual mores suggests that there may not be a unique totalitarian "take" on sexual freedom. Perhaps, however, any kind of intimacy is a potential threat to a totalitarian society, which seeks to mobilize the population for selfless communal projects; and the issue is



then what policy toward sex discourages intimacy. (20)

Posner is correct in stating that there is not a unique totalitarian “take” on sexual freedom as represented in dystopian literature as there are multiple strategies used by dystopian societies to regulate sex. Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, Atwood and other writers in the genre create different strategies for the dystopian separation of sex from the intimacy of love and conception, ranging from governmentally regulated promiscuity to enforced celibacy.

Two of the earliest and most influential works of dystopian fiction, Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, focus on endorsed promiscuity and regulated conception as the preventative countermeasures to loving relationships. In *We*, the government of OneState institutes a “pink ticket” program to allow for the culmination of sexual desire. Love, lust, envy, anger—and a host of other natural emotions—are repressed behind pink sex tickets that allow access to anyone, specifically in order to eliminate the subversive intimacy associated with individualized love. As D-503 explains:

... OneState mounted an attack on that other ruler of the world, Love. Finally, this element was also conquered, i.e., organized, mathematicized, and our *Lex sexualis* was promulgated about 300 years ago: “Any Number has the right of access to any other Number as sexual product.” (Zamyatin 22)

In its definably mathematic manner, OneState leaders believe the sexual and romantic urges of their citizens can be regulated into an orderly system that disperses romantic urges with sexual promiscuity. D-503, ever the slave to what will “integrate completely



the colossal equation of the universe,” obeys this maxim fervently (4). He happily allows the regulation of his relationship with O-90 through the pink ticket system. While D-503 does betray some sort of attachment to his “dear O,” and almost refers to her with the unorthodox possessive pronoun “my,” the emotional attachment is fairly weak and mainly based on “the pleasant and useful excitement” of sex (6, 7, 19). D-503 even shares O with the poet, R-13. D-503 says that he and R-13 “both chose that dear pink O,” and both men have sex with her without a hint of competition or individual attachment. Indeed, D-503 actually sees the three Numbers in “the language of our ancestors . . . a family” (44).

Yet this is a family in the most regulated sense, as, like its successors *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the totalitarian government in *We* is “hostile to the family” (Posner 20). The three Numbers may loosely be a family, but the common mother/father/child dynamic is regulated, like sex, by OneState in order to eliminate the intimate ties of love. Children are conceived and raised apart from their parents and there is no clear evidence that child and parent have any contact or even knowledge of their mutual existence. Because no Number has experienced being someone’s child, sibling, or parent, the emotional connection of family is unlikely to form and the connection D-503 feels to R-13 is the simple commonality of their sexual use of O-90. D-503 is mistranslating “the language of our ancestors” by describing his little “family.” Sex has replaced or greatly dulled any emotional attachment. Love only flourishes when I-330’s unorthodoxy tempts D-503 out of his emotionally simple existence.

Like *We*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* controls sex to confirm governmental allegiance and control the discord emotions can produce on societal



stability. In the beginning of the novel, the Controller explains to a group of students how, in the past, society suffered from the burden of emotions like love and why such emotions had to be dispensed with:

What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopeless individual isolation), how could they be stable? (Huxley 47)

According to the Controller, “feeling lurks in that interval of time between desire and its consummation” (49). Prevent that interval of time from occurring, letting desire and consummation be almost instantaneous, and you will be able to remove the unstable feelings from forming and threatening social stability. The Controller explains the great importance of this policy: “Stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this . . . no pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, so far as that is possible, from having emotions at all” (48-49). Richard A. Posner notes how far this society has gone to prevent love, or any emotion, from upsetting its stable dynamic:

They [dystopian governments] induce mindless contentment, including guiltless promiscuous sex. They induce complete intellectual and cultural vacuity, and complete political passivity. Marriage, the family, and parenthood—all conceived of as sources of misery, tension, and painful strong emotions—have gone by the board. (10)



The government tries to solidify its stability by dispensing with monogamy, viviparous conception and birth and by replacing these concepts with endorsed, dispassionate promiscuity. And if problems do arise with this system, the government relies on *soma*, a mood-elevating drug, to unnaturally ensure pleasant but vacuous emotions. The removal of intimacy from sex through endorsed promiscuity is very similar to that of Zamyatin's *We*, as "every one [sic] belongs to every one [sic] else" (Huxley 48). This maxim has been hypnopædically implanted into the minds of the people so that the erotic play in children leads to Orgy-Porgy in adults, instilling noncommittal attitudes that ensure that complex interpersonal relationships never form. The replacement of emotional relationships with purely pleasurable sexual relationships becomes a constant characteristic of human living from earliest childhood. At the beginning of the novel, the D.H.C., the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, informs a group of students, and the reader themselves, how sexual activities now extend to the earliest years of life:

He let out the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!): and had therefore been rigorously suppressed. (Huxley 39)

The Director's "truth" about the sexualization of their culture is met with disbelief and laughter, as if children were not supposed to engage in sexualized activities. Sex has become tied to childhood, so much so that "erotic play" is described as "ordinary" for children who are years or decades away from being physiologically or mentally sexually mature.



This early sexualization of behavior is actively conditioned as standard behavior. Before he spoke to the students, a nurse interrupts the D.H.C. by leading a crying boy away from an “anxious-looking little girl.” When asked about the upset child, the nurse tells the D.H.C. that this “little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I’d noticed it once or twice before. And now again to-day [sic]. He started yelling just now...” The boy clearly shows no interest in engaging in sexual play but he is forced to participate. As she leads him away, the nurse tells the Director, “I’m taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything’s at all abnormal” (38). A refusal of sexualized behavior is seen as something that’s abnormal, something that must be fixed by the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology if the boy is to become a functioning member of his sexualized society.

Conditioned sexual behavior continues into adulthood. The D.H.C. further horrifies his students by telling them “even adolescents like yourselves” could not openly engage in sex “in most cases, till they were over twenty years old” (39). The D.H.C. startles the students who can barely believe sexuality was discouraged in childhood let alone during their hormonal adolescent years.

The encouragement of sexualized behavior extends past heterosexuality. To this point, the sexuality in the novel seems to be heterosexual, with the “erotic play” shown being performed between a boy and a girl. However, when speaking of the intolerance over sexually active adolescents in the past, the Director notes that, “barring a little surreptitious auto-eroticism and homosexuality,” adolescents were not expected to be sexually active. The implication is not that masturbation and homosexuality were encouraged in the past but that they were simply secretively performed, leading to the



deduction that they no longer have to be a secret in this society. The sexualization of the culture of *Brave New World* extends not only from childhood to adulthood, but also involves multiple levels of sexuality. If “every one belongs to every one else,” then one male can ask to sleep with another, or a woman can ask to sleep with another woman (48). Their Orgy-Porgies, ritualized communal sex, must then be a free-for-all of pleasure.

By allowing and actively encouraging a child to be sexually active and promiscuous, the society reinforces its use of sex as a barrier against such emotional connections, specifically love, from an early age. How can a child raised in this overly sexualized environment relate to another person by any means other than sex? Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe, understands that these children will likely never be able to relate to anyone as something other than a sexual object of personal pleasure. As the D.H.C. shouts at a little girl to “go and do your erotic play somewhere else,” Mond sardonically replies to himself, “Suffer little children” (62). At the end of the novel we do see how Lenina suffers from her inability to process her feelings for John.

Exacerbating this sexual conditioning, love and sexual intercourse itself are separated from child rearing, making the emotional connection of parenthood “not so much as obscene as—with its connotation of something at one remove from loathsomeness and moral obliquity of child-bearing—merely gross, a scatological rather than a pornographic impropriety” (140). Love does not occur between a mother or father and child because the closest thing a child has to parents are a couple of cells in a container. Conception in *Brave New World* occurs in bottles with embryos developing in



a mockery of intimacy that includes “artificial maternal circulation” and shaking “into a familiarity with movement” (22-23). Contraceptives are rigorously taken and, if there are any unplanned pregnancies, abortion is the easy solution. The sole reason Linda carried John to term was that there “wasn’t anything like an Abortion Centre” at the reservation (113).

Without the messiness of a mother and father and emotional connection, the society can “predestine and condition” the new life in a system of “mass production at last applied to biology” (23, 19). By separating conception and childrearing from love and even sex, the society reinforces the loyalty of its citizens by making them products of society, not of two people whose parental love may create unwanted personal loyalties. Additionally, children do not seek out love because the sterile environment they are raised in never shows them love, only “erotic play.” Mond warns the students that family goes against the “hypnopædic proverb” that “every one belongs to every one else.” “Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, a narrow channeling of impulse and energy” (46, 45).

Unlike *We* and *Brave New World*, George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not disconnect sex from family and relationships through contraceptives and genetic engineering. The society is technologically regressive and what little technology developed is used for warfare or spying on its own citizens through telescreens and hidden microphones. With this limitation, Oceania forgoes the promiscuity of Zamyatin and Huxley’s worlds and, instead, strictly controls the availability and purpose of sex to prevent loving relationships.

The government of Oceania allows private relationships but only for the purpose



of propagating the Party. Marriage is not banned, but it is governmentally sanctioned to weed out any intimacy or desire one might assume a marriage would contain:

All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and—though the principle was never clearly stated—permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another. The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. (Orwell 66)

The Party reduces marriage from a relationship based on love and desire to one solely based on conception to produce new Party members, children who “adored the Party and everything connected with it.” Unlike *We* and *Brave New World*, Oceania lacks the scientific ability to biologically propagate children and raise them without parental participation. Because of this deficit, the Party makes sure there are no loving relationships and loyalty between parent and child, only between child and the Party. Indeed, “it was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children” (25). Because of this deep loyalty the Party instills in them, no loving bond between parent and child forms. In fact, children routinely betray their parents to the Party, as when, at the end of the novel, Parson’s daughter denounces him to the patrols. This breaking of the parental bond prevents children from experiencing parental love and, consequently, they are unable to experience romantic love later in life.

If sex is not used to provide children to the Party, Oceania attacks it, seeing it as a forerunner to relationships and loyalty that is not focused on the government. Winston believes “the Party was trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it could not be killed, then to



distort it and dirty it.” One way the Party attacks sex is through the Junior Anti-Sex League, an organization that “advocated complete celibacy for both sexes” (66).

Though the Party forbids prostitution, Winston admits that “tacitly the Party was even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which could not be altogether suppressed.” This unofficial oversight is the closest accommodation Oceania makes to oblige the human sex drive, which is only tolerated if sex is with a lower class woman, as “the unforgivable crime was promiscuity between Party members” (65). As Winston will learn once his love affair with Julia is discovered, any relationship between Party members, whether simply sexual or romantic, is seen as a threat because their loyalties are no longer to Big Brother alone, but to each other.

Though Oceania attacks sex because it is closely connected to love and relationships, Winston mistakenly believes that sex, not love, is the sole concern of his Party. Winston describes how he believes his government is specifically attacking sex to prevent love and other kinds of relationships like friendship and family:

The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it. (65-66)

This early misconception over the importance of sex is as much the product of Winston’s own sexual frustration (being reduced to “filthy scuffles [with prostitutes] at intervals of years”) as it is his misogyny (68). Prior to meeting Julia, Winston’s theory that sex is the primary enemy of the Party is marred by his inability to see women as anything more than sex objects. His view on women is very negative:



He disliked nearly all women, and especially the pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallows of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. (11)

With this view, it is not surprising that Winston focuses on sex, as women have nothing else to give a man because they have given themselves over completely to the Party. Furthermore, because of his scant faith in women, Winston believes that “a real love affair was an almost unthinkable event” (68). By automatically denying the possibility of love developing, Winston can only focus on the sex act itself so that “what he wanted, more even to be loved, was to break down that wall of virtue” he sees in every sex-hating woman.

Winston’s mistake in giving too much credit to the importance of sex over love is similar to his mistake in his initial opinion of Julia: “Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her” (11). He sees Julia as the embodiment of the politically zealous, emotionally and sexually frigid woman he imagines all women to be. He violently hates her, but, as Winston will later discover, Julia is not what he believes her to be. Just as Winston fails to see Julia for what she is, he fails to see the importance of love until his love affair with Julia, an affair that spurs him to transform his hatred of the Party from thought to action. Winston finally realizes that the Party fears love, not sex, only when this affair is uncovered by the Thought Police and he and Julia are taken to the frightful and appropriately named Ministry of Love.

A more recent dystopian novel that contains totalitarian control over sexuality is Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. In the novel, government and religion merge



and create a political body that destroys personal liberties like love and sex, and then justify it through religious means. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, The Republic of Gilead has replaced the United States with a theocracy that has forced women into subservient roles. The camp in which women are instructed to be handmaids indoctrinates women for a new role that restricts their freedom and removes their control over all aspects of their lives, including sex. Conception, which was fought in *We* and *Brave New World*, is a central necessity in *The Handmaid's Tale* because widespread infertility has caused low birth rates. The protagonist, Offred, and her fellow handmaids are kept by a married Commander as breeding stock. Atwood uses the term “fucking” to illustrate the point that this is not adulterous sex, a sin, or pleasure but a sanctioned activity for reproduction and nothing more. “Fucking” is mindless, a base instinct, not an action that shows deep thought and connections between partners. Offred understands this:

What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved.  
(Atwood, *Handmaid* 94)

In this way sex, like religious belief, is not a personal freedom but an enforced action for women as well as men, who are expected to remain celibate until they can be granted wives.

Any love or emotion is removed through the sex act, which becomes a boring breeding ritual. The Commander's wife actually participates, holding the handmaid by the wrist to “signify that we [handmaid and wife] are one flesh,” an action meant to be spiritually and socially unifying but which actually reduces the handmaid to the mindless



role of vessel for procreation (94).

Ironically, the world before the Republic of Gilead came into power seems oddly reminiscent of the hypersexuality of *Brave New World*. The Commander tells Offred of the time before Gilead's rise to power:

. . . the sex was too easy. Anyone could just buy it. There was nothing to work for, nothing to fight for. We have the stats from that time. You know what they were complaining about the most? Inability to feel. Men were turning off on sex, even. They were turning off on marriage. (210)

This “inability to feel” is the desired result of the totalitarian governments of *The Handmaid's Tale*, *We* and *Brave New World*, yet the desire for feeling is wanted in this novel by the Commander. Though he is married and should, as his religion contends, be emotionally committed to his wife, the Commander's private interaction shows a willingness to be open to love and an emotional connection to his handmaid. However, because of strict sexual roles that replace personal liberty with mindless procreativity, deep emotional feelings of love are unable to grow in either of them. When Offred asks the Commander if men feel anything now, he replies that they do, alluding to his own possible feelings toward her. Offred realizes, “What he wants is intimacy, but I can't give him that” (211). The subservient role granted to Offred does not allow her to feel anything for him, even when he takes her into private meetings and gets to know her. Instead, Offred's feelings of love drift to her lost husband and daughter, casualties in Gilead's rise to political dominance. Having lost her family and then placed into a system that considers her a subservient breeding vessel, Offred does not relinquish the love she had for her family.



Atwood's later novel, *Oryx and Crake*, dispenses with the repressed sexuality of *The Handmaid's Tale* in favor of a dystopian world where sex is once again a promiscuous, overemphasized element of society. Unlike the previous dystopian works, sex is not controlled by any specific governmental or social force but is instead a product of global moral degradation. Porn and prostitution are so common their constant presence is considered "erotic wallpaper" that includes any disgusting fetish imaginable (Atwood, *Oryx* 315). "Tart of the Day" violated "the usual orifices;" "Superswallowers" speaks for itself; and "HottTotts" aired child sex shows (89). Sex permeates every facet of society, from the nude newscast, "Noodie News," to BlyssPluss, the anti-aging, anti-STD prophylactic that will secretly harbor Crake's JUVE virus (81, 293). The oversaturation of sex and violence led to desensitization, as Jimmy notes during an afternoon spent with Crake:

So they'd roll a few joints and smoke them while watching the executions and the porn—the body parts moving around on the screen in slow motion, an underwater ballet of flesh and blood under stress, hard and soft joining and separating, groans and screams, close-ups of clenched eyes and clenched teeth, spurts of this or that. If you switched back and forth fast, it all came to look like the same event. (86)

The overexposure to sex and, apparently, its connection to violence dulls Jimmy's senses, making him feel "as if he's been to an orgy, one at which he'd had no control at all over what had happened to him" (86-7).

The proliferation of pornography shows that sex is as rampant as it is in *Brave New World* and, at times, sex can be attained just as easily as it is in Huxley's novel.



When Crake attends Watson-Crick, Student Services arranges prostitutes for the students. Jimmy's school is not as considerate; he had to look for sexual partners on his own but he never had trouble finding one. Even after his schooling, Jimmy finds sex easily, conducting affairs with married women who treat him like "some child's free gift dug out of a box of cereal, colourful and delightful but useless" (251). Sex, for Jimmy, becomes more important than an emotional connection between people, and his oversexed lifestyle would later hinder his ability to express his love for Oryx:

"You know I love you." She [Oryx] isn't the first woman he's ever said that to. He shouldn't have used it up so much earlier in his life, he shouldn't have treated it like a tool, a wedge, a key to open women. By the time he got around to meaning it, the words had sounded fraudulent to him and he'd been ashamed to pronounce them. (114)

Jimmy does not understand love because he was never exposed to good examples of the emotion as a child. Besides being desensitized to sex, his parents had a loveless marriage that ended in possible corporate espionage, an obviously complicated relationship that did not provide Jimmy with an example of love to emulate. He may love Oryx, but he does not trust her and is constantly worried that she does not love him back:

"Do you love me?"

That laugh of hers. What had it meant? *Stupid question. Why ask?*

*You talk too much.* Or else: *What is love?* Or possibly: *In your dreams.*

(319)

Jimmy has been conditioned to only feel at ease with sex, not emotions, so he struggles to find trust in his love for Oryx.



Oryx's own sexual past further complicates the love between them. It is through the child porn site, Hott Totts, that Jimmy first sees Oryx, or at least the young girl he believes she once was, though it could be "just another little girl on a porno site" (90). He also knows that Crake met her through Student Services, as a prostitute. Jimmy is curious about her past, continuously asking questions to figure out where she's from, what she's done, and if she needs help. Oryx answers ambiguously: "I don't care. I never think about it. It's long ago now" (117). If she does answer in specifics, Jimmy suspects her of "improvising, just to humour him" (316). Besides illustrating Jimmy's trust issues, these passive answers show Oryx's own inability, due to her long history of sexual activity, to believe in anything but the transitory existence of things. She is even unable to depend on love as "love was undependable, it came and then it went" (126). Just as Jimmy was conditioned by his desensitization to sex, Oryx is also desensitized by her childhood participation in it: overexposure becomes a type of conditioning that can hinder or prevent the formation of emotional, loving relationships.

In his essay, "Revolutions from the Waist Downwards: Desire as Rebellion in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*," Thomas Horan explores how lust "threatens the establishment because every dystopian world is built on cold, methodological logic, and lust is fundamentally illogical" (318). However, Horan is overly concerned with desire as a sexualized passion and, like the totalitarian governments in these novels, puts too much emphasis on the sexualization of relationships. Both fail to see the relationships in these novels as transformative due to the binding power of emotion rather than simple physical pleasure. Lust may be illogical, but love is more illogical in that it cannot be blamed on simple



biological urges but on irrational emotional connections. It is not that the societies in these novels “can never fully regulate the sexual instincts and indiscretions of their citizens”; for the most part, as we can see, sex is available for anyone who wants it. Lust, then, as Horan asserts, does not become the driving force for the “political awakening of the lovers” (316).

If one can bypass the preventative conditioning toward privacy and sex, love can become the emotional connection needed for change. Love spurs the rebellious impulses in these characters to become individuals in societies that value only the hegemony of communal subordination. Privacy and sexual freedom become individual liberties once again, not mandated governmental orders. However, if found out, love will be destroyed or turned against lovers because the dystopian society fears love’s transformative power.



## V. DESTROYING LOVE

When love defies the odds and somehow overcomes the preventative barriers set against it, the dystopian world attacks it more forcefully. On the rare chance someone can bypass the strict sexual regulations and constant surveillance of dystopian societies, the act of forming the loving relationship does not necessarily mean the people involved have successfully beaten the regulations of governmental ideology; that their love, in layman's terms, "won" and everything will end like a fairytale romance. Unfortunately, there is no happily ever after. Any real victory is only in the development of love, having it form despite the barriers set up against its development. Eventually any loving relationship is discovered or betrayed and those participating in it face harsher punishments than they could ever imagine.

Often, the conditioning associated with privacy and sex, while mainly preventative, can itself destroy the loving relationship by putting lovers at odds with any thoughts or actions that defy the conditioning. When an antithetical situation is faced, as in the case of love, the conditioned citizens often struggle between the new feelings they enjoy but do not understand and their conditioning that labels these feelings as wrong and unorthodox. While lovers may initially engage in a love affair willingly, a lifetime of conditioning against personal attachments will exude lasting emphasis that the affair is wrong and must be stopped. *We's* D-503 and *Brave New World's* Lenina are both unable to fully appreciate or explore their love because their conditioning continues to arise.



And, if the engrained conditioning does not break up the love affair, then the government steps in and, often violently, *reconditions* those who break from their original conditioning. Such reconditioning eventually breaks the emotional connection and/or refocuses the love back on the government itself.

In *We*, D-503's desire for I-330 is not a simple desire he could fulfill with a pink ticket, as he can with O-90. Before he meets I-330, the strongest emotions D-503 displays are not toward O-90 but toward logic and order: "What magnificence! What unalterable regularity!" (19). I-330 brings out a passion in D-503, and though his early actions are lustful and sex is readily given and received, a continual emotional element grows in his desire for I-330. This attachment is evident when D-503 screams "I won't stand for it! I don't want anyone but me to . . . I'll kill anyone who . . . Because I lo . . . I . . ." (Zamyatin 57). This quote not only shows D-503's inability to fully express his love for I-330—he cannot even say the word—but it also shows an inability to comprehend his feelings of envy and jealousy, emotions D-504 finds just as confusing. This inability to process emotions is fueled by his conditioning against any individual attachment, that "no one is *one* but only *one of*" (8).

The struggle between his conditioning and his emotions centers on his need to have I-330 to himself, a selfish desire he has never felt before. D-503 said that he and R-13 "both chose that dear pink O," but D-503 has no envy until he believes R-13 has a relationship with I-330 (41). With I-330, D-503 can be angry and envious of her past and present suitors and possessively think of I-330 in that "savage terminology – 'mine'" (76).

The relationship between D-503 and I-330 grows more strained as the Mephi revolution starts literally shaking the foundations of OneState. As I-330's role in the



antithetic rebellion becomes more pronounced to him, and her connections to other Numbers is discovered, D-503 cannot control these new emotions, or as he says, “that torment called my ‘soul’” (110).

D-503’s struggle between his passion and rationality exemplifies one of the reasons the dystopian state attacks love: it can cause personal unrest in its citizens and personal unrest can lead to communal instability. But it is this instability that I-330 and the rebellious Mephi want and why they are set in direct opposition to the rigid control of OneState. The Mephi want to experience emotions and unstructured living; they do not want to be governed by sterile mathematics and grids. I-330 explains how people like D-503 need to learn how to accept their human nature and not regulate their lives scientifically:

You had it worse. You grew numbers all over your body, numbers crawled about on you like lice. You all have to be stripped naked and driven into the forest. You should learn to tremble with fear, with joy, insane rage, cold—you should learn to pray to the fire. (158)

However, learning to deal with all of these emotions is what D-503 is unable to do. Instead, D-503 suffers with every puzzling emotion, “question marks that squirm like worms and gnaw at you like worms” (200). I-330 can see his struggle between his unbridled passion and his conditioned reason, and tells him, mockingly: “Desires are a torment, aren’t they? And it’s clear that happiness is when there are no longer any desires, not even one” (177). While I-330 is mocking this easy path to happiness, D-503 debates the worth of his newfound love against the ignorant happiness he felt before, describing this mental battle in violent terms: “Two logical trains had crashed, piling on



top of each other, crumpling, flying apart . . .” (178). This mental conflict finally causes him to question the basic tenant of OneState society—“no one is *one* but only *one of*”—when he asks himself, “Who is this ‘we’? Who am I?” (8, 212).

The final answer to this agonizing question comes in the form of the Great Operation, “the path to 100 percent happiness” (173). The Operation is a medical procedure that removes the imagination, the soul, and with it all ability to feel any strong emotion vanishes. D-503’s struggle with whether or not to have the Operation ends when his own untamed emotions lead him to believe that I-330 does not love him but is only using him for his access to the INTEGRAL rocket. I-330’s own feelings toward D-503 are left ambiguous; at times she seems to be using him but there are moments left unfilled by words that belay an emotional attachment, as when she tells D-503, “You, too, probably have a drop or two of that sunny forest blood. Maybe that’s why I . . .” (157). D-503 does not even have the courage to finish her thought with his own name (“. . . because you love . . . them . . .”) and this flustered ambiguity of her love and his emotions makes him yield to the Great Operation. His imagination/soul is removed, and he quickly and easily confesses all he knows about Mephi to the Benefactor and Guardians. By novel’s end, D-503 watches, unaffected, as his former lover, I-330, is subsequently tortured and then executed as a political dissident.

Just as D-503 struggles against his conditioning to understand his emotions for I-330, the characters of *Brave New World* struggle against theirs. Love is an unnatural emotion to have in *Brave New World*; any desire for another person is expected to be quickly quenched through sexual release with no emotions or responsibility required. Sex and conception have been diminished to “having” someone and if any problems do



arise, there's always *soma* to medicinally soothe them. However, during the novel's course of events such desire is not quickly quenched and the ensuing emotions disrupt the stability of the sexualized society.

Just as hypnopædia encourages each person to be happy in his specific caste system ("I'm *so* glad I'm a Beta") it conditions people into sexual promiscuity. When this sexual promiscuity is challenged, as it is early on by Bernard, who wants a more monogamous, more private, relationship with Lenina, and as it is by the young boy who does not want to participate in erotic play, the inability to conform to conditioning is seen as a threat to the stability of the society. And just as the young boy is taken to the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology because of his abnormal behavior, the Director attempts to fire Bernard partially for "the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sexlife" that places "the security and stability of Society in danger" (138). We first expect Bernard to be an advocate of love because of this unorthodoxy: his abnormal desire to have an exclusive and solitary relationship with Lenina. But after his discovery of John the Savage, Bernard's true nature is shown. His romantic nature was a result of feeling ostracized because his physically small stature is so "ugly" and "stunted," so much so that it causes rumors that there was a mistake during his test-tube incubation. Once his discovery of John causes popularity that can overcome his physical defects, he brags to Helmholtz how he "had six girls last week," using the same terminology he had used to lambast Henry Foster for using about Lenina earlier in the novel. Bernard is revealed as a hypocrite, who openly accepts his society's sexual promiscuity now that he can take advantage of it. Huxley casts Bernard "not as an authentic rebel against dystopia, but as one whose discontent derives mainly from his desire to be accepted in such society"



(Watt 382).

Lenina and John challenge the sexualized denial of love in *Brave New World*. As Lenina's love for John grows, she is unable to fully understand it due to her conditioning and is left bewildered. The inability to communicate feelings is best illustrated in the exchange between Lenina and John in Chapter 13. As Lenina arrives to confront John with her feelings for him, his own feelings for her come out. But, when John clearly admits his love for Lenina, she does not understand the emotional context of the word. John tells her "I love you more than anything in the world" and that he wants to "do *something*" to earn her love (173-74). Conditioned to freely give herself physically, Lenina is confused at the prospect of someone having to earn her attention. When John explains the courtship rituals of Malpais, where young men must bring their beloveds the skin of a mountain lion or wolf, Lenina cannot fathom the concept. Their conversation turns into a sadly comical argument about lions in England and the working of vacuum cleaners. This confusion is only furthered when John brings up the concept of marriage. If Lenina were confused about someone earning her attention, she is dumbfounded and horrified at the prospect of a solely monogamous relationship: "what a horrible idea!" (174).

Lenina eventually understands that John's talk of mountain lions, vacuum cleaners, and marriage only means that he does like her. However, Lenina does not understand the emotional strength of love; she only understands that John likes her and her mind immediately falls back to the response she's been conditioned to give to those she likes: sex. Lenina removes her clothes and embraces John, who is appalled by her actions, but Lenina continues in the only way she knows how. Huxley describes this



scene in predatory terms: as John is backed into a corner, he waves his hands at her “as though he were trying to scare away some intruding and dangerous animal” (176).

Because of her conditioning against love, as someone raised on “orgy-porgy,” test-tube babies, and mood elevating *soma*, the feeling can never be understood or expressed (85).

Their search for love ends, appropriately, with an all-consuming orgy, the physical embodiment of sex-as-society from which even John cannot escape. Finally pulled into this oversexed society, John cannot live with his moral trespass against his romantic beliefs and commits suicide.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Winston and Julia’s relationship is dangerous to Big Brother due to the secrecy needed to maintain it. Since the relationship could not be conducted in the open because of Winston’s marriage and the unusual difference in age, secrecy is needed. This secrecy breeds dissent, as, encouraged by the freedom of their secret love, Winston is further encouraged to explore the pre-Big Brother past and the resistance movement, interests that would most likely stay dormant daydreams if not for the encouragement gained from conducting their secret affair. This interest in political dissension leads the Thought Police to arrest the two lovers and take them to the Ministry of Love for reconditioning.

The powerful effects of a betrayal of love had been foreshadowed earlier in the novel, when Winston told Julia, “if they could make me stop loving you—that would be the real betrayal.” Julia answered defiantly that “they can’t do that . . . . It’s the one thing they can’t do. . . . They can’t get inside you” (167). By the end of the book, each will have betrayed the other.



This betrayal, the primary goal of the Ministry of Love, is accomplished when, in Room 101, Winston is forced to confront his fear of rats. O'Brien torments Winston with the threat of placing his head in a cage of rats, where they would "attack the eyes first. . . . [and] burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue" (288). Faced with his worst fear, Winston "suddenly understood that in the whole world there was just *one* person to whom he could transfer his punishment—*one* body that he could thrust between himself and the rats." Winston finally breaks and sacrifices his love for Julia for his life: "Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!" (289). Once he sacrifices Julia, Winston is set free.

By denouncing Julia and wishing her to take on his torments, the Ministry of Love permanently destroys his love for her. Winston understands the power of this betrayal, noting how powerful such infidelity is: "something was killed in your breast; burnt out, cauterized out," refuting Julia's earlier assumption that "they can't get inside you" (293, 167).

It turns out that Julia, too, sacrificed their love. They mutually confess on their first meeting after being released from the Ministry: "I betrayed you" (294). They both instinctively know that the passion they felt for each other will never be felt again. Julia understands how well the Ministry of Love works, noting "after that [betrayal], you don't feel the same toward the other person any longer" (295).

The full meaning of the Ministry of Love's name and role in Oceania isn't fully understood until the last line of the novel. While it takes great pain to destroy the love of individuals, it does so with a reason. Once eliminated, personal, romantic love is



reconditioned—it becomes a love for the totalitarian state. Winston no longer loves Julia. Instead, “he loved Big Brother” (300).

Reconditioning is a central theme in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*. The protagonist Offred continuously describes her reconditioning from independent woman to controlled, objectified handmaid. While she is conditioned against love, the emotion is further denied by the utter lack of importance placed upon it by the regime.

When the Commander asks Offred what the regime overlooked when they claimed power, she tells him, “Love.” Offred knows this all too well, as her own loving relationship with Luke was destroyed by the regime and she was made a subordinate handmaid. In this theocratic society, “love is not the point” (Atwood, *Handmaid* 220). “None of us says the word love, not once,” Offred explains, “it would be tempting fate; it would be romance, bad luck” (270). Love is not an acceptable emotion in this society; it has a negative connotation, like bad luck. Love cannot exist in Gilead as it is in stark contrast to the regime’s plans for society. The regime dictates that the low birthrate is more important than love, so it conditions sex as a purely reproductive function. If love does happen, the regime will be forced to destroy it as it destroyed Offred’s family with Luke.

Unlike her novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* shows the destruction of love not to preserve one ideology, but to begin another anew. Crake’s plan to cause the extinction of the species is initiated by his own genius at engineering the BlyssPluss pill with the devastating JUVE virus, but the second part of his plan, the ascendance of his Crakers as the dominate humanoid species on the planet, can only be fulfilled by insuring their protection. By murdering Oryx, the woman both



he and Jimmy love, Crake forces Jimmy to obey his lover's wish that he guard the Crackers should anything happen to her or Crake.

Crake himself asked Jimmy to guard the Paradise Project, the Crakers, whenever he's away or if anything should happen to him. No one else would "have the empathy to deal with the Paradise models, they wouldn't be any good at it" (Atwood, *Oryx* 321). However, this request from his best friend does not guarantee Jimmy's cooperation especially if Crake's involvement in human extinction comes to light, as it likely would once the BlyssPluss connection is discovered.

Oryx also makes Jimmy promise her that he'll "take care of the Crakers" if she or Crake have to leave for someplace else. As their teacher, she has come to know the Crakers as innocent, gentle creatures. To her, they are "children" who "need someone" to watch over them (322). Because she is his lover, Oryx's request holds stronger value for Jimmy, but his promise still does not insure his cooperation. It is an odd coincidence that she would ask him to protect the Crakers just days after Crake himself had asked Jimmy to do the same if anything should happen to him. Oryx's request, so soon after Crake's own, makes Jimmy question whether or not her last request was a systematic step in Crake's grand scheme for the extinction of *Homo sapiens*. Like D-503 in *We*, Jimmy questions their love and begins to wonder whether Oryx ever really loved him or whether she were using him the entire time. Believing he was merely a tool in Crake's larger plan would potentially negate Jimmy's willingness to safeguard the Crakers.

Crake's full involvement in this final duty is unclear, but it is likely both Jimmy and Oryx were used by Crake to fulfill his extinction agenda. Oryx is exonerated for any compliancy with Crake's plan by her reaction when the JUVE virus begins to materialize.



She calls Jimmy, crying, which was “so unusual Jimmy was rattled by it.” Through tears, she tells him, “I’m sorry, I did not know,” and further explains, “It was in the pills I was giving away, the ones I was selling. . . . Those pills were supposed to help people!” before the call mysteriously ends (325). These are the last words Jimmy hears Oryx speak and her anguish reveals that both of them have been used by Crake. The final part of Crake’s plan would be to cement Jimmy’s guardianship of the Crakers by killing Oryx.

Just as Winston’s love is reconditioned for a love of Big Brother, in *Oryx and Crake* Jimmy’s love for Oryx is reconditioned, repurposed, by Crake himself to meet his own needs. In a particularly brutal scene, Crake murders Oryx in front of Jimmy:

As Jimmy watched, frozen with disbelief, Crake let Oryx fall backwards, over his left arm. He looked at Jimmy, a direct look, unsmiling.

“I’m counting on you,” he said. Then he slit her throat.

Jimmy shot him. (329)

Crake’s murder of Oryx was a calculated attempt to recondition Jimmy’s love from Oryx to the bioengineered Crakers. Technically, Crake killed far more than Oryx; he killed the rest of humanity with the JUVIE virus and he forced Jimmy to kill him. All these deaths were to ensure his genetically engineered Crakers the ability to inherit the earth but Oryx’s death was especially important. While Jimmy and Crake are best friends, Crake’s actions, creating a genetic coup d’état, negates any importance Jimmy would give to his requests. Oryx not only had the strongest emotional tie to Jimmy, but her innocence in the extinction agenda absolves her from blame. Her request that Jimmy protect the



Crakers would be harder to deny than Crake's own because it was meant with simple affection and concern for them, not anything else.

Yet, by fulfilling Oryx's request, Jimmy also fulfills Crake's. Crake's final words, "I'm counting on you," makes Jimmy understand clearly how Crake used him: "He's served his evolutionary purpose, as fucking Crake knew he would. He's saved the children" (107). Crake's plan was systematic; he brought Jimmy to RejoovenEsense Compound likely knowing the protective role Jimmy would play; after all, "Crake trusted him" (217).

As for Crake, by murdering Oryx, he's not only reconditioning Jimmy's love for her but also his own. "And Crake loved Oryx, no doubt there," Jimmy observes early on, ". . . Crake had never been a toucher, he'd been physically remote, but now he liked to have a hand on Oryx: on her shoulder, her arm, her small waist, her perfect butt. *Mine, mine*, that hand was saying." Jimmy believes Crake is jealous of Jimmy's affair with Oryx, though she thinks it's impossible because "he doesn't approve of jealousy." Yet Jimmy points out that Crake is still "human," with all the emotions inherent in the species, even if he doesn't admit to them (313).

Crake has emotions, especially for Oryx. Though Jimmy does not realize it at the time, Crake debates his use of Oryx in his plan when he asks Jimmy, "Would you kill someone you loved to spare them pain?" (320). However, Crake's emotions lose out to his "truly colossal ego" when he later tells Jimmy, "If I'm not around, Oryx won't be either" (321). Crake's love for Oryx is hampered by his own ego, the "*mine, mine*" his body conveys when around her (313). Crake's murder of Oryx does display jealousy as he's not only using her death to ensure Jimmy's guardianship over the Crakers but also



not allowing her to live without him. Crake's love for Oryx is tumultuous and obviously dangerous; it displays all the negative elements of love that make dystopian societies prevent and attack the emotion for the social instability it causes. Though he's not immune to the turmoil love can create, Crake does understand how it can lead to instability. So, as in *Brave New World*, Crake takes the greatest care to prevent his Crakers from loving anyone.

Like other dystopian societies, Crake understands that love can cause social turmoil, but unlike other dystopian societies he does not accommodate the existing human sex drive. Instead, he rebuilds it, removing the emotional connection and with it any hint of jealousy, anger, or disappointment. Sex is now between a woman and four men and purely regulated by chemical reactions:

Since it's only the blue tissue and the pheromones released by it that stimulate the males, there's no more unrequited love these days, no more thwarted lust; no more shadow between the desire and the act. Courtship begins at the first whiff . . . (165)

When he dispenses with the messiness of the human sex drive, Crake also attacks love. Sex has been biologically engineered to be emotionless: "Sex is no longer a mysterious rite viewed with ambivalence or downright loathing, conducted in the dark and inspiring suicides and murders. Now it's more like an athletic demonstration, a free-spirited romp" (165). Unfortunately, while it removes the negative emotions that can be harmful to societal stability, it also removes the positive emotions, like love, from the sex drive. It even removes family by negating paternal ties to the child, children are raised in communal fashion and, as in *We* and *Brave New World*, no one knows his or her real



parents.

Crake's engineering the Crakers dispenses with social conditioning. There is no need for sexual regulations and constant surveillance to inhibit privacy; love has been made impossible by genetic excision. There is no need for conditioning to tell the lover that his emotions are wrong, that his private relationship is unorthodox, or that he is causing the deterioration of his society. By genetically removing the capacity for love, the need for the dystopian state to control privacy and sex through conditioning is negated. There would be no more struggle against conditioning and, ultimately, no need for the destruction of love because there can be no love to begin with.



## VI. CONCLUSION

Love plays an important part in dystopian fiction by igniting an inferno of revolutionary acts from those experiencing the emotion. Love can influence rebellion against totalitarian regimes, spur the recognition and acceptance of past actions and mistakes, and provide the freedom to escape from rigid restraints of time and place. Yet, the much-desired benefits lovers experience are also the reasons love is so furiously countered with conditioning, torture, and death. Love in dystopian fiction is usually brief and very rarely survives the forces set against it. If love and its positive influence inevitably end, then what good is the emotion in the first place? Why is love constantly seen in dystopian work if it lacks any associative power within the genre? The claim that “dystopian narratives conclude in social cataclysms” appears very true (Pfaelzer 61).

While there is some truth that dystopian fiction usually ends very catastrophically, as can be seen with the often permanent destruction of love and the lovers themselves, dystopian works usually offer a glimmer of hope that humanity will prevail. The open conclusions of each dystopian work show that nothing is permanent, the emotional and political revolution will continue in the actions of others. *We*’s I-330 explains the nature of revolution best:

And how can there be a final revolution? There is no final one. The number of revolutions is infinite. The last one—that’s for children.



Infinity frightens children, and it's essential that children get a good night's sleep. (Zamyatin 168)

I-330 is not being maternal but simply stating that it is infantile to believe something lasts forever. Nothing is ever final, and the destruction of one love often ignites revolution in others.

*We* may end in the death of I-330 and the excision of D-503's "soul," but those are only two Numbers out of millions. The revolution has ended for these lovers, but elsewhere the Green Wall is broken. Nature and Numbers, both held back for too long, are rushing through the Wall and experiencing the independence and emotion that D-503 briefly felt. *Brave New World* may have ended with John the Savage's agonizing suicide, but Helmholtz and Bernard are exiled to an island for those who are "too self-consciously individual." This punishment "is really a reward," where both men will "meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world" (Huxley 204). Both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid's Tale* end with commentary from an unknown time after the fall of Oceania and Gilead. The importance of the Appendix on Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or the symposium transcript in *The Handmaid's Tale* is the suggestion that people now have the freedom to comment on and criticize the policies of the governments, a freedom that was unknown during those regimes. And both *Oryx & Crake* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, two of the most apocalyptically catastrophic dystopian narratives, end with a positive sign that the world, and the possibility of love, has not been destroyed. Humanity has been brought to the brink of extinction but has survived to live, and love, another day.



From the recent reinvention of *Battlestar Galactica* to Lady GaGa's "Alejandro" video, love continues to be a central element in the dystopian genre because it incites revolution against the dystopian characteristics of oppression and control. These revolutions validate the experience of love within the dystopian world by offering hope that the dystopian world is finite. If "the flow of history was never-ending, and that one phase of human development grows out of what preceded it," one can assume that the dystopian world is not permanent (Saint-Andre 293). With the collapse of every dystopian world, there is hope that a utopia can emerge that can bring about the permanent and welcome return of love.



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## **VITA**

Jason Neil Krueger was born in Karnes City, Texas, on August 14, 1981, the son of Harry and Lynda Krueger. He graduated from Floresville High School in May 1999, and enrolled in Southwest Texas State University that summer. By the time he completed his B.A. in December 2004 the university had been renamed Texas State University—San Marcos, though his own name faithfully remained Jason Neil Krueger. After graduation Jason worked in many professions, including a brief stint as a writer and editor-in-chief of a local student magazine, an aggravatingly longer stint as a technical support representative for national internet providers, and another long stint as a reader for a visually disabled student. After (and possibly because of) those experiences, Jason entered the Literature Graduate Program at Texas State in the fall of 2008.

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