

CONTROL AND RESISTANCE IN THE DYSTOPIAN NOVEL:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English

by
Julia Gerhard
Spring 2012

CONTROL AND RESISTANCE IN THE DYSTOPIAN NOVEL:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A Thesis

by

Julia Gerhard

Spring 2012

APPROVED BY THE DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH:

Eun K. Park, Ph.D.

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Geoffrey Baker, Ph.D., Chair

Matthew D. Brown, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract.....	iv
CHAPTER	
I. Introduction	1
Utopia and its Origins.....	2
From Utopia to Dystopia.....	9
Control and Resistance in Dystopian Fiction.....	14
II. Control of the Body and Mind in Dystopian Fiction.....	23
The Routine	26
Social Function.....	31
Reproduction	45
Surveillance	52
III. Writing as Self-Discovery and Resistance to Authority.....	63
Writing as Revolt.....	66
Discovering Identity	71
Reconstructing the Past	83
Reclaiming the Body	91
Works Cited.....	102

ABSTRACT

CONTROL AND RESISTANCE IN THE DYSTOPIAN NOVEL:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

by

Julia Gerhard

Master of Arts in English

California State University, Chico

Spring 2012

This thesis examines how dystopian novels depict various forms of discipline exercised by a government over the body and mind of its subjects, and also offer liberation from that control through the act of writing. The first chapter reveals specific variations of disciplinary control employed by the state to manipulate the human body and mind in order to achieve supreme power in dystopian societies. A comparative analysis of six dystopian novels—Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* (1924), George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), Ayn Rand’s *Anthem* (1938), and Karin Boye’s *Kallocain* (1940)—shows that governments produce disciplined bodies and minds in these novels through the use of a strictly regulated routine, prescribed social functions, reproductive control, and constant surveillance. The second chapter focuses on how writing or

narration offers liberation from the state's disciplinary control and allows dystopian citizens to resist and rebel against the authority of the state. Concentrating on three of these novels—Zamyatin's *We*, Orwell's *1984*, and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*—I analyze how writing functions as an empowering agency in each novel. In *We*, writing allows the main protagonist to discover his true identity and thus challenge the collective ideology of the state. In *1984*, writing similarly enables the main character, Winston Smith, to reconnect with his past and revive his memories, thereby remaining human in an oppressive society. Finally, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the act of writing empowers the main heroine to regain control over her body, which has been disciplined and exploited by the state. Overall, this thesis suggests that, while dystopian novels enumerate repressive state's strategies of domination, they also offer avenues of liberation through writing.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The dystopian genre that blossomed in the literature of the nineteenth century emerged and developed mainly as a critical response and an antithesis to utopian fiction, and portrays utopia gone awry. The word dystopia can be translated from Greek for “bad place” and usually depicts a society with a utopian organization that has at least one dangerous flaw. Though dystopia or anti-utopia has mainly manifested and gained popularity as a skeptical reaction to utopian vision, it surprisingly shares a lot of characteristics with utopia. However, the chief distinction between these two genres lies in whether the text seems to suggest a positive or a negative outcome to the utopian fantasy. The question at stake, nonetheless, is why the positive utopian thinking shifted into the negative dystopian portrayal of the future, which then flourished in the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The answer can be found in history—major historical events of the nineteenth century, such as the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, Nazi Germany and the Second World War, technological progress and the creation of the atomic bomb, challenged the possibility of a utopian paradise and brought disillusionment and fear that our future might not be as bright as we thought. Maria Varsam justly asserts in her work “Concrete Dystopia: Slavery and Its Others” that, “whereas . . . utopia is a manifestation of desire and hope for a better world and an ‘unalienated order’ that upsets the status quo, . . . dystopia delineates the crushing of hope

and the displacement of desire for the purpose of upholding that status quo” (209). David Riesman also explains the evident slide into dystopian thought as a result of scientific progress, which creates a negative projection of the horizon of humankind’s future: “When governments have power to exterminate the globe, it is not surprising that anti-Utopian novels, like *1984*, are popular, while utopian political thought about a more hopeful future nearly disappears” (95). To further examine the emergence of the dystopian novel in this introduction, I first address the driving force behind the creation of utopia and outline concrete reasons for a dystopian shift. I then explore what I see as the key themes prevalent in dystopian fiction—particularly those connected to the concept of totalitarian control that the government exercises on its citizens, and the ways in which people can offer resistance to that control. Finally, I provide a brief overview of this thesis: the first chapter concentrates on the comparative analysis of six dystopian novels, and I explore how the government uses disciplinary coercions to exploit human body and mind; the second chapter examines three novels and analyzes how dystopian citizens liberate themselves from the control and resist the oppression of the state through writing or narration. Ultimately, I propose that the dystopian novel both delineates the state’s disciplinary control over the human body and mind, and offers liberation from that control through the epistolary tradition of writing.

Utopia and its Origins

To discuss the key components of literary dystopia and analyze the reasons for its sudden impetus and success, the utopian literary tradition has to be examined first. It is commonly considered that Plato’s *Republic*, written around 380 BC, gives birth to the

genre that is known today as utopian fiction. The word utopia is translated from Greek as “no place,” but can also be interpreted as “good place” derived from the English homophone “eutopia,” thus suggesting an ironic double meaning, resulting in a plethora of definitions. Martin G. Plattel, for instance, suggests that “the utopian searches of happiness dream of a new earthly paradise, in which an authentic freedom reigns and happiness is sought in unbridled sensuous delight” (47). Martin Parker focuses more on the social structure of the utopian state when he defines utopia as a “systematic investigation of alternative principles of organization” that “relies on a re-formulation of the principles of social order” (217). George Kateb offers a more detailed description of a utopian society,

in which all conflicts of conscience and conflicts of interest are abolished, . . . all the obstacles to a decent life for all men have been removed, . . . the resourcefulness of modern technology is put in the unfettered service of lessening labor and increasing and enriching labor,” with “peace, abundance, and virtue permanently and universally obtained. (17)

With slight variations these definitions, nevertheless, underscore the same idea: utopian fiction mainly depicts an ideal, imaginary society with a perfect socio-economic and political system superior to the present-day version of it where people live carefree, in abundance and happiness.

Examining the origins of the utopian literary genre, we can identify several reasons that made utopia plausible. Firstly, as Chad Walsh suggests in his book *From Utopia to Nightmare*, since ancient times man has always had dreams of a perfect utopian society, as “man is an animal with imagination” and has always tried to “transcend himself and nature” through imagining a better future (29). Secondly, as Martin Plattel contends in his work *Utopian and Critical Thinking*, the dream of a utopia “with

paradiselike conditions” is always “unconsciously present” in our psyche since the original paradise of the Garden of Eden where “man lives in perfect harmony with nature and himself” (46-47). Consequently, people, “afflicted by the memory of the lost paradise,” are constantly trying to revive and recreate it (47). This is how utopian dreaming commenced.

Most of the early written utopias contain all of the attributes of the ideal place to live. As Nell Eurich elaborates in his book *Science in Utopia: A Mighty Design*, in the first utopian work, *The Republic*, written by Plato, the society is divided into classes: philosophers (the ruling class), guardians (the middle class) and workers (the lower class), where “leadership is based on intelligence and character, not nobility of blood or inheritance” (63). The idea of private property ceases to exist, and the “communal pattern of living” where “each man contributed according to his individual nature” is initiated, eliminating jealousy and inequality (63-64). To achieve harmony, each man has to be educated properly because, “unless a man was made perfect, the state could never be ideal” (64). Thus, the state now plays a more significant role in influencing man’s education, work, and private matters such as marriage. All people are to maintain “the goal of virtue built upon knowledge and understanding”—“the greatest need of man, the answer to his search for happiness and thus the aim for an ideal society” (69). As George Kateb notes, the whole idea of the utopian society in *The Republic* depends on the concepts of justice and ethicality: “the just man avoids all wrongdoing in his private dealings, but the just man . . . will do all things needful . . . to preserve the existence of the just state” (25-26). Another utopia that officially solidifies this literary genre, *Utopia* written by Thomas More in 1516, explores concepts similar to Plato’s *Republic*. As

Walsh points out, More's society is also based on the idea of communism where everything is shared; everyone works not for their personal gains, but for the prosperity of the state and thus commonwealth (40). The concept of money is abrogated and forgotten, ideas of envy and egocentricity are annihilated, and, since everything belongs to everyone, no personal conflicts can occur. Government consists of officials elected by people; the prince is appointed for life, but can be eradicated if suspected of abusing his power (41). The utopias that came afterwards—Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, Andreae's *Christianopolis*, Campanella's *City of the Sun*—followed the utopian literary canon and portrayed similar patterns.

If we look at the chief characteristics of the utopian fiction described above, a certain ensemble of themes becomes apparent. The idea of community and the prosperity of a state in which man's private and public lives intertwine dominate the utopian canon. The happiness of an individual derives from the happiness of the community or the state; thus, any personal self-expression that is somehow aberrant to the societal principles is frowned upon. The communal happiness of the state, furthermore, is also dependent on each individual doing his or her job accordingly. Everyone is somewhat equal in each particular class, which eliminates the possible rivalry between the rich and poor. Childbearing functions and education are regulated by the communes, too, as they decide how children and people in general can serve to improve the commonwealth of the society. People's occupation is most likely determined by the state, since one's productivity is directly connected with the opulence of the state as a whole. The ruling class, even though exercising some authority over the masses, is supposed to do their duties justly again for the well-being of the state. Summing up all these elements of a

utopian state, it seems that its primary goal is to take care of their people, and they will in turn take care of the state and guarantee its well being. This mutual interdependence is highlighted in the utopian world, and the blurring of the borders between personal and communal happiness becomes the essential key to a utopian dream.

However, all of these aspects of a utopian world are able to materialize only due to a number of assumptions that utopian writers had about human nature. Walsh analyzes this idea and presents several presuppositions about the human condition that utopian writers were likely to be influenced by at that time. He argues that, at that time, people believed in the inherent goodness of man, who, even if he sometimes behaves irrationally, can nevertheless “be shaped and conditioned to fit happily into whatever society one chooses to create” (71). Accordingly, if man is morally good or can be easily influenced by the order of civilized society, corruption and injustice are unlikely to arise, and the rulers can be trusted to perform their duties fairly without abusing their power. Indeed, as Northrop Frye maintains in his essay “Varieties of Literary Utopias,” the majority of the utopian societies rely on the “disciplined,” just and reasonable individual who by utopian standards equals “the free individual” (33). Moreover, utopians did not see the necessity to distinguish between personal and communal happiness because they believed that man is guided by logic and reason and thus will choose to work towards the creation of a better society and disregard his personal ambitions (Walsh 71). This idea resonates with Rousseau’s concept of the “general will,” where an individual person surrenders his personal will to the will of the collective body for the better future and protection of each individual and society as a whole. Lastly, people believed that, even though regulated, a utopian world does not gainsay freedom: by contrast, “it will lead to

‘true freedom,’ as individual men and women find their own destiny fulfilled by co-operating freely with the purposes of society” (Walsh 72).

These assumptions, however, become transformed drastically in the twentieth century, which can perhaps explain why utopian visions of the world faded and the dystopian tradition emerged and achieved such popularity. First of all, Patrick Reedy and Tom Moylan suggest that the key historical events of the twentieth century—the first and second World Wars—“gave little encouragement for utopian thinking” (Reedy 175). In fact, as Moylan asserts,

dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century: A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of the everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination. (xi)

Secondly, the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union contributed to the dystopian shift as well. According to Peter Ruppert, human hope in the flawlessness of socialism that permeates most utopian writings vanished when the October Revolution of 1917, which promised a radical transformation of Soviet society in some kind of a utopia, failed. He states that “the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union, once thought to be a model utopian experiment, . . . is sufficient evidence that utopianism is not only ineffective but untenable” (100). M. Keith Booker adds to this spectrum of the reasons for a dystopian shift in his book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* and contends that the new technological advances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also contributed to the emergence of dystopian thought. According to Booker, many of the “technological achievements predicted by early scientists like Bacon were being realized” in the nineteenth century, and they already “offered hints that

science would not have an entirely emancipatory effect on humanity,” as science in general goes against human nature and thus becomes a source of its suppression and control (6). Lastly, the discovery in psychology and philosophy in the nineteenth century that human nature is not as perfect and morally good as it was believed to be greatly undermined utopian thinking. Walsh claims that the discoveries of Freud in psychology had a tremendous effect on utopian dreaming and established the framework for the emergence of an inverted utopia, as they proved that humans are not entirely rational beings: they have instincts and are driven by passions and desires (125). Kateb also highlights that the utopian decline originated when man was discovered to be a “mysterious being”—“mysterious to himself and surely to others, not fully explicable by his milieu . . . and capable of some spontaneous behavior” (146). These newly developed assumptions about the nature of human beings definitely had a big impact on the decline of the utopian dream. How can such people be trusted to exercise justice and reason, when they govern the state and the general populace? The careful “planning” that needs to be employed for the creation of the utopian society is now under question (Walsh 55). To conclude, major historical events of the twentieth century, rapid technological progress of the nineteenth century, and newly changed perception of the human make-up cultivated dystopian thinking and gave birth to the dystopian genre. This genre reflected the fear of what might happen to a utopia if the perfect “planning” of the elements of that society goes awry and even turns against its people.

From Utopia to Dystopia

Now if disillusionment in the current state of events and fear of nightmarish proportions drove writers to produce anti-utopian plots, let us look at the circumstances under which some of these dystopian novels were created. One of the early dystopias of the twentieth century was written in 1921 and, unsurprisingly, came from the Soviet Union itself. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* became the first genuine dystopian novel that gave ground and inspiration for most of the dystopias of the twentieth century. Zamyatin was a true believer and advocate of the revolution. During the Tsarist turmoil days, Zamyatin wholeheartedly supported the revolutionary intent of the Bolsheviks and participated in the Revolution of 1905 as a member of the Bolshevik party. After serving several years in exile, Zamyatin again embraced the October Revolution of 1917 and had high hopes for the success of the Communist doctrine in Soviet Russia. However, soon he became disillusioned with the result of the Revolution and began to see what direction the "dictatorship of the proletariat" might go and how the government that was supposed to protect its people started to gain its authoritative control and spread its totalitarian power. Zamyatin already predicted the future horrors of Stalin's rule and wrote *We* as a warning. In *We*, Zamyatin depicts a sterile society where people are denied any form of individuality or creativity and are completely subjugated by the state's apparatus of power. The life of OneState is heavily regulated according to the Table of Hours, which prescribes the way people dress, eat, live, sleep and even procreate, turning them into mindless robots. People are indoctrinated to embrace reason and logic, ignore their personal feelings and ambitions, and idolize the collective. When *We* was first written, it was banned in the Soviet Union and was never published there until 1980s, as it was very

apparent that the merciless Benefactor of Zamyatin's dystopia was Stalin himself and the book was a critique and a warning of the Stalinist totalitarian regime's potential. In 1931, a disenchanted Zamyatin wrote to Stalin and asked him permission to leave Russia because he could no longer write freely under the repression of the state and its new censorship policies. Thus, Zamyatin's *We* became the embodiment of the writer's anxieties, fear and disappointment with the Revolution and the new utopian society it was supposed to bring.

Zamyatin's followers—Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Ayn Rand, Margaret Atwood and Karen Boye, whose novels I am going to analyze in this thesis—also had their valid reasons to create dystopias. Huxley's dystopian vision of the world surfaced in his famous novel *Brave New World*, written in 1931. The creation of the novel was spurred by Huxley's fears of the possible horrific outcomes of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the early twentieth century that promoted mass production and put technological advancement on a pedestal. Huxley was worried by the loss of individuality and the burgeoning number of factories and plants in Europe that converted human beings into machines, especially after his experience working at a chemical plant in England (Baggini 86). His fears intensified even more after he voyaged to America and was appalled by the apparent worship of entertainment, materialism, commercialization and blatant hedonism. All of these fears about the future of the mankind resulted in his famous dystopia *Brave New World* which, as suggested by Mustafa Mencütekin, depicts an “inhuman society controlled by technology, in which art and religion have been abolished and human beings reproduce by artificial fertilization” (60). In this society, people are divided into different castes according to their intellectual and physical

abilities and are conditioned from their very birth to blindly accept their social positions. Social stability is the state's motto and is achieved by keeping every citizen happy at all times. Happiness in this society in turn is accomplished through hypnopaedic conditioning at birth and reinforced by sexual promiscuity (which is considered a virtue), entertainment, and Soma, a drug that is supposed to calm one down if he or she starts to feel depressed (Mencütekin 61-62). Thus, Huxley in his dystopia shows us at what human cost social stability is attained and how what appears to be a perfect utopian paradise at first glance can suddenly slide into a hellish dystopian nightmare.

Orwell's startling dystopia *1984*, which is considered one of the dystopian classics, was also the product of intense apprehension for the future generations. *1984*, published in 1949, was largely inspired by Zamyatin's *We* and was written as a satire and critique of Stalinism. Unlike Zamyatin, who wrote *We* predicting what *might* happen in the future of the Soviet Union under the Stalinist regime, Orwell conceived *1984* after observing all of the atrocities of Stalin's brutality and his omnipotent control over people. He saw the corruption and the incredible violence exercised by Stalin towards Russian citizens and the rise of Hitler's influence in Germany and was afraid that a communist or a fascist virus might spread throughout Europe during the Second World War. In his somber dystopia, Orwell portrays a society under a brutal dictatorship with secret surveillance, never-ending wars and horrible living conditions, where individuality is considered a thoughtcrime and people live in constant fear and misery. The ideology and cult of the Party's ruler, Big Brother, is fortified by means of propaganda, manipulation of the historical events of the past, the invention of Newspeak, and various forms of surveillance. This is the kind of grim future Orwell envisioned after witnessing the

consequences of a ruthless Stalinist regime in Russia, and he warned about what might happen if history were to repeat itself.

Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (1937) continues the tradition of the Soviet-inspired novels and forewarns us against the collectivism and socialistic tendencies of Soviet Russia as well. In this novella Rand describes a place where individual ambitions are completely suppressed and replaced by the worship of the collective. Children are raised by the state and are assigned their social roles against their will so that they can contribute to the overall commonwealth of the state. When the main protagonist, a streetsweeper, uses his knowledge and wit to rediscover electricity, he is severely upbraided by the World Council of Scholars for going against his social position and disobeying the rules of the government and is ostracized from that society (Gimpelevich 20). By depicting such a social structure, Rand shows what happens to our humanity under a merciless totalitarian regime and how the dream of the communal utopia where everyone contributes equally to the overall prosperity of the state can jeopardize and eventually eradicate the concept of individuality.

Another dystopia incited by the autocratic regime in the Soviet Union and the trepidation of the consequences of the Nazi power was written in 1940 by a Swedish poet and writer, Karin Boye, entitled *Kallocain*. This novel, like Rand's *Anthem*, also imagines a society where the concept of individualism is eliminated and people are utterly subordinated by the political apparatus of Worldstate. In this dystopia, the main protagonist invents a new drug called Kallocain—a truth serum—that can expose individual thoughts and therefore can ultimately annihilate any possibility of a heretical idea or rebellion. By using this drug the state is now in total control over people's private

thoughts and feelings; nothing can escape their omnipresent gaze. This kind of futuristic world, where not only people's actions but also their thoughts are controlled by the all-powerful totalitarian machine, was highly feared by Boye as she visualized frightening outcomes of the state's power gone out of control.

Finally, *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood's brilliant feminist dystopia, written in 1985, was composed to satirize the contemporary feminist movements as well as misogynistic inclinations as Atwood became concerned about where these movements can take the contemporary society if taken to the extreme. In this novel, which takes place in the futuristic United States where a military coup has established a totalitarian government with strong patriarchal domination derived from the Bible, old ideas of family, jobs or love are eliminated and substituted by the newly invented concepts that divide all people into classes according to their social functions: Commanders, Wives, Aunts, Eyes, Handmaids, etc. Since pollution and natural disasters brought the birthrate to almost a zero level, women are now viewed solely as child-bearers and are only valued for their reproductive abilities. Handmaids undergo ideological indoctrination by Aunts and then are selected and assigned to a childless family of an elite class. Their social function now is to produce children and, if they refuse, they are pronounced "unwomen" and sent to Colonies to die. Even though this dystopia is written with feminist undertones and focuses mainly on the oppression of women under a tyrannical rule, it undeniably fits in the dystopian canon, as it depicts and cautions us about the suppression of individuality and human freedoms under the strict control of the state. To sum up, Zamyatin and his followers describe and warn against utopias that at first appear to

possess a perfect life with ideal governmental organization and living conditions, but later start to reveal its ugly dystopian face.

Control and Resistance in Dystopian Fiction

Looking at some of the recurrent themes in dystopian fiction, it is apparent that they are startlingly comparable to the main characteristics of the utopian vision of the world. However, they do have one key distinction: if utopian writers believe in the positive outcomes of the perfectly structured life of the utopia, dystopian writers are not too eager to conclude that the rigid planning of the utopian society will go flawlessly. They reveal and caution us about what happens to a utopia when something breaks down in its immaculate order or does not go according to the plan: whether it is a dystopian citizen who does not want to conform to the collectivism of the state or a governmental apparatus that becomes corrupt and too hungry for power. As Walsh puts it: “If utopia is social planning that produces good results, dystopia is most often social planning that backfires and slides into nightmare” (137). Jessica Langer also maintains in her work “The Shapes of Dystopia: Boundaries, Hybridity and the Politics of Power” that, “rather than imagining a world in which the criticized aspects of the author’s society have disappeared,” dystopia “instead imagines a world in which those same aspects are overgrown and run amok, displacing them into an alternate universe where life is defined by them” (171).

Judging by the examples above, dystopia mainly depicts the divergence between individual identity or ambition and the collective goals of the state, which crush or suppress any individual expressions. Walsh justly asserts that “by weakening the sense

of individual identity, they make it more likely that the average man will merge his own frail identity with the social whole and cease to demand that he be called by a name instead of a number” (143). The collective mentality of the state and its power directly attack dystopian citizens in both body and mind and turn them into robots that are supposed to live and work for the state only. As Sharon Stevenson contends,

the evil in a dystopia is usually a faceless, all-encompassing state, bureaucracy, or belief system that annihilates or restricts some set of values the readers believe are indispensable to both their own and the characters’ ability to function as fully dignified human beings. (131)

The lives of dystopian citizens are highly regimented and surveilled; they are denied any personal relationships or feelings; sex and marriage are viewed in some cases as purely for procreation, in other cases as a distraction or a pastime. Children are brought up and educated by the state and trained to be loyal and fulfill their assigned functions accurately without ever questioning or challenging the system. Thus, the utopian idealistic communism that originally intended to guarantee the commonwealth for all ends up abusing its power in the dystopian version of the world, exploiting human body and mind and turning its citizens into slaves.

As a consequence, themes of governmental control become important in the discussion of dystopian literature. Some critics examine how this control is materialized through the use of technology that, as proposed by Gorman Beauchamp, can portray dystopias as either technologically advanced, where the state is “dependent upon a massive technological apparatus,” or primitive to keep its citizens in the constant state of “depressed deprivation”—either way, the state utilizes technology or lack of it to govern and manipulate human lives (55-56). The concept of routine and prescribed schedule that

the state instills in its citizens is also discussed in dystopian fiction as a way to tame wild human nature and transform people into mindless robots. Samuel Macey, for instance, underlines that clocks dominate dystopian societies and “eventually the people themselves take on the nature of clocks” (30). Brett Cooke also argues that dystopian plot “sets planned social engineering against what passes for human nature,” rendering human beings to the status of slaves (*Human Nature, Utopia* 384). Consequently, other critics, like Michael Amey, analyze the suppression of human emotions and freedoms to the control of the state and underscores how it reduces individual “originality” and increases “uniformity,” shaping dystopian society into one organism where individuals think and act alike, providing perfect conditions for the state’s exploitation (29). Moreover, eugenic and reproductive control plays a significant role in the dystopian canon as well, and critics like Mencütekin and Cooke emphasize the importance of it in their works.¹ Another important aspect of control in the dystopian novel that attracts a lot of critical attention is the idea of human manipulation through language. According to Courtine, since “language is the living memory of man and offers him a space for inner resistance,” “power must thus become master of language,” which can not only manipulate the past of the humankind through language, but also eradicate certain words and definitions associated with “heresy” so that nobody can interfere with the supreme power of the state (70). Finally, the state’s control materializes in strict and constant surveillance in

¹ Mencütekin maintains that the regulation of reproduction in dystopia guarantees the ultimate control of the state, as through the use of science it not only can produce a certain number of bodies through the notorious “Bokanovsky Process” that Huxley employs in his *Brave New World*, but can also condition them to obey the state’s doctrine. Cooke also concludes that by regulating human sexual life and reproduction through “a combination of bureaucracy and science” the government “strips” people “of their immediate evolutionary purpose” and denies them “their natural right” (*Human Nature* 139).

dystopian societies that can reinforce the subjugation of people and, as suggested by James Tyner, “produce total conformity” (137).

Since the concepts of control are analyzed, various means of liberation from that control have been suggested as well in dystopian literature. This idea has brought a considerable amount of debate, though not as deep and detailed as the debate over the concept of regulation and control. The two main views of liberation in a dystopia include the resistance that is expressed through the body and its sexuality, and writing or narration. Bodily, natural impulses rebel against oppression and totalitarian control, because the human body is considered to contain primitive, unrestrained passion and instincts that go against any attempts to be tamed and subjugated by civilization or any political apparatus. Thus, sexual desires become subversive to the policies of the state, and, according to Naomi Jacobs, function as a “liberating energy” in dystopian novels. This energy rebels against the perfect order of the state and refuses to subdue its natural impulses and give up its freedoms (4). Human emotions like love are also supposed to awaken our irrational instincts and thus can serve as a threatening source for the state’s control, which is based on rationality, order, and obedience.² Besides the power of the body that can rebel against the state, writing also enables people to develop a sense of empowerment and authorship which grants them a sense of identity in the faceless mechanism of the state. The epistolary format that some of the dystopian authors employ in their novels not only allows the main protagonist to find his or her voice and reclaim

² Andrew Barratt, for example, emphasizes the importance of love in Zamyatin’s *We* as it manages to bring out the irrational, “x-factor” in the main protagonist’s identity and puts his worship of the state’s collective mentality into question: “The danger embodied in I- extends much further, jeopardizing the very existence of the One State itself” (664).

self-autonomy in this dehumanizing society, but it also permits characters to regain their bodies and by doing so resist the oppression of the state.³

My thesis will also examine both the control that the state performs over people and ways people discover liberation from that control. However, while most critics focus on the crucial role technology, surveillance, eugenic and language manipulations play in governmental control, in the first chapter I intend to look at how the government under totalitarian rule employs its control through the lens of Foucauldian “discipline,” an idea developed in his work *Discipline and Punish*, and through the discourse of the body. Foucault was among the first philosophers to thoroughly expose how the body is exploited by society and those in power, and constantly regulated and policed by Panopticism to the point that the body internalizes the mechanism of discipline and self-surveillance. The Panopticon, created by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, is a type of architectural design for prisons with a circular frame and a tower in the center, allowing the supervisor to easily observe inmates from the tower without their knowing whether they are being observed (this design can also be used for hospitals, schools, and factories). Because the prisoners can never know with certainty when they are being watched, they start regulating and controlling their own actions, and thus the discipline becomes innate. Foucault’s theory is

³ The role of writing/narration is usually analyzed in Zamyatin’s *We* and Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*. For example, Patrick Parrinder, proclaims D-503’s diary in *We* as a major impetus for his identity search and thus, an act of resistance. He argues that D’s narration does not only give him a personal space to express and reflect on his individual feelings, but also makes him develop a new language in which he can express his newly discovered self. While language allows D to rediscover his self, language in *The Handmaid’s Tale* enables the main heroine to regain her body through her narration and thus reclaim her authority in the totalitarian state. According to Myrsiades, “the handmaid must find her agency by composing her own body” as it grants her an “emergent place of her own” where she can put pieces of her defragmented body together, reconstruct her identity and reconnect again with her body (234-235).

vital to the analysis of dystopian fiction, as it helps us understand the discourse of the state's control and its detrimental effects on dystopian citizens. Thus, it is this Foucauldian interpretation of "discipline" that I am going to apply to analyze how the body in a dystopian world is manipulated, exploited and monitored by the government to achieve the subjugation of the body to the authority of the state. Since Foucault admits that, as a result of discipline, a series of coercions were created by the ruling class that employed "a calculated manipulation" of the body's "elements, gestures, behavior" to "explore it, break it down and rearrange it," I intend to examine how these coercions affect the human body (138). Particularly, I explore how the state, by disciplining the body, not only achieves its ultimate subordination, but also increases its productivity for use by the commonwealth of the state.

Another aspect of the dystopian novel that I aim to explore, which has been somehow overlooked, is the government's intention to control the human mind as well. It seems that the discussion about the exploitation of the human mind in dystopian literature has been limited to the mere exploration of human conditioning, mainly in Huxley's dystopia. I, however, propose to analyze the regulation of the human mind through the theories of ideology and social function formulated by Louis Althusser in his work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Aware of the obvious dichotomy of the body and mind in social theory—which, according to Turner, presents mind as "a rational consciousness" and body as "a machine"—I show that these novels nevertheless suggest that, in order to fully obtain supreme authority over human beings, both body and mind have to be controlled (26). This is where Althusser's ideas become useful, since he implies that the control of the mind that will guarantee and reinforce the control of the

body is only possible through ideological indoctrination. He argues that in order to convert a human being into a docile and productive *body*, human *mind* has to believe in the righteousness of the actions of the body. He claims that “all ideology hails or interrelates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” who become susceptible to the values and beliefs of the dominant ideology in a totalitarian state (162). Althusser explains that once a “subject” possesses appropriate “consciousness” and truly believes in “the ideas that his ‘consciousness inspires in him,’” he will begin to “*act* according to his ideas” completely submitting himself to the ideology and his social function, thus boosting the productivity of the body that Foucault talks about (157). Therefore, like Foucault, who highlights the enormous role the state plays in producing “docile” and “disciplined” *bodies*, Althusser believes in the importance of social apparatuses that can produce “docile” and “disciplined” *minds*.

With this context in mind, the first chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to a comparative analysis of six dystopian novels: Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*, George Orwell’s *1984*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Karen Boye’s *Kallocain* and Ayn Rand’s *Anthem*. My examination will involve various ways governmental control and the Foucauldian concept of “discipline” materialize themselves on different levels in dystopian society, and how they affect people on an individual level. Specifically, I argue that the state implements its discipline in a well-organized routine which prescribes and shapes the thoughts and actions of every citizen in dystopian society. Discipline is also embedded within the social functions which are assigned to each individual by the state and become the sole characterization of their bodies, disregarding their personhood. Moreover, human reproduction and personal

relationships are also regulated and controlled, producing not only disciplined bodies but disciplined minds, as ideological indoctrination is employed right from birth. Finally, discipline manifests itself in a strict and incessant surveillance system intended to monitor the human body and confine the human mind through the mechanism of Panopticism which, according to Foucault, guarantees the ultimate submission.

Yet, against these means of control, writing functions as a liberating tool to resist the authority and control of the state. While some critics suggest that the body and its sexual drives present a site of resistance, others concur that writing or narration in dystopian fiction provides a space for resistance as well. I agree with the latter and, in my second chapter, examine how writing becomes an empowering agency in dystopian society, but look at it through the feminist theoretical lens. I employ the feminist idea of writing/narration as an empowering mechanism, one that endows people with agency, encouraging women to stand up against the patriarchal society, express their individualities and regain their bodies through writing. Since feminist theory advocates liberation from repressive forces through writing, I engage this theory by situating it in the context of the dystopian canon to analyze various ways writing helps dystopian citizens to re-discover their personality and, by doing so, rebel against the oppressive regime. In this chapter, I offer a comparative study of three dystopian novels—Zamyatin's *We*, Orwell's *1984* and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*—and suggest that writing offers resistance in three different ways: 1) in *We* it allows one to discover one's personality and thus defy the collective mentality of the state through one's newly discovered identity; 2) in *1984* it enables one to reconnect with one's past and thus reclaim one's memories and remain human in a dehumanizing world; 3) in *The*

Handmaid's Tale it serves as a way to reclaim the control over one's body when body appears to be the main source of totalitarian control.

CHAPTER II
CONTROL OF THE BODY AND MIND IN
DYSTOPIAN FICTION

Most dystopian novels depict the government as an absolute power: oppressive and domineering, controlling all spheres of life. The essential condition of this power is to be ubiquitous, to permeate every layer of society and regulate people, their actions and thoughts. Thus, in order to remain omnipresent and have total control over human lives, discipline is employed on all levels of society as the most crucial tool to establish supreme control. The system of severe, never-failing discipline is applied in dystopian societies and used to manipulate people's bodies and minds to ensure the maximum power of the state. This idea of discipline as an essential component of political power is the focal point of Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish*, where he examines various ways discipline functions in society. Foucault believes that discipline is a powerful agency used to govern people's lives "to produce subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies" that can be "manipulated, shaped," and "trained" for the benefit of the state (136-138). I am going to rely on the Foucauldian interpretation of discipline in this chapter, because it proves important in analyzing ways the state is attempting to spread and maximize its power over people's bodies and minds in dystopian novels. The phenomenon of "docile bodies" as the product of discipline and a direct "object and target of power" is especially interesting to me, as I aim to examine

how human bodies and minds are controlled and exploited by the state (136). In addition, I am also going to utilize theoretical work on ideology—“Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” by another Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser—since it addresses the idea of social function and ideological practice that are also imposed on people through disciplinary mechanisms to tame them physically and mentally. On the whole, I propose that discipline in dystopian literature is employed in most important aspects of human life and is practiced on multiple levels.

To begin with, discipline is utilized to control people’s everyday lives in the form of a strictly regimented routine where people’s actions are prescribed by the government-instituted schedule. Thus, dystopian citizens do not have a choice in what they can or cannot do, have lost the control over their own bodies and minds, and have become “imprisoned” in the state’s disciplinary system (hence, I compare their lifestyles to that of prisoners’). In this section, I mainly analyze the portrayal of the routine in Yevgeny Zamyatin’s dystopia *We* through the lens of Foucauldian theory from his work *Discipline and Punish*. Secondly, I argue that discipline is also employed through the social duties that are assigned to all people by examining Althusser’s theory on ideology and social functions. By perceiving people as “subjects,” the state discovers a way to use the human body to its full potential to ensure the maximum productivity of the general populace for the state’s overall well-being. This is achieved through the manipulation of the human mind, materialized in ideological indoctrination, to ensure people’s total acceptance of the ruling ideology and total compliance to the state’s mandates so that they can become the country’s main productive force and “perform their tasks conscientiously” (Althusser 128). In this case, the control of the body and mind has to be

applied simultaneously, because people's physical performance is directly interconnected with their psychological conviction in the correctness and usefulness of their actions. In this segment, I primarily explore the control of the body in Margaret Atwood's feminist dystopia *The Handmaid's Tale* and analyze the manipulation of the mind via ideology and indoctrination through the collective mentality in Zamyatin's *We*, Ayn Rand's *Anthem* and George Orwell's *1984*. Further, I suggest that government found its way to spread its disciplinary apparatus to the reproductive process where it can not only control the number of bodies produced, but is also able to condition and train them to grow up completely "docile." The state's goal to "integrate" the ideology of production into children's "everyday 'consciousness'" is examined here through the lens of Althusser's ideas, as it is easier to regulate someone's mind when he or she is young and inexperienced (Althusser 123). Government-created propagandistic teachings for the children, and the complete alienation of these latter from their natural parents guarantee future model citizens who are industrious and, at the same time, patriotic and tractable. I evaluate the theme of the state's interference in the reproduction process in Aldous Huxley's dystopia *Brave New World* and the idea of children being state property in Orwell's *1984*, Karin Boye's *Kallocain* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. Lastly, I propose that discipline is used to control the human body and mind through implementing a regulatory apparatus of surveillance, which aims to monitor the human body at all times. Foucault's idea of the Panoptican gaze is explored here: it is embodied in many dystopian novels in the form of the telescreen (*1984*), the police-eye (*Kallocain*), Guardians (*We*), Eyes (*Handmaid's Tale*) that constantly watches dystopian citizens to maintain their docility and eventually turn them into their own observers. I particularly

focus on the role of the telescreen in *1984* and transparent architecture in *We*. The control of the mind through disciplinary surveillance is obvious in attempts to control human thoughts, creation of the Thought Police (*1984*) and invention of the drug serum (*Kallocain*) to detect and eradicate any signs of unconventional thinking. In addition, thoughts are controlled by the alteration of the past and historical events so that the current ideology can never be questioned and people can be free of any doubtful thoughts. In this final part, I analyze the idea of a thoughtcrime in Orwell's *1984* and Boye's *Kallocain* as well as the manipulation of the past in *1984* and *We*. All of these forms of state's disciplinary coercions are applied in dystopian societies to produce a "manipulable body" and "subjected" mind for establishing the ultimate hegemony of the state (Foucault 136; Althusser 128).

The Routine

In a dystopian world, bodies are represented as powerless and feeble, being reduced to constant oppression and regulation from the state, which engages discipline to achieve its devious aim. As Foucault describes it, discipline is a tool that made "possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body" materialized in different ways (137). One of them focused on a scrupulously designed and organized everyday routine, which had to be followed by everyone in society. This coercion grants the ruling elite a perfect opportunity to force people into submissiveness, turn them into robots that are trained to do with preciseness exactly the same thing as everyone else does. Every day and every hour of people's lives is prescribed and directed by the government, prohibiting people any involuntary deviation from the rigid schedule. In fact, it is through

the use of such a strict disciplinary system that social order can be established where people become totally subservient and oblivious to the omnipotent power of the state. Foucault in his work elaborates on this idea and explains that “discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (138). In other words, once a human body becomes totally disciplined, two things happen. On the one hand, the body increases its productive potential and can benefit the state economically, and, on the other hand, it becomes completely obedient, posing no difficulties for the state’s control.

Thus, inadvertently, the citizens of most totalitarian regimes resemble prisoners because of the rigid discipline that the state requires of their bodies. Foucault discusses the implementation of discipline in penitentiary institutions in *Discipline and Punish* and quotes at length Léon Faucher, who drafted the rules for a Parisian prison:

The prisoners’ day will begin at six in the morning in winter and at five in summer. They will work for nine hours a day throughout the year. Two hours a day will be devoted to instruction . . . At the first drum-roll, the prisoners must rise and dress in silence, as the supervisor opens the cell doors. At the second drum-roll, they must be dressed and make their beds. At the third, they must line up and proceed to the chapel for morning prayer . . . Work and the day will end at nine o’clock in winter and at eight in summer. . . . (qtd. in Foucault 6)

Similarly, citizens of OneState in Zamyatin’s novel *We* seem to follow exactly the same routine. People, to be exact Numbers, live day after day according to the Table of Hours—a detailed schedule of their lives organized and put together by the state. This Table, proclaimed by the main protagonist as the “heart and pulse of OneState,” dictates how people should spend every minute of the day—everyone is doing precisely the same thing in unison, creating a giant organism that acts and moves alike—to shape one body,

which can be easily regulated through discipline and order (Zamyatin 12). Zamyatin, depicting a typical day in the life of OneState residents, writes:

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 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 to bed. (13)

Such eerie unanimity does not allow any foreign action that is somehow different from the rest, making it very simple for the government to exercise its control and at the same time use people's productivity for its advantage. This never-interrupted and never-ending routine sucks out any creativity or desire to learn from these people, turning them into one giant mass of pliable material, easily trained and molded.

Foucault elaborates on this "time-table" method of discipline and asserts that, because it "establishes rhythm, imposes particular occupations, regulates the cycle of repetition," it allows the state to obtain the same blind compliance from its citizens as commanders get from their soldiers in the army (149). The rigid breakdown of time into hours, minutes, and seconds and disciplinary control of gestures and movements in the military eliminates any free movements and adjusts "the body into temporal imperatives," which, if repeated continuously, stay in one's body forever (151). By the same token, D-503 and other characters in *We* live their lives in an infallible circle of "precisely established meals, obligatory walks" that smears any traces of individuality and makes them robotic and identical, like "innumerable waves" in one big "mighty flood" (Zamyatin 7). As Brett Cooke points out in his article "Human Nature, Utopia, and Dystopia," in *We* "virtually every aspect of life is subjected to purportedly rational central

planning. Numbers live a meticulously scheduled existence from cradle to grave, walking, washing, working, recreating and retiring largely in unison” (386). Even such an intimate act as sex is regulated in the Table of Hours, when twice a day “the single mighty organism breaks down into its individual cells” for the Personal Hours (Zamyatin 13). It should be noted that the Personal Hours, even though they allow you to do what you wish, are still an allotted period of time in a closely regulated Table of Hours, which orders people when to have sex or rest. Moreover, the meticulously crafted Table of Sex Days also directs and assigns which Number you can “make use of” on certain days, determined by exact calculations of sexual hormones in your blood for perfect chemically proven match (22). This lifestyle undoubtedly reminds of the rigorous discipline of prisoners or soldiers, who do not have the freedom to do what they want, but instead have to abide by the firm system of laws and regulations.

The regime of dystopian citizens that controls their time and movement in space does resemble the “rezhim” of GULAG prisoners in Russia under Soviet rule. Citizens of One State in *We* have similar lifestyles to GULAG prisoners, as they comply with the same daily routine. However, there is one chief distinction between the two that needs to be addressed. Anne Applebaum in her book *GULAG: A History* illustrates the living and working conditions of the camp prisoners and emphasizes the systematic “regime” of labor camps that “determined when and how the prisoner should wake; how he should be marched to work; when and how he should receive food; when and for long he should sleep” (191). This description does sound similar to the strictly regulated lifestyle of D-503 in *We* or Winston Smith in *1984*; however, there is one detail that seems to separate these two worlds. As Applebaum depicts it further, camp prisoners

marched to work with armed guards behind them shouting: “A step to the right, or a step to the left, will be considered an attempt to escape—The convoy will fire without warning” (192). They had rifles constantly pointing at them and forcing them to conform to the laws of the prison; thus, they had to march in strict rows in silence, fearing for their lives. Conversely, in a dystopian world, people accept the regime as an essential component of their lives and willingly follow it, as if pre-programmed, day after day. Dystopian writers—either Zamyatin, who predicted what *might* happen or Orwell, who described what *would* happen if the totalitarian regime were not stopped—depict a society that has already internalized the discipline imposed on it and, unlike GULAG prisoners, does not need to be forced into submission; dystopian citizens are *voluntarily* submissive. They recognize the timetable as a mandatory aspect that simply has to be fulfilled either because of ignorance and years of indoctrination (*Brave New World*), blind devotion (*We*), or fear (*1984*). Either way, citizens of dystopian societies are prisoners who refuse to see and acknowledge the bars of their own cages and do not have control over their own bodies.

While I compare the citizens of a dystopian world to prisoners who senselessly espouse the rules of the ruling Party and willingly perceive the discipline as a normal component of their daily lives, Cooke in his book *Human Nature in Utopia: Zamyatin's We* compares them to children who live their lives as “recipients” (40). He states that the predominant disciplinary regime of OneState in Zamyatin's *We* denies its citizens the common human concept of “giving or exchange,” thus making their interaction linear instead of circular (40). Their life is prescribed for them: food is divided, work and sex life are heavily regulated and monitored, and personal

relationships are disrupted, leaving their society with no privacy or individuality (41). Either compared to children or prisoners, the concept remains the same: dystopian citizens do not possess authority over their lives and are regimented through a highly regulated schedule, which they do not even question anymore.

Social Function

Such incredible collective mentality stems from people's belief that the state knows precisely what the general populace needs. Thus, people are convinced that it is their duty to serve and sacrifice themselves for the state's well being, annihilating their identities and personal happiness and blindly embracing their social responsibilities as a result. For instance, the main protagonists in *We* and *1984* work for the government and believe that they are fulfilling an important task. D-503 from *We* is in charge of a critical assignment to design and build a spaceship, the Integral, that will allow OneState to possibly expand its powers and conquer other civilizations. Correspondingly, Smith, the main character in *1984*, is the editor of the newspaper *Times*, whose job is to forge information presented in the media to ensure that "every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct" (Orwell 36). They become so entrenched with their social duties that they turn into "subjects," whose sole function is to live and work in order to satisfy the government's wants and not "interfere with the progress of the great State Machine" (Zamyatin 25).

This becomes another embodiment of discipline used by the ruling Party to govern the body, which is only perceived as a machine laboring away not merely until it is tired, but until it breaks down or is told to stop. Besides the routine that regulates every

person's move and action, the government subdues the body by labeling it with a social function, a duty that every individual has to fulfill in order to practice good citizenship. This phenomenon of the social practice is discussed in Louis Althusser's work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," where he introduces the idea of ideological function, which categorizes individuals into "subjects." He states that a human being, who is subjected to ideology involuntarily, turns into a "subject," as his outlook on the world will be shaped congruously with the state's beliefs (157). However, he claims that "what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (155). Thus, this "imaginary relation" will dictate how individuals perceive themselves in the world and what social function they will occupy. A person's ability to identify oneself is perceived through the lens of social practices that are imposed on people through ideology. Therefore, it is in the state's best interest that people view themselves as "subjects" (not as individual identities); once they identify themselves as such, they act and think according to the ideology's chief principles, and fail to break the circle—they cannot imagine themselves outside of the ideological framework. With this idea considered, in most dystopian books, the state prescribes which social function each person will serve for the welfare of the country as a whole. Thus, individual feelings or ambitions are disregarded, as dystopias, according to Martin Kessler, "posit a perfectly malleable . . . human nature incapable of experiencing any emotion or exercising any judgment outside of the prevailing . . . frame of reference" or "ideology," resulting in the "destruction of personal identity in objective reality" (568). Consequently, for example, in Ayn Rand's novel *Anthem*, when children reach the age of

sixteen they are prohibited from choosing their future occupations because they are not in control of how their bodies will be used. The state arbitrarily determines what “subjects” they will be turned into and how their bodies will be appropriated according to governmental needs. Rand writes what the Teachers tell their students when they reach sixteen:

Dare not choose in your minds the work you would like to do when you leave the Home of Students. You shall do that which the Council of Vocations shall prescribe for you. For the Council of Vocations knows in its great wisdom where you are needed by your brother men, better than you can know in your unworthy little minds. And if you are not needed by your brother men, there is no reason for you to burden the earth with your bodies. (18)

In other words, individuals’ opinions on how to utilize their own bodies are not taken into consideration, and what is more disturbing is that due to the ideological indoctrination, they do not even mind it; they are so used of being told what to do that they see nothing unusual about it.

The idea of human beings being exploited and appreciated only when they can accomplish their societal duty and benefit the state is emphasized in Margaret Atwood’s dystopia *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In this novel, set in the Republic of Gilead during the time when very few women are able to procreate due to nuclear radiation and chemical pollution, women are valued only for their bodies that can reproduce and supply the state with children. All people, especially women, in this new theocratic republic, are divided into classes according to their social functions and have to wear color-coded clothes to be easily distinguishable. Women who still have viable ovaries belong to a newly created social class, called Handmaids, who are assigned to the males of the ruling class elite purely for reproductive purposes and “are reduced to fertility machines” (Freibert 282).

They are selected and trained in indoctrination centers by Aunts, and, as Roberta Rubenstein points out, are “tattooed with ‘cattle brands’” to embrace their new role and social function as a “two-legged womb”—their duty now is to bear children (Rubenstein 106; Atwood 128). When the mission is accomplished and the baby is born, the Handmaid can be relocated to another Commander. Undoubtedly, in this dystopian society, the woman is literally perceived as a body, a “womb” that can produce offspring to be distributed and utilized in society however the state desires. In fact, fertile women are considered property of the state: they are assigned to Commanders and are treated not as human beings, but rather, as proposed by Linda Kauffman, as a “territory to master,” a reproductive tool that can be beneficial for society’s stability (226). Linda Myrsiades addresses females’ new social function in Gilead’s society in her essay “Law, Medicine, and the Sex Slave in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*” and compares Handmaids to slaves, “reproductive slaves,” who are “forced by the state to bear children and not entitled to full human status” (228). She asserts that women are stripped of their humanity and, instead of fulfilling their traditional role of mothers, introduced into their new roles—the role of “surrogate, carrying on society’s genes as the vessel through which they pass” (228).

The utilization of a human body is particularly emphasized in this novel, since it is mainly a woman’s body that is being controlled and disciplined in Atwood’s dystopia. Women and their inferior position to men have always occupied a prominent place in the discourse of the body because they are usually depicted as emotional, irrational, driven by the instincts of their corporeal needs, and going against the traditional male-dominated beliefs. Moreover, women have frequently been the subject of

masculine control and have been subjugated and manipulated mostly through their bodies. As stated by Angela King in “The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body,” women are usually defined “according to their reproductive physiology,” thus making them “feeble and passive, literally a receptacle for the desires of the male and incubator for his offspring, . . . a slave to her reproductive organs/hormones” (31). Likewise, in Atwood’s futuristic world, women are only defined as reproductive tools for the future of the state and reduced to the status of baby-making machines.

The leitmotif of a woman’s body being used solely for procreative purposes permeates the entire novel, and the main protagonist, Offred, constantly observes, refers and analyses her body as the story progresses. In the scene following her visit to the doctor, Offred admits while undressing that she does not want to look down at her body “not so much because it is shameful or immodest, but because” she does not want “to look at something that determines her so completely” (Atwood 82). She realizes that as long as she keeps birthing babies, she will be safe; otherwise, she will be proclaimed an “unwoman” and sent to the colonies to do hard manual work. The state does not offer women a variety of options, so they just follow along to avoid any repercussions and possibly death. Later in the novel, when Offred ponders over the past where she had a normal life with a husband and a daughter, she confesses that she used to view her body as “an instrument of pleasure, or a means of transportation, or an implement for the accomplishment of her will”—something alive, “lithic, single, solid, one with her” (95). However, now, since she has been reduced to a child-bearing apparatus, “an ambulatory chalice,” her body, as Rubenstein puts it, “exists literally to be used against her” (103).

She feels how her flesh “arranges itself differently” and perceives herself as a cloud, “congealed around a central object, the shape of a pear” with a space inside that is “huge,” “dark,” and “empty” (Atwood 95). She feels that her body does not belong to her anymore; it is now the state’s valuable asset, or, as Offred puts it herself, its “national resource” and, thus, the state decides when and how her body is going to be used (Atwood 85). Myrsiades states that Offred as a person ceases to exist (even her new given name seems to imply it—being Of Fred, the name of her Commander, or “offered”) because “she has been inverted and engulfed in the dissipating egg her womb expels, provoking an image of an incubator housed in that which it incubates” (227). Clearly, the governmental control reaches its highest goal: it has stolen a body, thousands of bodies to be exact—the most private part of a human being—robbing people of their humanity, freedom of choice and inner power, reducing them to apathy and servility, and, as expressed by Freibert, “violating their individual autonomy” (283). In the case of Offred, her body has not just become “docile”; it is completely absent and gone. Consequently, Myrsiades proclaims Offred to be “an absented figure,” who is “unrepresented” and “erased” (223).

Establishing constant control over one’s body proves to be a very effective way for the ruling class to keep the citizens in a submissive state and always working. When the bodies relentlessly remain exhausted and busy with activity, there is no time or desire for the mind to be active, since, when the body is drained and feeble, it needs to regain its energy by being physically and mentally inert. Nevertheless, some people manage to stay mentally active and alert, able to see all the gaps and cracks in the political and socio-economic systems and unveil the state’s conniving master plan. Thus,

this leads to the expansion of the governmental control of the body to the control of the mind so that any misdemeanor or rebelling thought could be eliminated and the state could have a total dominion over the human being: from the tips of their toes to the insides of their brains. In addition, to ensure that bodies contribute to the economic well-being of the state and are utilized to their full potential, they need to be indoctrinated and sincerely believe in their actions. This is where ideology plays an enormous role in making humans accept their social functions and becomes a powerful tool in manipulating and controlling human minds. Thus, ideology turns people into slaves who will obey and do whatever the government assigns to them, disregarding their own personal ambitions. As Althusser contends, ideology “endows” every “subject” with a “consciousness” and “ideas” that his “consciousness inspires in him” and thus, forces him to “*act* according to his ideas,” gratifying wholly the secret agenda of the government (157). This is where the control of the body and mind as two separate branches of discipline have to be employed jointly for the ultimate effect of total human submission to the state’s Machine: in order for people to *act* in a certain way, they have to actually *believe* in the ethicality of their actions.

The controlling of the mind in dystopian fiction is manifested in people’s conviction that this is the only proper way to lead their lives, despite all injustices and firm regulations on the government’s part. The government has convinced people that the way their society functions and government operates is intended for the common good of the state and its citizens. Hence, D-503, the main character in *We*, admires this beautifully organized existence and calls it an “ideal nonfreedom” (Zamyatin 6) with a “mathematically infallible” formula for happiness (3). He views freedom as a “primitive

state,” (Zamyatin 3) in which his ancestors used to live freely like “beasts,” and he cannot even comprehend why the governmental power of those times did not do anything to stop this disorderly barbarian lifestyle (15). Citizens of OneState are indoctrinated and, according to Cooke, genuinely believe that they live in a utopian state, where adversity is eliminated, and “material want, loneliness, and social disharmony have been banished” so that people can live in the ideal conditions of what Zamyatin’s protagonist calls “the beneficent yoke of the State” (Cooke, *Human Nature, Utopia* 386; Zamyatin 36). People are so accustomed to their routine that they fail to see any flaws within the system and believe that this is how their life should be. Vladimir Kryuchkov also discusses D-503’s idealistic vision of OneState in his book *Heretics in Literature* and claims that “not only does the state view any personal expression as a crime, but Numbers themselves do not feel the necessity to be individuals with their own unique world outlooks”¹ (53). He discusses the story of “трех отпущенников” (“The Three on Leave”), known to every pupil in OneState, where three Numbers were liberated from work for the whole month as an experiment, but even being given the choice, they

hung around the place where they usually worked . . . and would saw, and plane the air, bang invisible hammers, clobber crude castings of iron that no one could see,” as “those movements have become internalized in their bodies.”² (Zamyatin 190; Kryuchkov 53)

This demonstrates that they have been so drenched in the discipline and ideological propaganda that they do not seem to envision their lives being any different. The

¹ My translation from Russian. Original quote: “Не только государство расценивает как преступление всякое личностное проявление, но и нумера не ощущают потребности быть личностью, человеческой индивидуальностью со своим неповторимым миром.”

² Original quote: “...возвращались к своему рабочему месту и по целым часам проделывали те движения, которые в определенное время дня уже были потребностью их организма (пилили, строгали воздух и т.п.).”

government has managed to turn people into working machines, unable to think or live differently from others. As Michael Berman suggests in his work “Deception of the Self in Zamyatin’s *We*,” the government, by employing “the scientific management ideals of Taylor” [timetables to control human behavior and productivity], has not only “converted them [humans] to machines,” but also has manipulated their mental state, making them “efficient, obedient, and essentially mindless” (138). Thus, D-503 himself admits that “the instinct of nonfreedom has been an organic part of man” (Zamyatin 6) and compares it to the ancient man who, having lost his tail, missed it at first, but then “learned to shoo away the flies” without it (12).

Thus, the collective completely overpowers the individual in dystopian society: while “I” is ignored, suppressed and without agency, “we” is all-powerful and domineering. In a controlling and oppressive state apparatus, an individual does not matter because there is no power in an individual thought or action; as D-503 claims it, “*We* comes from God, *I* from the Devil” (Zamyatin 124). Individuality is considered a crime in a totalitarian state because it involves an ability to think differently from others or feel emotions; thus, it has to be annihilated. As Irving Howe suggests in his work “Orwell: History as Nightmare,” Orwell as well as other dystopian fiction writers portrays a world “in which the self, whatever subterranean existence it manages to eke out, is no longer a significant value, not even a value to be violated” (539). This obliteration of the self along with the never-ending battle between the concepts of “we” and “I” is distinctly apparent in most dystopian novels. In Zamyatin’s version of the dystopian world, after falling in love with I-330, the main protagonist experiences a struggle between the collective mentality he is so accustomed to and his own personality.

One of the most vivid moments in this struggle is when D-503 discovers his hairy, “monkey’s hands” that were “some kind of stupid throwback” (Zamyatin 9). These “shaggy paws,” as suggested by Barratt, become the “external marks of the powerful instincts” that have been suppressed by the collective ideology (Zamyatin 23; Barratt 662). This discovery, according to Barratt, becomes the incipience of “the growing rift between his public persona and his newly-discovered private self” (662). In fact, D-503 acknowledges it himself:

There were two me’s. One me was the old one, D-503, Number D-503, and the other The other used to just stick his hairy paws out of his shell, but now all of him came out, the shell burst open, and the pieces were just about to fly in all directions. (Zamyatin 56)

This turns into a personal crisis for D-503, as even though he becomes aware of his own identity and now could “see into himself,” (Zamyatin 56) he realizes that it goes against the values of OneState where one cannot possibly assume that “I” has certain “rights” with respect to the State because “a gram” cannot weigh “the same as ton” (111). Control is much easier to achieve when everybody is equal and possesses the same thoughts or ideology, and remains just “a millionth part of a ton” (111). As Berman emphasizes, “their [numbers’] uniqueness as selves having been leveled to just one of the marching masses shows that social conformity renders numbers arbitrarily equivalent” (139). Only when D starts seeing his own identity and recognizing his own self, he begins to notice all the cracks in the state’s system and see the way common citizens are being blatantly manipulated.

In a different dystopian novel *Anthem*, written by Zamyatin’s Russian counterpart Ayn Rand, the happiness and stability of the nation also lie in the collective

“we,” while individuality or the concept of “I” is forgotten and prohibited all together. The main character Equality 7-2521, from the first pages of the book, confesses to the reader that alone “is a fearful word,” as “the laws say that none among men may be alone, ever and at any time, for this is the great transgression and the root of all evil” (Rand 12). Thus, their motto, “cut in the marble” “over the portals of the Palace of the World Council,” sounds like this: “We are one in all and all in one. There are no men but only the great WE, one indivisible and forever” (13-14). As Zina Gimpelivech states in her article “We and I in Zamyatin’s *We* and Rand’s *Anthem*,” Equality 7-2521 acknowledges his individuality from an early age and yet does not embrace it because it is considered a curse in dystopian society (20). As the author further develops, the main character in *Anthem* wants to follow his dreams and become a Scholar, which would go against “a life mandate as a street sweeper” given to him by the State (20). Only when he finds manuscripts from the past hidden in a tunnel, does Equality experience empowerment and decide to openly admit it, and talk about his discovery in front of the World Council of Scholars. Gimpelevich points out an interesting detail: in both books, *We* and *Anthem*, the main characters discover individuality when they confront their past where “I” was not yet abolished and people had the freedom of personal expression (20). While “I” wins over the collective “we” in *Anthem* and becomes a sort of exception among the majority of dystopian books, D-503, similar to the main characters in other dystopias, succumbs to the power of the prevailing state’s ideology and accepts his destiny as a Number.

Due to the domineering ideology and state’s overpowering control, when citizens of dystopian societies for any particular reason deviate from their social duties

and become more interested in their personal feelings, they feel that they are lacking discipline and betraying the state, as they no longer can fulfill their social functions and be of any use to society. However, this occasional straying away from social responsibilities induces them to perceive themselves as individuals and even to notice the corruption behind the state's ideology. This separation of the self from the overbearing "one million-headed body" of the state's organism is considered a sickness, insanity, an error, irregularity that is not permitted (Zamyatin 124). It is interesting that whenever a person in dystopia begins seeing oneself as an individual, he or she feels sick. For instance, when the main protagonist of *We* falls in love and cannot sleep at night, which is considered unlawful in OneState, he admits that he feels sick and is "in no condition to fulfill" his "obligations to OneState" (58). On a different occasion, D-503 has a dream, which is a sign of a "serious mental illness" in OneState; he believes himself to be sick again and feels obligated to report his condition to the Medical Bureau (33). Being indoctrinated for so long, he thinks he is developing a soul or "imagination," which is labeled to be "the worm that eats out black wrinkles on the brow" in OneState and in the end has to be cut out from the human brain during the Great Operation so that nothing can interrupt the blood flow of the giant state's body (173). During the last couple of minutes before stepping down to the Machine of the Benefactor for the Great Operation, D-503 for the first time feels human, he dreams of his mother and simply wants to be "a piece of humanity, a piece of his own self" and not "the Builder of the INTEGRAL, not the Number D-503" (208-209). He does not want to be defined according to his social function anymore, he does not want to be the property of the State—he just wants to belong to himself and feel an individual inside his flesh.

Concomitantly, in Orwell's *1984*, Smith is declared insane for disagreeing with the Party and put to torture because, as O'Brien puts it, he was not able to control his mind according to the Party's rules (205). O'Brien admits to Smith: "You are here because you have failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one" (205). In other words, those people who have enough courage to go against the conventional rules of the Party are considered outcasts and labeled insane for defying the State and its ideology. Individual thought that disagrees with the collective mentality is measured to be insane, skewered, and in need of repair and more discipline. Thus, O'Brien explains to Smith that the only truth that exists is defined by the Party, and "it is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party" (205). He further elaborates and states that reality exists "not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes," but "only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal" (205). He assures: "Whatever the Party holds to be truth *is* truth . . . This is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you can become sane" (205-206). To put it differently, one has to destroy oneself, undergo a "self-destruction" so that the state can fill one up with its ideology—the only truth one needs to know. If you espouse your *own* truth and embrace your individuality, you are declared mentally unstable and discarded, vaporized from the face of the Earth.

The idea of declaring an unruly mind insane is not new. If we look back at history, a lot of Soviet dissidents, who went against the conventions and spoke out against the oppression of the Soviet government, were pronounced insane and put into

psychoprisons. In the book *Soviet Psychoprisons* written by Harvey Fireside, the author explains why it was more advantageous for the government to declare someone, who was against the regime, insane instead of accusing him of political crimes. Zhores A. Medvedev, in his foreword to the book, asserts that when a country has its people in total submission and when “the Party, the State, the police, the KGB, and the whole penal system are closely interconnected, it is easier to declare one person insane than to compromise the system as a whole” (Medvedev xiii). In addition, Fireside admits that there are two reasons why the state under tyrannical rule chooses to announce the unmanageable people insane and therefore, exercise their hegemony. First, if a person is labeled insane, he or she is viewed as socially dangerous and thus, has to be committed to the mental institution, and eradicated from society. Second, if someone is declared insane, they cannot be tried in court; consequently, they cannot prove the government wrong, because no one is going to give them the right to defend themselves, as they are considered sick. Just like when D-503 is proclaimed to be developing a soul by the medics, a condition considered to be incurable and very dangerous in OneState, and offered the Great Operation to “extirpate the imagination” forever, Russian dissidents who dared to reveal the truth and wrote political poems speaking out against governmental policies, were proclaimed to have “paranoid development of the personality, with reformist ideas arising in the personality, with psychopathic features of the character and the presence of symptoms of arteriosclerosis of the brain” (19). They were then announced mad and sent to psychoprisons to be cured; by the same token, citizens of OneState have to undergo the Great Operation to eliminate imagination and cure their sickness. In fact, Fireside claims that as shown by the reports from the Serbsky

Institute for the insane, any person in question who showed signs of unorthodoxy or would make “any manifestation of nonconformity *prima facie* evidence of mental illness,” had to be proclaimed insane and locked up (30). Thus, there is a direct correlation between defying the logics of established conventions and being proclaimed insane. If you present a truth, different from the ideas of the Party, your truth would be proclaimed the unconscious, deranged rambling of the insane, who ought to be isolated from society and either be fixed or done away with entirely. It is interesting how brilliant Zamyatin’s insight is, as he wrote *We* before the psychoprisons became popular in the Soviet Russia. Zamyatin was able to predict how ruthless and inhumane the government’s discipline would become in dealing with any heretical action or thought and warned us against its appalling consequences in his dystopia.

Reproduction

Besides the daily routine and instilling of social functions, discipline crosses all boundaries and attacks the meek body of dystopian inhabitants in the most vulnerable place. If, before, it was shaping and training already formed bodies to become tractable and “docile,” now it does not even need to do that. It has found another way to control the body: the state has decided to attack the body at the threshold—right in the fertilized egg, before the body is even being formed. The government has put its hands on reproduction and now makes decisions such as how many times an egg should be divided to produce a certain amount of bodies, “docile bodies” from birth. This devious exploitation of the body is vividly depicted in Aldous Huxley’s dystopia *Brave New World* where natural reproduction is banned and children are “decanted” in Hatcheries, preconditioned

according to the five caste divisions, which is essential for the manifestation of the World State's motto—"community, identity, stability" (3). Each of the castes is created to occupy prearranged positions in the state's system: the highest castes "Alpha" and "Beta"—the selected elite and intelligentsia—and the lower castes "Gamma, "Delta" and "Epsilon," who are supposed to constitute the majority of the population doing physical work and manual labor. Thus, right from the birth, fetuses are predetermined in terms of which socio-economical status and occupation they are going to hold when they become adults and are conditioned to behave in a certain way from their childhood. It is interesting that each "Alpha" or "Beta" is the result of one fertilized egg that creates one fetus with a distinctive personality and abilities. In contrast, members of the lower castes are produced using the famous "Bokanovsky process," where an egg can divide multiple times and produce up to ninety-six children that look identical. This highlights the government's ardent interest in the body: people that are being produced do not need to look different or possess various personalities, as they are not appreciated for their uniqueness. They are only valued as bodies—"major instruments of social stability," sharp enough to do physical work and bring profit for the state, and at the same time dull enough to obey the state's law (7). To ensure that the bodies are strong enough and will have no difficulties completing their work and are "docile" enough to not question the system, they are conditioned through the use of chemicals, oxygen, heat, cold etc. so that they will come out with restricted intellectual and physical skills, making it easy for the government to control them. Huxley's novel puts it best when The Director of the Hatchery and Conditioning Center claims,

‘We also predestine and precondition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers of future . . .’ He was going to say ‘future World controllers,’ but correcting himself, said ‘future Directors of Hatcheries,’ instead. (13)

Thus, the bodies are literally regulated, made “docile” and “subjected” from the day they are born without having even the slightest idea that they are being preprogrammed to act in a certain way. This in turn provides the government with not only “docile” bodies but industrious bodies that, as Kessler puts it, “learn” the value of their social functions right from birth, allowing the state to ultimately “control the very condition of human existence” (571).

The conditioning that the embryos and babies undergo in Huxley’s novel underlines that government not only controls people’s bodies and decides how to appropriate them, but also manipulates people’s minds, creating a nation of ignorant, compliant people. To ensure that all castes are different according to their physical and mental abilities, they are conditioned through chemicals; to ensure that they never feel jealousy towards one another or express dissatisfaction with their social functions, they are taught hypnopaedia—“the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time”—hypnotic messages which when repeated numerous times, seep into children’s sub-consciousness and eventually become common sense (Huxley 28). Thus, when they become adults, people not only perform their social functions with great efficiency, but they also never complain about their lives and accept their occupations with the utmost dedication: either it is an intellectual Alpha or a hardworking Epsilon. The Director of the Hatcheries admits that the result of this new invention is superb: “Till at last the child’s mind *is* these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child’s mind. And not the

child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions!” (28-29). Such mind manipulation underscores Althusser's theory on ideology and demonstrates that “it is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labour power” (Althusser 128). Hence, in order to become law-abiding citizens, people in dystopias have to grow up with the ideals of the state, taught to them from birth, transforming them into diligent, disciplined and submissive workers. This idea of mind control, caste division and conditioning is also discussed in Mustafa Mencütekin's article “Plato Still Dominates: The Case of Huxley's *Brave New World*,” where he claims that “the conditioning that takes place from the time of fertilization through the individual's first years guarantees—though not always—the individual's complete acceptance of every aspect of life in BNW” (62). Thus, he reaches the conclusion that, “since an individual is conditioned by hereditary and environmental factors, if it is possible to control these factors, the individual may be controlled.” If an individual can be controlled, then free will is eliminated, and the ruling class gets complete authority over the destiny of the people, their bodies and minds.

As a result of this strategic plan, children's bodies and minds in dystopian societies are considered the property of the state. Since adults are only supposed to concern themselves with what is useful for the collective whole, they are prohibited to have friendships or develop any affection for their children. Sex is only allowed as a means of reproduction and not pleasure; thus, the children are viewed as not a product of love, but a product of social duty that can improve the well-being of the state and become

the next generation of “hands” in a giant body of the Party. As stated by Smith in the Orwellian dystopia *1984*:

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 . . . The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema. This again was never put into plain words, but in an indirect way it was rubbed into every Party member from childhood onwards. (57)

Therefore, in most of these dystopian societies, children are separated from their parents shortly after they are born and are trained and conditioned to accept the mainstream ideology. The chief reasoning behind it is that it is much easier to influence a young body and mind, since it has not yet gotten a chance to develop any world outlook and obtain any knowledge and thus can be easily manipulated. According to Althusser, children have to be informed and educated about the process of production and learn “the submission to the rules of the established order” or ideology so that they can grow up to be model citizens. Althusser further affirms:

The school . . . teaches “know-how,” but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its “practice.” All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the “professionals of ideology” (Marx), must in one way or another be ‘steeped’ in this ideology in order to perform their tasks “conscientiously.” (128)

Thus, children are disciplined and indoctrinated through ideological teachings early in life, mainly due to the fact that the “reproduction of skills” of future workers is directly interconnected with the “reproduction of its subjection to the ruling ideology” when they are young and callow (Althusser 128). This idea is manifested clearly in Orwell’s *1984*: when the main protagonist, Winston Smith, comments on the way children are being

raised today, he highlights what irreversible impact the Party propaganda leaves on them, turning them into “ungovernable little savages,” who spy on people and even their own parents for any signs of “unorthodoxy” (24). Orwell explains:

They [children] adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother—it was all a sort of glorious game to them. All their ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals. (24)

As a result, through this effectively used discipline, the family value system undergoes a tremendous shift in a dystopian world, allowing the state to play the role of a parent to all the young and naïve children, trained and instructed to be partisan—to never break the conventional rules or question the Party. As Cooke suggests, “a child constitutes at birth a ‘tabula rasa’: its personality is plastic, amenable to any mold to which it is subjected,” and hence becomes a perfect victim of state’s manipulation (*Human Nature, Utopia* 382).

Comparatively, other dystopias expose devalued families, where children constitute the property of the state and are raised in state nurseries where they are taught the only doctrine: the ideology of the state. For example, children in Rand’s novel *Anthem* are separated from their parents very early in life as well, placed into the Home of Infants where they live together with other children, born the same year until the age of five. Then they are sent to the Home of Students where they study until the age of fifteen, then “they go to work” to fulfill their duty to the state (Rand 16). Similarly, in Boye’s version of the future world, *Kallocain*, children are considered “fellow-soldiers” and are taught in children’s and later in youth camps how to be prepared to defend the state and show their loyalty to the Party. When the main character Leo talks about his eight-year-old son, he mentions that he is allowed “to build fires, shoot a children’s gun,

and throw little imitation hand grenades” and is already turning into “a well-disciplined fellow-soldier” (Boye 14-15). Leo is constantly torn between the feelings of love for his children and faithfulness to the state and is overwhelmed with nostalgia for the days when his children were small and were still allowed to stay with them. Leo wants to be involved in the upbringing of his children, but at the same time is aware that, according to law, children are state’s property and are not considered “their [parents’] possession since it has been inherited from other fellow-soldiers before them” (164). As a result, parents remain absent in their children’s lives, and after they accomplish their duty of producing another “fellow-soldier” for the numerous troops of the state, children are taken away from them and are only permitted occasional visits in the evenings. Lastly, in Huxley’s *Brave New World*, children do not even have parents, as the fertilized egg is separated from the mother and placed in a controlled environment under the strict supervision of the Director of the Hatchery and Controlling Center. There, it is multiplied to produce a plethora of embryos to give the state the needed number of world controllers, scientists and factory workers. As Walsh states, “conventional motherhood, with its haphazard results, is now obsolete,” and state hatcheries now exercise full control over human births (92). Children grow up in special State Conditioning Centers where each of their actions and thoughts are preprogrammed so that one day they become “docile” bodies and serve the state without ever knowing the love of their mother. When the group of students in *Brave New World* asks the Director of a Conditioning Center a question regarding “parents,” the archaic term the majority of them are not even familiar with, he answers that human beings used to be “viviparous” (Huxley 24). He says that in the past all babies used to be brought up by parents instead of Conditioning Centers until the sleep-teaching

or hypnopaedia was discovered, which eliminated the need for parents and their care. When what children learn can be strictly monitored and regulated by the state, why do adults need to spend their time raising children when they could be working? Thus, the advantage of this is two-fold: while children's bodies and minds are being trained to be "docile" through conditioning and strict supervision, their parents' "docile" bodies are being exploited for the state's purposes.

Surveillance

Finally, for total control of bodies the state executes discipline through constant surveillance to keep all citizens in check. Docile bodies have to be observed and monitored to make sure that they follow the rules, complete their social functions and do not dare to oppose the regime. The surveillance system and the way it is ought to coerce people is discussed in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, where he analyzes the need for surveillance in a disciplined society through the lens of the Panopticon schema. According to Foucault, the Panopticon design is perfect for surveillance not just in prisons but in society in general because it allows the power to be both "visible and unverifiable" (201). He explains that "the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector" and always "have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied on"; however, he "must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment," and yet "must be sure that he may always be so" (201). In brief, to ensure that the body is "docile," it needs to be under regular scrutiny, and the body has to be aware of it. This awareness will guarantee discipline on the body's part because there is no way to be certain whether you are being watched or not. Foucault mentions the spread

of discipline through “the centers of observations disseminated throughout society” that “would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly” (173-212). “The centers of observations” with the vigilant “gaze” that can see through everything come to life in a lot of dystopian novels, taking on various forms, yet satisfying one main objective: to always monitor what the body is doing, so that one day the body will be so disciplined that it will start regulating its actions of its own volition and become the subject of self-surveillance (212).

The Panopticon’s gaze comes to existence and becomes efficacious through “a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures,” allowing “thousands of eyes to be posted everywhere” to ensure that the body remains “docile” at all times (214-215). As suggested by James A. Tyner in his article “Self and Space, Resistance and Discipline: A Foucauldian Reading of George Orwell’s *1984*,” in Orwell’s dystopia, the all-pervading telescreen, becomes the literal embodiment of the “gaze” and a perfect apparatus to implement discipline over the bodies (137). Since the movement of the “body” has to be supervised persistently and predisposed by the Party, Tyner accurately argues that surveillance permeates all “spatial and temporal elements” of everyday lifestyle of the party members and “every behavior, however, inauspicious, is disciplined along state lines” (136). In fact, Orwell himself writes that “in principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed,” knowing that the telescreen watched them unremittingly (72).

From the first pages of the novel, Winston constantly refers to the omnipresent telescreen, which follows him anywhere he goes: from the private corners of his own apartment to the empty streets of London. Orwell writes:

The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment . . . It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. (6)

This “faceless gaze,” which may or may not be always there to watch your actions, is a vivid illustration of Foucauldian understanding of the primary purpose of surveillance (Foucault 214). On the one hand, this disciplinary power, in this case exercised through telescreens, enables the state to not only observe and spy on people to make sure their physical bodies never rebel, but also to verify that they are fulfilling their social duties properly for the continuous growth of the production to assure “its economy [and] efficacy, its continuous functioning and its automatic mechanisms” (206). On the other hand, the incessant gaze behind the telescreen, due to its invisible nature, makes the body always aware and conscious of its actions, no matter whether the gaze is really there, thus causing, as Tyner contends, “the induced paranoia of not knowing when one is being watched” (137). Consequently, the telescreen becomes the ultimate representation of the state’s disciplinary power: it compels the body to become its own judge and turn the panoptical gaze inward—the body now can discipline itself. This uncanny attribute of the telescreen is mentioned by the main protagonist in *1984*, Smith, who asserts that it is simply impossible to escape from the telescreen and the eyes of Big Brother (he becomes a personification of the state’s controlling gaze), which “pursued you” everywhere: “on coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, . . . asleep or awake, working or eating, . . . in the bath or in bed” (Orwell 26). The perpetually surveilling gaze was designed to track down the body in space and time, but, soon even that became unnecessary—when the

unyielding discipline is persistently performed on the body, it becomes innate. With that in mind, Foucault concludes:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principal of his own subjection. (203)

Thus, the result of such unalterable disciplinary surveillance is, as Tyner elaborates, “a regimented, predictable, hyperorderly society, one that negated human will, spontaneity and creativity,” generating “total conformity” “via corporeal control” (137).

Another way for the state to craft a disciplined body through the means of surveillance is to institute total transparency throughout all spheres of society, prohibiting citizens from hiding or concealing anything from view. Zamyatin’s dystopia serves as a bright illustration of that: in OneState, everything is made out of crystalline glass so that nothing can go unnoticed and unobserved by the state’s omnipresent gaze. The main protagonist D-503, at the beginning of the novel, admires the ideal living conditions in OneState where everyone resides in buildings with lucid glass walls so that they can be easily spied on by the Guardians. D-503 naively declares that the citizens of OneState have “nothing to hide from one another” because they are “always on view,” making it “easier for the Guardians to carry out their burdensome, noble task” (Zamyatin 19). With this absolute translucency the concept of privacy is abolished, and people are prohibited from having or doing anything personal; everything in their lives is governed by the ruling class through constant surveillance and discipline. Michael Amey examines this phenomenon in his work “Living under the Bell Jar: Surveillance and Resistance in Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*” and complicates it by suggesting that this “transparent

architecture” allows not only the Guardians but also “ordinary citizens to continually spy on each other” (4). This observation directly relates to Foucault’s interpretation of the function of power following the Panopticon model—where “the network of disciplinary mechanisms” would be “everywhere and always alert, running through society without interruption in space and time” (Foucault 209). Subsequently, in a dystopian world, not only the state and its police apparatus fulfill the role of “disciplinary mechanisms,” regimenting the human body and permeating all layers of society, but ordinary people as well. Amey draws parallels between the Panopticon and OneState, underlining the similarity between the two “in their reliance on the gaze as the mechanism of power,” and at the same time, makes distinctions in the ways these two systems are managed (6). He claims, “While the Panopticon empowers some individuals to regulate and modify the behavior of other individuals, the OneState uses *everyone* to regulate and modify the behavior of *everyone*” (Amey 6). In short, the government in this dystopian society discovered a way to make “docile” bodies control and supervise each other, which fits perfectly in their disciplinary surveillance scheme. All in all, whether it is a perpetual gaze from the telescreen or an inquisitive stare through the glass walls, it is ever-present and never-ending, designed to guarantee the bodies’ permanent state of internalized discipline and tractability.

The discipline in dystopia, materialized in the perpetual surveillance system that “fixes . . . and arrests or regulates movements,” does not just subjugate the body, but assails the human mind as well (Foucault 219). Since you could never be certain if someone is spying on you through the telescreen, staring at you through the tall glass windows, eavesdropping on your conversations through the microphones or watching

your every move while you are working, you had to control every action and even thought at any given moment. This thought control becomes an important leitmotif of an Orwellian dystopia, where to think a thought (not even to act) that disagrees with the common ideology is considered a crime and equals death. Thus, the telescreen forces humans to not only control their own actions, but also regulate their thoughts, which were supervised by the all-powerful Thought Police. Smith in *1984* confesses:

It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. (Orwell 54)

Thus, as suggested by Tyner, “all facets of humanity are monitored and disciplined” in a dystopian world, and even your own thoughts do not belong to you anymore (138).

Hence, “*thoughtcrimes*, *facecrimes* and *ownlives* were rigidly policed and enforced,” and to think your own thoughts that somehow challenged the ideology literally meant annihilation (138).

If in *1984* the telescreen is used to constantly watch people for any signs of heresy and Thought Police are engaged to monitor any thoughtcrimes, it does not always prove to be effective—they would have to be scrutinizing people and their facial expressions incessantly. This problem is solved in a different dystopian novel, *Kalloccain*, written by a Swedish writer Karin Boye, where the government finds a way to know exactly what people think due to the newly invented truth serum that tests every citizen’s “value as a fellow-soldier” and “offers ... the possibility of controlling what goes on in people’s minds” (50-102). The main character of the novel, scientist Leo Kall, invents this truth drug to demonstrate his loyalty to the Worldstate and show that he is a

dedicated “fellow-soldier.” He feels the ultimate pride of a dystopian citizen when he imagines how much thought crime the government could uncover now and how much more productive their state could become. He even dreams that perhaps one day “a yearly Kallocain-test for every single fellow-soldier” would be implemented so that “horrible crimes can be prevented” and the government can always be informed of what is going on in the minds of its people (49-50). He is convinced that this drug is “a necessary stage” in the development of the Worldstate’s society, “since it widened the great communion to encompass also the inner self, which had been kept private before,” and hopes that with this new invention the “last vestige of their private lives” will be gone and they can finally achieve communal happiness and stability (51-52). Indoctrinated by years of governmental propaganda, Leo Kall explains: “from thoughts and feelings, words and actions are born. How then could these thoughts and feelings belong to the individual? Does not the whole fellow-soldier belong to the state? To whom should his thoughts and feelings belong then, if not the state?” (52). The idea of privacy of thoughts and individuality is examined by Alison Winter in her work “The Chemistry of Truth and the Literature of Dystopia” where she affirms that, in Boye’s anti-utopia, “the concept of the ‘individual’ is itself heretical” and notions like “privacy, intimacy, and individual relationships are almost entirely eliminated” (226). She states that the truth serum is a brilliant invention in a totalitarian nation like Worldstate: it strengthens and “enhances the disciplinary power of the state” because it “can now seek not only to police traditional forms of crime, but to check that ordinary citizens’ feelings do indeed match their loyal . . . actions” (228). Thus, now the government does not need to be always observing its people and trying to read their faces for any traits of thought crimes; it can simply inject

Kallocain in their veins and allow people to tell them their thoughts themselves. As a result, this drug embodies a perfectly designed way for the state to deny humans the right to any private thoughts, subordinate human mind and obtain the optimal control of their bodies.

Another way the Party manipulates and controls the human mind and in particular memory, is through the extermination and falsification of any historical facts. In *1984*, for instance, the past has been altered by the Party and substituted by a distorted reality, which unfortunately is credulously accepted by the general populace due to massive indoctrination. Elaborating on this blatant forgery, Smith affirms that once all the records were fabricated and “told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth,” bringing to life the Party’s slogan: “who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past” (Orwell 32). In *1984*, all records of the history were thoroughly destroyed and “melted into mist,” leaving no evidence and no recollection of the truth in the human mind so that nothing can threaten the present ideology of the Party: “The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. And since the Party is in full control of all records, and in equally full control of the minds of its members, it follows that the past is whatever the Party chooses to make it” (33-176). Thus, Winston regrettably concludes: “The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth” (64). The only thing that was left from the past was “the instinctive feeling, . . . the mute protest in your own bones” that life before “the glorious Revolution” was not as gloomy as textbooks portrayed it (63). Malcolm Thorp examines this subject matter in his article “The Dynamics of Terror in Orwell’s *1984*” and justly asserts that “the mutability of the past is at the very basis of mind control in *1984*” (12).

He provides two reasons why the Party chooses to control the past. The first one, he claims, is connected to the idea that the past has to be erased so that dystopian citizens cannot compare the present regime with the previous government institutions and cannot make any analogies with how people used to live in the past (12). The second reason, the most vital one, is related to “the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party,” making it a crucial condition for the history to “be constantly revised in order to preserve the myth of perfection” (12). No mistakes can be acknowledged, because they would smear the perfect reputation of the Party and its great achievements; thus, history must be altered to preserve the impeccable image of the Party. For the reasons given, as Thorp determines, “Big Brother becomes omnipotent,” controlling the minds and actions of all people (12).

By contrast, in Zamyatin’s *We*, the past is neither altered nor hidden but, conversely, can be studied and revisited by any person in the Ancient House (a sort of museum of the past) so that people can see how much “better” and more comfortably they live today. This Ancient House is preserved and protected under the glass shell and even staffed to be showcased for anyone curious about the lives of ancient people. It seems that the government is completely confident that OneState citizens would respond to the chaotic life of past generations with repulsion: the state wants people to see how illogical and disorganized ancient people used to be to reinforce the dominant ideology. Indeed, people’s minds are so filled with ideology and propaganda that, when D-503 is observing the interior of the Ancient House, he is disgusted by the way ancient people used to live “completely unscientific, like animals” (Zamyatin 14): “children were still private property,” and people resided in apartments with “rectangular windows” through which you could barely see (28). In this case, the spectacle of the Ancient House serves

two purposes: to show how much more organized and better their lives have become under the present regime and how less rationalized and savage-like people used to be.

To sum up, the dystopian novel depicts how the totalitarian state exploits, regulates and controls the human body and mind via disciplinary coercions to ensure its full productivity-potential and utter submission. According to Foucault, the state treats “the body as object and target of power” (136), intending to eventually produce “a body-weapon, body-tool, body-machine complex” (153). This strategy fulfills two goals at once: the more docile and obedient the body becomes, the more useful and productive a tool it evolves into. Elaborating on this disciplinary tactic, Foucault argues that “the disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination” (138). Dystopian novels portray various disciplinary coercions that achieve both a docile and productive body. The routine that the government instills in people warrants the creation of docile bodies and ensures their docility in every aspect of everyday life. As Foucault contends, the prescribed timetable develops “a collective and obligatory rhythm,” “assures the elaboration of the act itself,” “controls its development and its stages from the inside” (152). Also, prearranged social functions, with which each dystopian citizen is labeled in dystopian society, become another embodiment of the discipline. This type of disciplinary control ensures that each body is used to its full potential and can be of advantage to the state’s well being. This in turn is achieved through ideology and indoctrination so that the body becomes willingly submissive and fails to view its exploitation as anything aberrant, or, as Althusser puts it, turns into “the subject” of ideology (163). Besides the routine and social functions, reproduction and personal relationships fall into the iron grip of government discipline as

well. With this eugenic control, the number of bodies that the government owns can be easily regulated, thus increasing the productivity of the state. Since natural forms of parenting are eliminated, the state can now raise and educate its young citizens through ideology to produce obedient and industrious future generations. Lastly, to ensure the docility of the body, the state employs a strict system of ubiquitous surveillance, which, according to Foucault, “had to be like a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere” to police and monitor the actions and thoughts of each citizen (214).

CHAPTER III

WRITING AS SELF-DISCOVERY AND RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY

As discussed in the previous chapter, people and their lives in dystopian societies are highly controlled and regulated by the State. Not only are their minds indoctrinated and controlled by the dominant ideology, but also physical bodies are disciplined into submission and literally taken away from their rightful owners, as people are considered the property of the State. Thus, their goals and ambitions revolve around satisfying the State's needs and fulfilling their social responsibilities. Since the collective is worshipped, individuality and any personal expression or creativity are prohibited, while people's physical abilities become the sole definition of their identities. Any rebellion against the regime is eliminated through propaganda and indoctrination, and enforced through constant surveillance and manipulation of the historical past, so that nothing can challenge the current apparatus of political power. Nevertheless, some people are able to see the horrible injustices of the state's system and dare to speak out against it. Since most of the dystopian novels employ an epistolary format and are written in the forms of diaries, I propose that it is precisely their writing process that allows the main protagonists to discover their inner selves and reclaim their individualities, to break through their indoctrinated and "social" selves, and regain their bodies. Consequently, this act of self-discovery grants them an invaluable opportunity to look at their lives from

a different perspective, detect cracks in the state's system, see and understand their repressed lifestyles, and find the will to rebel against it.

I suggest that writing in dystopian fiction functions as an empowering or liberating agency that enables the protagonists to reclaim power over their bodies and minds, achieve self-autonomy, and thus redeem their authority in a repressive society. Parallel ideas of writing as an empowering mechanism, endowing people with agency, can be found in women's literature and feminist theories. They encourage women to stand up against the patriarchal society, where their voices have been neglected and silenced for so long, and express their individualities through writing in order to gain what Woolf calls the "freedom to think of things in themselves" (34). Since feminist theories advocate liberation against the repressive forces through narration or writing, I am going to apply works of feminist writers to analyze various ways writing helps dystopian citizens to re-discover their personality and, by doing so, rebel against the oppressive regime. Particularly, I am going to explore three dystopian novels: *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin, *1984* by George Orwell, and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and examine in what ways writing in each novel represents resistance to the authority of the State. While all of the novels portray writing as a rebellion and a courageous attempt to defy the system, each of them accomplishes this through different means. On the whole, I argue that, while, in Zamyatin's *We*, keeping a diary allows the main protagonist, D-503, to discover his individuality and reflect on his suppressed emotions, and thus, resist the collective mentality of OneState, in Orwell's *1984*, it provides Winston Smith with a connection to his past and memories (in the society where past is continuously manipulated), resulting in his resistance to accepting the ideology of

Ingsoc and his desire to remain human. Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* also depicts writing or narration as an act of resistance; however, in Atwood's vision of the dystopian world, the main protagonist, Offred, has to find her self and reconstruct her body through her story since it literally does not belong to her. Offred has to reconnect with her body in order to gain her true self and regard herself not simply through her social function, but as a piece of humanity. In sync with the feminist tradition, writing in all three novels offers an incredible power to regain oneself through language that breaks the boundaries of the totalitarian regime and endows the main characters with authorship and authority in the de-humanizing dystopian society.

Even though the protagonists of dystopian novels begin writing or journaling for various reasons, they all seem to undergo a dramatic transformation once they initiate a writing process. Writing allows them to re-discover their individuality and re-evaluate their personality against the collective ideology, thus making them see themselves as individuals instead of small, easily replaceable bolts in a giant engine of the State. As Gloria Anzaldúa avers in her feminist manifesto "Speaking in Tongues," writing helps one to "become more intimate with oneself, to discover oneself, to preserve oneself, to make oneself, to achieve self-autonomy" (319). She perceives writing as the act of women's liberation from the domineering male culture and the prejudices associated with it. This idea can be applied to the dystopian societies as well, where not just women but *everyone* is oppressed by the dominant ideology. In this sense, writing becomes a way to freedom for not only women, as suggested by Anzaldúa, but anyone who has the courage to oppose subjugation.

Writing as Revolt

Before I discuss how writing in all three of these novels serves as the means for the main protagonists to find their inner selves, recognize themselves as individuals, and thus resist the authority of the state, it needs to be noted that writing by itself manifests an act of resistance. Since in a dystopian world individuality is suppressed by ideology and discipline, and people's actions and thoughts are constantly policed, writing presents a serious threat to the state: it renders personal expression, self-reflection, and authority—things that empower people and prompt them to think critically. Not only does writing invite a foreign thought that can question and challenge the authority of the State, it also enables that foreign thought to move and spread, posing a tremendous danger for the government's stability. Therefore, writing is banned in most dystopian novels and is considered a crime. Hence, people who decide to take such a risk and engage themselves in some form of writing already break the law and jeopardize their status as a citizen. The mere act of writing violates the state's law and thus, in itself, presents an act of resistance.

From the first couple pages of Orwell's *1984*, the reader learns that writing is a serious felony in Oceania and if "detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death" (Orwell 9). As he begins his diary, Smith admits that "to mark the paper was the decisive act" and, knowing that it was punishable by death, he realizes that the only thing he needs is "courage," as "the actual writing would be easy" (10). If writing by itself incorporates crime, then the content of the writing does not even matter. As Winston later contends after he writes his brazen "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his diary, "the writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial

act of opening the diary” (19). Keeping a diary equals thoughtcrime, “the essential crime that contained all others in itself,” and in consequence crystallizes Winston’s daring act of opposition to the tyrannical rule of Ingsoc and ideology of the Party (19). Winston’s finding of the corner in his apartment that allows him to hide from the Panopticon gaze of the telescreen and write his diary symbolizes his attempt to find a way to defy and go against Party’s dominant regime. As Tyner notes, “the simple act of purchasing and possession of a diary constitutes a punishable offence and thus may be read as an act of resistance” (144). He, however, contends that Winston’s diary, which is “written within the spaces of the novel,” reveals a more significant meaning of resistance, because despite the Party’s surveillance, as Smith shows, diaries *do* get written—so little acts of revolt *are* possible in dystopian society.

In Atwood’s novel, writing and reading is also banned. In this dystopian society, women according to their new social functions do not need to read or write since their only purpose is to produce future generations. Reducing handmaids’ human status to almost zero and denying them any power, even the power over their own bodies, Gilead also prohibits any forms of reading and writing that might offer these women any kind of agency or remind them of their other “abilities.” Thus, Offred’s narration embodies a great act of resistance, which by its sheer existence constitutes opposition and reluctance to accept Gilead’s new ideology. Since language is erased and words on signs are substituted by pictures, Offred’s story telling where she reconstructs the language definitely can be viewed as a brave act of resistance. If Winston Smith in *1984* uses an archaic instrument, a pen, and buys an old book to be used as his diary, Offred cannot even do that: women are completely divorced from any written documents and have no

access to books, pens or paper. Unlike Smith and D-503, Offred does not write her story; instead, she narrates her “tale” to the tape-recorder, which is later discovered by future generations. The reason is obvious—writing is illegal and Offred cannot have paper or pens in her possession: “It’s also a story I’m telling, in my head, as I go along. Tell, rather than write, because I have nothing to write with and writing is in any case forbidden” (52). When Offred goes to the market, she observes how paintings eradicated words that were previously written on the wooden signs of the shops and could still be seen through the paint when “they decided that even the names of shops were too much temptation” for women (33). Women in Gilead ought not to be tempted by anything except for fulfilling their duty of bearing children. Later on, Offred confesses that books belong to the black market now and are nowhere to be found except in the possession of Commanders and the ruling elite. When the Commander invites her to his room, Offred notices that around the walls there were many bookcases filled with books. She concludes: “Books and books and books, right out in plain view, no locks, no boxes. No wonder we can’t come in here. It’s an oasis of the forbidden” (177). Thus, if Commander holds power, books in his possession also symbolize a power that is not attainable by Handmaids. In a way, Offred’s narration becomes her book and symbolizes the power she was able to acquire by composing it.

Later on, while playing Scrabble with the Commander, Offred experiences an inconceivable feeling of freedom that overpowers her, as she continues to hold possession of words that she composes and acknowledges—she feels as if “he’s offered her drugs” (179). In a different scene, when Commander gives Offred a Vogue magazine, she is shocked to see something that was supposed to have been burnt. She admits that

she wanted it badly “with a force that made the ends of her fingers ache” (200). She further explains:

What was in them [magazines] was promise. They dealt in transformations; they suggested an endless series of possibilities . . . They suggested one adventure after another . . . They suggested rejuvenation, pain overcome and transcended, endless love. (201)

In this sense, magazines represent feelings and thoughts Handmaids are not supposed to have, something humane and spontaneous. Lastly, the sentence written on the closet wall by the previous Handmaid in Offred’s room—*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*—intrigues and puzzles her because she cannot understand what it means. Offred, however, is constantly communicating with and thinking about the Handmaid that occupied her room prior to her coming here and admits that it gives her joy to know that her writing, which she cannot even decipher, was at least read by one other person. She knows it contains an important message, but cannot interpret it. She ponders: “Why did she write this, why did she bother?” (190). This sentence becomes emblematic in a sense that if it cannot be decoded, it means that the power lies in the writing itself—in the unknown message it was trying to articulate. It can be argued that Offred’s narration was inspired by it and becomes the embodiment of the message of this unknown woman, who represents women in general, oppressed and silenced, who were trying to speak, but could not be heard. Thus, now it is Offred’s duty to continue the message, to let it reach the unknown audience:

You don’t tell a story only to yourself. There’s always someone else. Even when there is no one. A story is like a letter. *Dear You*, I’ll say. Just *you*, without a name . . . You can mean more than one. You can mean thousands . . . I’ll pretend you can hear me. (53)

By composing and recording her story in a society where reading, writing or speaking is prohibited, Offred represents the voice of the oppressed, and the act of her narration defies the rules of the domineering regime. As Linda Kauffman points out, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, “the medium changes, but the mode remains the same” (222)—Offred challenges the system by speaking up against it through stealing the language and spreading the message of the silenced victims, thus making the act of her narrating a rebellion in itself: “Exiled, imprisoned, cloistered, or ‘shut up,’ epistolary heroines are deeply subversive because for them writing [or narrating] itself is an act of revolt” (226).

Unlike *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, writing is not banned in Zamyatin's *We*, but it has a limited function. The purpose of art and poetry is purely panegyric in Zamyatin's dystopia; it has to eulogize the grandeur and mathematically rational life of One State as well as the infallibility of the Benefactor, evident in the poems like “Mathematical Rhymes,” “Daily Odes to the Benefactor,” “Late for Work,” “Flowers of Judicial Verdicts.” As T.R.N. Edwards claims in his book *Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak, and Bulgakov*, art and writing are “subordinated to the purpose of propaganda, and serves a utilitarian aim” (69). Indeed, D-503 himself divulges that “poetry today is not some impudent nightingale's piping—poetry is government service, poetry is usefulness” (Zamyatin 67). He finds it repulsive that poets in the past “wrote about whatever popped into their heads,” but ends up doing it himself since the medium he chooses for his writing suggests self-reflection and self-questioning rather than simple praise (66). As Edwards puts it, “what is intended to be a civic bequest to the inhabitants of other planets soon turns into an intimate record of D-'s love affair with I- and his growing awareness” of his self (63). What is interesting is that D-503 is aware of

his digression into his emotional world and his deviation from the original plan to praise and record the infallible perfect life of OneState, and yet he continues to do it. As he mentions himself, he wants to fit “any absurdity” of his narration into “a syllogism,” but obviously fails to accomplish it, as he regretfully affirms:

I am crushed to see that instead of the elegant and strict mathematical poem in honor of OneState, it’s turning out to be some kind of fantastic adventure novel. Oh, if only this really were just a novel instead of my actual life, filled with X’s, $\sqrt{-1}$, and degradations. (99)

Thus, his continuation to record his feelings instead of composing a paean clearly shows his resistance to the rules of OneState since, as he himself states, art is not supposed to be personal, but only utilitarian. He ignores his duty as an orthodox dystopian citizen to pay tribute to the State and its values, and thus subverts the ideology by his writing: “Yes, duties, . . . in my mind I quickly went through the most recent entries in these pages. The fact that there wasn’t anywhere the least thought of any duty . . .” (127). D’s heretical diary not only reveals the irregularities of OneState’s life, but also challenges State’s collective ideology through his newly discovered individuality:

Picture this: a human finger, cut off from its body, its hand . . . a separate human finger, running hopping alone, all hunched over, on a glass sidewalk. I am that finger. And what is strangest of all, most unnatural of all, is that the finger hasn’t got the slightest desire to be on the hand, to be with the others . . . (100)

Discovering Identity

Growing up in OneState, a dystopian world, where humans resemble lifeless robots, worship the principles of reason and forego their personal ambitions for the collective happiness, the main protagonist of Zamyatin’s *We* undergoes a personal crisis

when he begins to write a diary. Narrating enables D-503 to reflect on his feelings and for the first time see himself as an individual, unique and different from everyone else.

Writing about his encounter with I-330 and analyzing his thoughts, allows him to begin noticing his inner self, the one not overshadowed by the collective ideology of OneState, which, according to Althusser, is supposed to “transform the individuals into subjects” of the state and make them accept the collective identity (163). By doing so, D-503 realizes the irregularities of his self and hence, the irregularities of OneState’s regime, which he defies through his story.

In Zamyatin’s *We*, the main protagonist begins his diary as an attempt to laud “the mathematically perfect life of OneState,” but as his writing progresses, he starts to deviate from his original plan and ends up using it as a space to explore his feelings and unveil his inner self (Zamyatin 4). At first, by explaining how the internal mechanism of their perfect life in OneState works, with its Green Wall, the Table of Hours, Personal Hours, Maternal Norm, etc., D-503 naively boasts about their life and is totally convinced in its utter perfection. However, as he continues to record the events happening to him and his feelings associated with them, especially after he meets I-330, he begins to encounter his inner self and starts realizing that he is not as perfect as he thought he was. As he keeps writing, he begins to acknowledge his feelings for the first time and attempts to decipher them. He says:

. . . today I’ve been writing about the loftiest summits of human history, the whole time I’ve been breathing the purest mountain air of thought, . . . but inside there is something cloudy, something spidery, something cross-shaped like that four-pawed X. (23)

After confessing about his emotions in his diary, he admits that he wants to cross everything out, as he has been conditioned to ignore his own feelings; however, since he has promised to not leave anything out of his recordings, he continues to allow writing to “act like the most delicate seismograph” and “register the least little wiggles in his brainwaves” (23). For the first time, he consciously mentions the word “my” and thus steps on the quest to his self-discovery to identify that “strange inner feeling” (23). As a consequence, writing ceases to function as a sheer objective recording of events and grows into something more profound—it becomes his personal therapist, inviting him to read, listen and interpret his own thoughts, and break free from the state’s ideological indoctrination and its collective “consciousness” (Althusser 157). Berman explores D-503’s search for inner self in his article “Deceptions of the Self in Zamyatin’s *We*” and asserts that, “structurally, the novel unfolds in a strange place between the individual and the social order” where the main protagonist’s language “slides from argument to confession, to narration, revealing trends and conflicts that rage within his own self-understanding, paralleled by the society of *We*” (133-134). Thus, writing enables D-503 to uncover his mistaken identity, created and shaped by ideology of the dystopian society of OneState, and embrace his own self.

While Berman believes that it is D-503’s love affair with I-330 that awakens the “irrational side of his being” and allows him to see Numbers as individuals, ultimately culminating in his realization of his own selfhood, I suggest that his diary had a tremendous influence on him as well (139). The presence of love unequivocally brings a huge change into D-503’s personality; however, I believe that writing about his feelings has a huge impact on his self-discovery: it stimulates him to register and reflect on his

feelings aroused by I-330, and distinguish his own self on paper like in the mirror, by seeing, as stated by Anzaldúa, his own “nakedness” (322). Patrick Parrinder in his article “Imagining the Future: Zamyatin and Wells” supports the idea that writing had a lot to do with the main protagonist’s internal metamorphosis and claims that “superficially” D-503 begins to search for his inner self because of his love for I-330, but really it is “the act of writing” that initiates that process (23). He contends that it is not love, but “his identity as a man who wishes to write down his sensations that throws D-503 into mental crisis” (23). Thus, as D-503 continues to note down his “sensations,” he begins to examine his thoughts more closely and appraise his feelings, learning more about the other side of himself, the side that he has never known before—his true self. This becomes apparent right after he visits the Ancient House with I-330 and for the first time has a dream, when D writes that he feels “some kind of foreign body” in his brain, like “a very thin little eyelash in your eye” (Zamyatin 33). Later on, when he records his experience after being seduced by I-330 in the Ancient House, writing clearly allows him to reflect on that important event and ponder over his feelings as he continues his journey to his selfhood. This is evident from the following notes in his diary:

By the way, right now I’m trying to convey the feelings I had at that time, which were not normal. Now, though, when I am writing this, I realize perfectly that all that was as it should be, that he’s just as entitled to happiness as every other honest Number. (55)

As is apparent from this quote, writing grants him an opportunity to distance himself from the situation and thus, even if only for a brief moment, liberate his mind from the collective ideology—which, as Althusser suggests, is supposed “to govern the existence of individuals”—and become an objective observer of his own emotions (155). As he

calls himself “he,” he divorces himself from the subjectivity of his own mind and is able to read his emotions by attempting to stop “identifying his ‘core self’ with the abstract objectification” (Berman 142). As stressed by Anzaldúa, writing or, as she puts it, “pen,” tends to “outwit” people and “say more than what they intended”: “You [pen] surprise me, shock me into knowing some part of me I’d kept secret even from myself” (320). Consequently, writing enables D-503 to uncover things about himself, which he was not even capable of noticing before—his inner self.

It is interesting that after recording this observation about himself, comes what could be the most critical moment in D-503’s identity split between the collective “we” and his own self, where he severs his, what Foucault calls “disciplinary” self, created by the state’s disciplinary coercions and “the web of panoptic techniques” that I discuss in the first chapter (224). I refer to the scene where the main character looks inside himself as if through the glass and concludes: “There were two me’s. One me was the old one, D-503, Number D-503, and the other . . . The other used to just stick his hairy paws out of his shell, but now all of him came out, the shell burst open, and the pieces were just about to fly in all directions” (Zamyatin 56). This unusual duality in his social and inner self or, as Berman claims, his “struggle over self-identity” “to be both a mathematician loyal to the One State, and a poet willing to rebel and exercise his individual freedom,” symbolizes his desire to shatter the ideology inserted in his brain and represents the incipience of his mission for seeking the self (143). The metaphor of a breaking shell as an emblem of an attempt to bring his “inner” self from the depth of his “social” self is very similar to the one used by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her essay “The Yellow Wallpaper,” where she watches her inner self trying to break through the wallpaper.

Being totally dependent on her husband and the patriarchal society, Gilman ventures to rescue her true self from the one assigned to her by society and helps it to get out of the bars of male domination represented by the image of the wallpaper. As she peels off the wallpaper, she liberates the woman who was shaking it from the inside and, by doing so, frees her inner self from the oppression. After finishing her job, she tells her husband: “I’ve got out at last . . . in spite of you and Jane! And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back” (274).¹ Just as Gilman uses the symbol of the wallpaper to manifest societal repression and tries to rip it off, D-503 breaks the shell so that “not Number D-503,” but “the other” could finally get out (Zamyatin 56).

A different and yet related scene, where D-503 looks at himself in the mirror and interprets his newly discovered two selves, has been discussed and analyzed by many critics as the main indication of D-503’s awakening. While Amey uses Lacan’s theory of human development to underscore the importance of D-503’s “alienation process” within his body and the emergence of his “new identity,” Berman analyzes D-503 through the lens of Merleau-Ponty’s theory of the self, emphasizing the essential interdependence of the “self” and the “lived-body” [the self that is formed by the socio-cultural context] within one’s self (Amey 33; Berman 135). It is not surprising that this scene has brought so much attention, as it expressively shows the intensity of the conflict between the two selves:

I’m in front of a mirror. And for the first time in my life, I swear it, for the very first time in my life, I get a clear, distinct, conscious look at myself; I see myself and I’m astonished, like I am looking at some “him.” There I am—or rather, there he is:

¹ This scene from Gilman’s essay also suggests that the main heroine’s freedom comes from her loss of sanity. This brings an interesting question regarding dystopian settings which is somewhat troubling: is the regime so powerful that only insanity can liberate us from it?

He's got straight black eyebrows, drawn with a ruler, and between them, like a scar, is a vertical crease (I don't know if it was there before). Gray, steel eyes, with the circle of a sleepless night around them; and behind that steel—it turns out I never knew what was there. And from that "there" . . . I am looking at myself, at him, and I am absolutely certain that he, with his ruler-straight eyebrows, is a stranger, somebody else, I just met him for the first time in my life. And I'm the real one. I AM NOT HIM. (Zamyatin 59)

While I agree that this passage plays an important role in assessing D-503's split of the self, and that mirror is a vital contributor to that, I think that one major aspect regarding this scene has been overlooked. I contend that not just looking in the mirror, but writing these thoughts down has helped D-503 to contemplate on this experience and find words like "him" and "there" to formulate and name what he was going through. Right after this scene, D-503 confesses that "the only reason" he is "writing this down is to show how human reason, even very sharp and exact human reason, can get crazily confused and thrown off the track" (60). By not being afraid to admit his confusion and attenuating reason, D-503 acknowledges and reflects on his personality crisis as he writes these thoughts down. Thus, this identification process has contributed to his realization of the two selves in him, and it is his writing about this experience that validates this identity struggle.

This brings to the fore an interesting aspect of writing that needs to be addressed, because it reinforces the link between writing and identity-formation. From the beginning of his diary, noticeable language transformation can be observed, as D-503 experiences new emotions and attempts to verbalize and put them into words for his unknown audience. Thus, it can be argued that, if he did not need to explain his experience to his readers, he would not have to give definitions to his new feelings and would not get a chance to ruminate upon them. Therefore, composing serves as an

impetus for D-503 to identify his new self and thoughts associated with it by putting them in the new form of language. As Hélène Cixous asserts, women, or anyone oppressed, had to invent a new language to be able to label their own emotions and disclose their own selves since they could not use the discourse of the oppressor: that discourse simply did not have the appropriate language or stylistic forms to interpret them. She writes:

If woman has always functioned “within” the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this “within,” to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. (400)

Cixous’ ideas about women living “within” the discourse of the oppressive patriarchy, who had to break through the conventional language and “explode it” so that they can create their own language “to get inside of,” can be applied to interpret D-503’s linguistic metamorphosis, who had to find definitions to describe his new transformation and feelings aroused by I-330. Writing allows him to obtain a new language, different from the one of the conventional ideology, which gives authority to his new self. Since, according to Althusser, one becomes “steeped” in ideology and consequently perceives and expresses reality in the terms, language and practices approved by this “ruling ideology,” D-503 has to steer away from his ideological self and recreate his own means of expression through language (128).

A striking change in D’s language becomes noticeable as his writing progresses, manifesting both: the unveiling of his self and the emergence of doubt in the State’s system. In compliance with his original promise to praise the “beauty and grandeur of OneState,” D-503 begins his diary describing his everyday life with precise,

dry and lifeless language that represents his social self, one that was indoctrinated by the State to worship reason and order (Zamyatin 3). As Parrinder highlights, D-503's " 'orthodox' selfhood is expressed through a logical discourse, syllogistic in form and drawing repeatedly on mathematics, geometry, and engineering for its stock of metaphors," as "this is the language in which citizens of the One State are trained to reconstruct the infallible reasoning behind the State's bold directives" (23). This is surfaced when D-503 depicts the life in OneState: he uses words like "the divine parallelepipeds of the transparent dwellings," "the squared harmony of our gray-blue ranks" (Zamyatin 7) and constantly expresses his collective self by extolling and admiring "the mathematically perfect life of OneState" (4). As mentioned by Michael Beehler in his article "Yevgeny Zamyatin: The Essential, the Superfluous, and Textual Noise," in the first journal entries D-503's stylistic voice as the author of his diary is almost absent and he writes mainly objectively as a sheer observer of the living conditions of OneState (57). At the beginning of his narration, D's language is sterile and distant because he treats his diary not as something of his own, but as another duty to OneState. However, after meeting I-330 and everything that this encounter entails, D-503's writing style begins to take on a new form: he begins to write about his feelings instead of his observations of daily life; consequently, the diary which was supposed to record what "we" think turns into something, as Parrinder puts it, "irretrievably subjective," displaying his internal struggle between the two selves (22). This sudden change of events alters the main protagonist's language, as he is trying to put in words something that he has never experienced before and has never known how to express—he was not taught to listen to the "individual" inside him. After meeting I-330, his narrative

style and language change from formulaic to impulsive or, as Parrinder describes, “probing, spontaneous and electric,” which correlates with the discovery of his “I” and differs greatly from the orthodox “collective” discourse he has been taught (24). We can detect the nervousness and constant changes in his mood and perceptions in his later entries, and, as he has to put all these new feelings in written form, he simultaneously has to put them into the new language: the language that is marked by “an acutely nervous vitality” (Parrinder 24) and is filled with vivid and at times abstract descriptions, question marks and unfinished utterances:

A dynamo was whirling and humming in my head. Buddha . . . yellow . . . lily-of-the-valley . . . pink crescent moon. Yes, and what about . . . How about O, who was supposed to drop by today? Should I show her this notification about I-330? I don’t know. (Zamyatin 51)

As Parrinder proposes, this “kaleidoscopic language” and “splintered style” of D-503’s diary echoes the growing awareness of his selfhood and manifests a dramatic shift from his mathematical ego to the newly unwrapped self:

So here am I, in step with everyone else, and yet separate from all of them. I’m still trembling all over from the recent excitement—like the bridge that one of the ancient iron trains has just rumbled over. I feel myself. (Parrinder 24; Zamyatin 124)

This type of unstable and chaotic language not only symbolizes D-503’s acknowledgement of his new self, but also exposes his resistance to write in a discourse of the dominant ideology. This idea of the poetic language being a tool of one’s liberation from repression is analyzed by Julia Kristeva in her work *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she suggests that one can reject the “official ideology” “through the process of language” (186). She borrows Freud’s idea of “negation” to explain how poetic language can reveal one’s resistance to the oppressive discourse. Since, according to Freud,

“negation is a lifting of the repression,” Kristeva asserts that poetic language is thus the direct outcome of this “negation” that brings “the unconscious into language” and makes it subversive to the dominant discourse (162-163). She states that this “negation” “arranges the repressed element in a different way” (162), allowing it to “shatter conceptual unity into rhythms, logical distortions, paragrams, and syntactic inventions” (186). D-503’s lyric language undoubtedly fits into Freud’s concept of “negation” and violates the unity and order of the discourse to which he is subjected. This becomes apparent when he describes his feelings towards I-330:

Silence. My pulse. I’m a crystal, dissolving in her, in I-330. I feel with absolute clarity the way the polished facets that define me in space are melting, melting. I’m vanishing, dissolving in her lap, in her. I’m getting smaller and smaller, and the same time wider, larger, off every scale...Because she...she’s no longer herself, she’s the whole universe. (Zamyatin 126)

This poetic language, which seems to pour out D-503’s subconscious, is a bright illustration of D’s attempt to, as Kristeva puts it, “shatter conceptual unity” (186) and “arrange the repressed element in a different way,” framing it into unusual syntactical variations and striking word choice (163). Consequently, this kind of writing, according to Kristeva, unveils “the social function of texts” that produces “a different kind of subject, one capable of bringing about new social relations” that are “inseparable from instinctual and linguistic change” (105). Thus, D-503’s new language manifests his refusal to write and think within the discourse of the state’s ideology and highlights the birth of his new self.

This expressive language that motivates D-503 to embrace his inner self through writing most likely would not have been created if D chose to write a poem or an ode in praise of OneState. His decision to select a different medium—a journal—turns

out to be crucial to his self-realization, as according to Cooke, it “commits him to individual self-expression, a form that brings his relativistic ‘I’ into inevitable conflict with the purportedly absolute group expression of the Single State’s “we” (*Human Nature* 174). Cooke underlines the notion that if D-503 were to choose a genre approved by the State, such as panegyric ode, he would probably end up succumbing to his social self and blindly lauding the perfectly rational life of OneState. Journaling, however, due to its subjective mode, “inclines him to confession, self-reflection, and many digressions,” “calling subconscious aspects of his psyche, such as memory, instinctual desires and association patterns, into a more prominent role in shaping his consciousness” (Cooke, *Human Nature* 174). Thus, recording the daily events and feelings associated with them provides the main protagonist with a perfect opportunity to not only meditate on his thoughts, but also to disclose them with sincerity and frankness. As Cooke points out, the “spontaneity” of this type of writing genre gives room for free, uncensored, uninterrupted thoughts, which later “challenge his beliefs and his image of himself” and “allow him to review the workings of his psyche” (*Human Nature* 174). Since D-503 promises to not leave anything out of his observations, this dedication and self-discipline prove beneficial “to investigate the phenomena that clash with his civic faith,” which might have remained unnoticed if he did not choose to keep a journal (*Human Nature* 176). Thus, writing or authorship “brings the writer into closer touch with his own thinking process, insofar as it is accessible to introspection,” “makes him aware of his mind” and allows him to explore his repressed self (*Human Nature* 182). This mirrors James Olney’s ideas, expressed in his work *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*, where he claims that “the act of autobiography . . . constitutes a bringing

to consciousness of the nature of one's own existence, transforming the mere fact of existence into a realized quality" since it involves a "definition of the self at a moment and in a place" (44). Hence, writing in *We* plays a crucial role in the development of the main protagonist's true self and serves as an empowering agency through which D-503 gains authority and shows resistance to the rules and values of OneState.

Reconstructing the Past

If in Zamyatin's *We* the main protagonist discovers his true identity through writing and reflecting on the daily events and feelings, Winston Smith, in Orwell's *1984*, regains his identity through the reconstruction of his past. Writing in the Orwellian dystopia symbolizes connection to memory and the collective past, which is altered and falsified by the State. Since "history is continuously rewritten" and the "Party is in full control of all records" of past events, remembering becomes one of the central themes in the novel and plays a key role in the main protagonist's grappling to re-claim his identity in this totalitarian environment and resist its main objectives (Orwell 176). In this case, writing functions as a space to remember and recollect things from the past that grants Smith self-autonomy and gives him the courage and intrepidity to oppose the dominant ideology. The idea of reconstructing the past through writing as a means to reconstructing your individual identity in the repressive society comes up regularly in feminist critical literature. Barbara Christian in her essay "The Highs and the Lows of Black Feminist Criticism," for instance, claims that women or the oppressed in general, "had to 'rememory'—reconstruct their past" in order to repossess their individual selves, and writing presented the best medium for it (350). She avows that "language is one (though

not the only) way to express what one knows/feels even when one does not know one knows it,” making storytelling “a dynamic form of remembering/recreating” oneself (350). This resonates well with the way I would like to approach writing in Orwell’s *1984* and analyze how writing assists the main protagonist in “recreating” himself through remembering, and therefore, showing resistance in the heavily controlled totalitarian regime of Oceania. Since, as Althusser claims, “ideology has no history” and “is conceived as a pure illusion, a pure dream” that instills the dominant ideas of the ruling regime on people, remembering one’s individual history becomes crucial in this society (150). Also, since for most citizens in dystopian societies, as Tyner maintains, “resistance was not to ‘acquire’ power, but instead to retain a semblance of humanity, of individuality,” Winston Smith finds such resistance in writing his diary, which grants him an opportunity to reconstruct reality and remain human “within a de-humanizing environment” (142).

From the first pages of the book, Winston’s desire to remember the past or decode the memories of the past is evident in the novel. When the reader learns about “a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover” that Smith took out of his drawer, the main character admits that he bought it because it looked like it was more than forty years old and he felt “an overwhelming desire to possess it” (Orwell 9). This incredible infatuation with the past begins with the purchase of the diary and Winston’s ardent desire to hold it, revisit and reconstruct it since it is absent in the historical records and literally belongs to the Party. His diary becomes a symbol for his pursuit to re-claim his past under the tyrannical regime that has been manipulating, rewriting, and depriving people of their history to solidify the State’s hegemony and

create what Foucault refers to as “the disciplinary society” (209). Since people in this society are prohibited from discussing their private matters and are constantly surveilled by the “panoptic machine,” the “smooth creamy paper” of his diary becomes the only listener to the tragic story of his past, memories and self, helping him to reconnect to his childhood and revisit the history of his mind, an act of humble, silent resistance in a totalitarian state (Foucault 207; Orwell 9). As Orwell puts it, “to mark the paper was the decisive act,” and Smith decides to undergo this venture because, as Smith comments, he had to share the truth with somebody: by writing it down for his unknown audience, he could “carry on the human heritage” and stay sane (26).

Winston’s diary evolves into his own private space where he can express his personal uncensored thoughts and remember his past in this persistently monitored society—where “always the eyes [of Big Brother] watching you” (26). The very first entry of Smith’s diary is his description of the war movies they had to watch, where he describes a mother shielding her little son with her body from bullets. This sudden desire to write arrived suddenly and, after staring at a blank page for a while, he writes his first entry “in sheer panic,” frantically, without stopping or pausing (11). Such ardent writing can be seen as a need to not only record the events of the past, which could be falsified at any moment by the Party, but also as a need to pour out his feelings the same way you would if you talked to a psychologist, or someone who would listen to you without interruption or judgment. Interestingly enough, Smith’s almost stream-of-consciousness writing in this first entry reveals an important leitmotif that will come up in his later writing: his childhood memories of his *own* mother who loved and protected him just like the woman in the movie. In comparison to his first entry, Winston’s voice as a writer

gains a lot more authority and precision, and appears to be more deliberate and confident as his writing advances: “From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of double think—greetings!” (27) From these words, it is clear that he has accepted that he might be caught and put to death for writing such unorthodox thoughts and yet continues to do so. Winston, whose job is to change and rewrite history in the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth, feels it is his obligation now to redeem himself and write the truth, even if nobody will ever read it.

As he continues writing his diary, Winston begins having dreams of his mother (which were most likely spurred by his emotional outpour in the first entry) that enable him to remember and relive his past, and thus regain his humanity in this despotic setting. Writing seems to stir up some deeply stored feelings from his childhood, ones he has never addressed or explored before, that remind him of the time when children still belonged to their parents and were allowed to have private feelings like love and compassion. Erika Gotleb examines Winston’s attempts to reconnect with his past in her article “Political Allegory and Psychological Realism in Orwell’s *1984*” and claims that the “effort of articulating his thoughts in the diary leads to more and more profound levels of mental activity in the dreammind, which, in turn, leads to increasingly higher levels of conscious understanding, pointing to the liberation of the suppressed memory” (68). The suppressed memory surfaces once writing is in process and leads to Smith’s understanding and acceptance of his inner self, the one that belonged to him and his mother, not the Party and its ideology. Anzaldúa assures us that “writing is dangerous because we are afraid of what the writing reveals: the fears, the angers, the strengths of a woman under a triple or quadruple oppression; yet in that very act lies our survival

because a woman who writes has power” (321). This idea translates agreeably to the writing of Winston Smith and what it brings out from the depths of his subconscious. From the two dreams that he has, it becomes evident that Smith feels somehow guilty for his mother’s and sister’s deaths, as he, being a selfish hungry young boy, “snatched” the last piece of chocolate from his sister’s hand right before parting with them forever (Gotleb 78-79). However, after revisiting his past memories, he in a sense revisits the old forgotten and forbidden ideals of love and sympathy, and by doing so, awakens his inner self, one that was eclipsed by the social or “ideological” self for so long. The feelings of guilt, love or tragedy that Smith associates with his mother can no longer be found in Oceania because they are eradicated by duty, social responsibility and substituted by fear, despair and servility. “In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement,” O’Brien confesses after torturing Smith.

Everything else we shall destroy—everything . . . There will be no loyalty, except loyalty toward the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother . . . There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no employment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. (Orwell 220)

Thus, by reconstructing on paper and in his mind all these feelings that are about to become extinct, Smith feels like a human being again. Orwell writes:

His mother’s memory tore at his heart because she had died loving him, when he was too young and selfish to love her in return, and because somehow, he did not remember how, she had sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. (28)

By remembering that he was loved by his mother with pure unconditional love until the day she died, he was able to reconnect with his past, which in this novel represents his self, and re-live human emotions like love and empathy that are annihilated in this society

through ideology. In fact, Smith's mother symbolizes the past and his suppressed memories and thus, brings him closer to his inner—not social—self, one that was loved for no particular reason, as a piece of humanity. As Olney justly asserts, “memory that is conscious and supraconscious, personal and racial . . . must be the cohesive power that renders us, as separate individuals and as human beings, single and integral” (38).

Another major significance of Winston's diary and its association with the past is manifested in Smith's resistance to the newly invented language of the Party, Newspeak, and his decision to use Oldspeak to write his journal. This detail unveils a strong act of resistance to the Party's ideology and its linguistic manipulations, because it aims to erase the Oldspeak with its ancient concepts of love and friendship and substitute it with a new language, which, according to Stephen Blakemore, “narrows human thought by linguistically narrowing the semantic space of language itself” (349). Thus, elimination of the old words and their linguistic meanings from the language not only suggests the Party's attempt to erase the past and abrogate human history, but it also reveals the Party's intention to control man through language, as “he sees and apprehends reality through language” (349). Blakemore highlights the importance of the invention of Newspeak in Orwell's dystopia in his work “Language and Ideology in Orwell's *1984*” and states that the Party tries to tamper with language in order to discipline human minds and limit their intellectual abilities, since if there is no verbal identifier for violence or rebellion, then the phenomenon of resistance itself ceases to exist (349-355). This idea is confirmed in the conversation between Smith and Syme when Syme admits: “Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to

express it” (Orwell 46). Thus, Blakemore concludes: “The novel documents the degradation of man through the murderous assault on his linguistic reality—an assault that is more sinister than the clumsy torturing of the spirit’s flesh” (349). Accordingly, the destruction of the old language in *1984* symbolizes the annihilation of the old self, and Smith’s diary embodies resistance to the Party’s linguistic ideology and represents his unwillingness to surrender his real identity. By employing Oldpseak in his journal to revisit his past, Smith thus defies Party’s ideology and, as Blakemore puts it, consequently “subverts the Party’s effort to destroy the textual past” and the human self (350). He reconstructs the meanings of such words as loyalty, compassion and love when he writes about his mother and childhood, and by doing so regenerates his true self and remains human.

The connection and interdependence of the past, language and self becomes important in the reading of *1984*: when the Party aims to destroy the past, it needs to destroy the language, leading to the ultimate purpose of the State—to destroy the human self. The self has to be killed in order to be filled with ideology and become disciplined. As O’Brien explains to Smith: “You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves” (Orwell 211). Thus, creation of the new language fulfills the purpose of the “filling”—filling people’s minds with words and concepts that have limited and unambiguous connotations, ensuring docile bodies and minds. Jean-Jacques Courtine analyzes the correlation between language and self in his article “A Brave New Language: Orwell’s Invention of ‘Newspeak’ in *1984*” and argues that in order for the totalitarian regime to work properly, it must obtain power over language, because language “constitutes a screen between the totalitarian gaze and the human

body, . . . offers the shelter of its shadow” (70). He suggests that Newspeak is a direct product of the discipline that the Party exercises over its people and a clear extension of its highly regulated surveillance system that I explored in the previous chapter: the Panopticon schema has not simply manifested itself in the telescreen and Thought Police, but has enslaved the language as well (72-73). Hence, the language has to be regulated and controlled; better yet, a new language must be invented. Courtine thus concludes:

Language threatens the totalitarian enterprise. It is in fact the zone of obscurity where the gaze is lost. People must therefore be cured of their language: old and obscure terms must be eliminated, areas that escape definition, and zones of indetermination-ambiguity, equivocation, polysemy wiped out. Signs must be purged and purified of their meaning and bodies of their substance. And then they must be refilled. (70)

Another critic, Alfred R. Ferguson, in his work “Newspeak, the First Edition” comments on the importance of the creation of a new language Newspeak as means to not only regulate human thoughts, but also reduce creativity and free imagination, “the faculty of perceiving self-initiated, non-conformist alternatives,” which in turn decreases and distorts the objective reality (261-262). He explains: “The intention of abstract language is to restrict or limit the reality represented by a word to one possible meaning. One meaning, one reality—the prescribed meaning, the prescribed reality” (262-263). Taking this into consideration, if the new language represents the new reality, the sole way to resist the reality is to resist the language. Accordingly, defying the new language is an attempt to save your history, memory and self. Winston Smith has done precisely that: by writing in Oldspeak in his diary, he has retained a part of himself that the Party is so eager to get—his memories and his self—and by doing so, commits one of the largest acts of resistance in the novel. If Smith had not decided to keep a journal, perhaps he

would never have preserved his Oldspeak, re-explored his past, or known his self. Thus, as Courtine proposes, “since language is the living memory of man and offers him a space for inner resistance,” writing in the Orwellian dystopia becomes *the* space of resistance (70).

Reclaiming the Body

Writing or, to be exact, narrating in Margaret Atwood’s dystopia *The Handmaid’s Tale* also plays a central role as the main protagonist’s way of resistance to the theocratic regime of the Republic of Gilead, where women are exclusively valued for their reproductive function and are mentally and physically abused by the patriarchal ruling class. While, in Zamyatin’s and Orwell’s dystopias, writing helps the main characters to discover their individuality and reconnect with the past, in Atwood’s futuristic world, Offred, the main heroine, employs writing to reconstruct her body, which has been disciplined and exploited for the state’s benefit. As Foucault puts it, the discipline that the state employs to achieve its supremacy has to dominate and control the body to achieve its total subjection: “the discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (138). Thus, she has to regain her body and reclaim her authority, recreate her identity and challenge the state’s ideals by narrating her story. Among the dystopian novels discussed in this chapter, Atwood’s novel literally belongs to the tradition of *écriture féminine* and directly reflects the philosophies of the feminist writers on the role of women and their oppression in society. Since women in Gilead are defined only through their social functions of procreation, are treated as “fertility machines,” and have

no power over the autonomy of their own bodies, the only way to survive and resist the repression is to attempt to regain their bodies (Freibert 282). Writing, subsequently, becomes the avenue for the reconstruction and liberation of the woman's body, which has been taken away from her, rendering her voiceless and powerless. As Cixous underlines in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," writing enables woman to "return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display" (395). Since the woman "is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow," she has to rebel and let her body be heard through writing,— "an act which will not only 'realize' the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being," but also "give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal."

Narrating her own story thus becomes essential for Offred, because through writing she recreates her body, reconstructs her identity, and remains human. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Offred, the main protagonist in *The Handmaid's Tale*, always refers to her body as something over which she does not have control anymore, something that is foreign or distant from her, something that is needed by the governing elite and thus treated as *their* property. In the Republic of Gilead, where as a result of the military coup, religious fundamentalists obtain governmental power, women who can still reproduce become a "national resource," as nuclear pollution has rendered most women infertile (Atwood 85). Her role now is to give birth, and, if she is unable to accomplish it, she will be labeled an "unwoman" and sent to the Colonies to toil laboriously until she dies. Aunts indoctrinate Handmaids to think of themselves as "seeds," but Offred refuses to be considered just a seed: she feels that as a human being she is entitled to have the

ownership over her own body and her self (25). Thus, since she is denied the ownership of her body, she must reclaim it through her story. As Sheila Conboy assures in her article “Scripted, Conscripted, and Circumcised,” Offred “refigures” her lost body “through the text, as she imagines the narrative as a metaphorical body” (356).

The leitmotif of the dismembered body is vividly present in this novel and becomes the metaphor for Offred’s lost body to the ruthless values of Gilead, one she must reconstruct through her story. Images of and references to body parts can be detected throughout the whole novel (Rubenstein 104). In this dystopia, handmaids are *only* viewed as “two legged wombs” (176); the doctor who examines Offred “deals with a torso only” (78); the image of hands reoccurs multiple times when Offred thinks how “empty” they seem to her, as they “could be held, but not seen” (Atwood 62; Rubenstein 104). When Offred has memories of her husband, Luke, she confesses that she feels like a “missing person” and expresses the incredible urge to hold a human body:

Can I be blamed for wanting a real body, to put my arms around? Without it I too am disembodied. I can listen to my own heartbeat against the bedsprings, I can stroke myself, under the dry white sheets, in the dark, but I too am dry and white, hard, granular; it’s like running my hand over a plateful of dried rice; it’s like snow. There’s something dead about it, something deserted. (132)

When women all of a sudden become powerless over night as a result of the military coup that establishes the rule of the Judeo-Christian theocracy in Gilead, Offred recalls that she thought as if somebody had “cut off [her] feet” (Atwood 232; Rubenstein 105). Interestingly enough, Offred’s friend Moira, the one who tries to escape from the Aunts’ controlling discipline and indoctrination, is punished mercilessly, and it is her feet that are tortured “with steel cables, frayed at the ends” since, as Aunt Lydia puts it, “for our purposes your feet and your hands are not essential” (118). Finally, the propaganda

movies that Aunts show to the Handmaids, underscoring how women have been mistreated in the past, contain dead and mutilated bodies and once even show a woman “being slowly cut into pieces, her fingers and breasts snipped off with garden shears, her stomach slit open and her intestines pulled out” (152). All these images of the dismembering woman’s body symbolize and highlight Offred’s and other women’s loss of any authority over their bodies and become the metaphors of their shattered selves. Thus, Offred must revive her mutilated body through her narration, in which she recreates her identity, gains agency, and puts together the pieces of her dismembered body. This symbolism of disembodiment is analyzed by Roberta Rubenstein, who asserts that Offred’s text becomes “an act of self-generation that opposes the oppressive obligations of procreation” and also functions as Offred’s struggle “to reconstruct her fragmented selfhood and to justify the choices she has made” (105). Conboy also discusses this theme in her article and states that Offred’s “textual body, ‘this sad and hungry and sordid, this limpid and mutilating story,’ replicates the narrator’s literal body, which is cut off from her free mind: both body and text are experienced as parts which do not always cohere, as shattered wholes” (Atwood 267-268; Conboy 356). Thus, Offred’s story serves as means to glue the pieces of her dismembered body and her shattered self together. Another critic, Debrah Raschke, examines this idea as well in her work “Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*: False Borders and Subtle Subversions” and illustrates how Handmaids’ names resonate with their distorted bodies and selves. She explains that the newly created class of Handmaids is distinguished not only by their red-colored dresses and white wings of their hats, but also by their new names, which are “formed by a preposition and its object”—Offred—meaning of Fred, Fred’s possession

that “mark them not only as claimed property, but as nonsubjects” (259). She rightly suggests: “Through the exclusive use of the preposition and its object, the ‘I’ and the connecting verb in this syntactical construction become eliminated entirely. By saying ‘Of Fred’ instead of ‘I am of Fred,’ the subject (of the sentence) is effaced, thus diminishing the chances of a Handmaid constructing herself as an ‘I’ (as a subject or a self). Total erasure” (259). Therefore, she concludes that “metaphorically, the Handmaids, unable to tell their own stories, are ‘blank pages,’ untold stories—women’s histories, cultures, and writing that have been edited out of the dominant culture or reformulated to fit the masculine mode” (259). Because their selves are taken from them and even their names are changed and mutilated, they are voiceless and powerless, and thus now must reclaim their authority and narrate their own story, where they can recreate their identity, the one that has been “edited out” to fit the dominant culture.

Another way that writing or authorship functions in this novel is it provides the main protagonist with a space of her own since she literally does not exist in this dystopian society as a person—only as a child-bearing machine—or, as Raschke puts it, “a baby maker, procreator, womb vessel” (259). Consequently, writing grants Offred an opportunity to express and repossess her self as a human being, and explore her identity as a person—not simply an “ambulatory chalice” (176). The idea of a body being a woman’s “dwelling place” is introduced and explored by a feminist writer Nancy Mairs in her essay “Reading Houses, Writing Lives: The French Connection,” where she claims that woman by embracing her body will find her own private space in society. Mirroring Cixous’ idea of the body, Mairs affirms:

Still forced to function as man's Other and thus, alienated from her self, she has not been able to live in her 'own' house, her very body . . . Women haven't had eyes for themselves. They haven't gone exploring in their house . . . Their bodies, which they haven't dared enjoy, have been colonized. (412)

Hence, she determines that writing becomes woman's living space, and "through writing her body, a woman may reclaim the deed to her dwelling" (412). The erasure of women—which Raschke and Mysriades talk about—and thus their "inexistence" with no space of their own is evident in Gilead from not only the way women are treated by the government and Commanders, but also by the way they live. After the military upheaval, women are stripped off their jobs and bank accounts, their old clothes and names, their right to love and be with who they want, even the right to read and be educated, and thus, as Ginette Katz-Roy puts it, "they became anonymous workers in a society organized like a gigantic bee-hive or ant-hill" (119). Their invisibility is also underscored by their new dress code: a long red dress that hides the figure, red gloves and shoes—everything is red—"the color of blood, which defines them"; the only thing that is white is the hat that has wings on the sides, "which keep them from seeing, but also from being seen" (Atwood 11). As Aunt Lydia preaches to them, "to be seen is to be penetrated. What you must be girls is impenetrable" (38). Offred resides in a small room with no windows or mirrors at the Commander's house, which is a compound with gates all around for protection, like a "prison" (Katz-Roy 119). Offred admits: "Now and again we vary the route; there is nothing against it, as long as we stay within barriers. A rat in a maze is free to go anywhere, as long as it stays within the maze" (53). The old gymnasium where the Handmaids undergo their "education" is always surveilled by the Aunts; they are constantly in view and have no privacy, or, as Virginia Woolf puts it, no "room" of their

own. Once Offred is assigned to the Commander and comes to live with him and his wife, she refuses to call the room “hers” as if she knows that once she acknowledges it, she accepts the rules of this game and succumbs to the regime’s power. Thus, Offred finds that room of her *own* through writing or to be exact narrating (since writing is not allowed there, she narrates her tale on the tape-recorder), enabling her to become visible, gain self-autonomy and become human again. Since she is completely voiceless and powerless in this society, she claims her voice and her body back by composing her story. As Coral Ann Howells points out in her book *Margaret Atwood*, “Offred refuses to be silenced, as she speaks out with the voice of late twentieth-century feminist individualism, resisting the cultural identity imposed on her” (99). Linda Myrsiades also justly proposes that Offred, “deprived of the ‘room’ that was her own, . . . must create a space she can claim as hers, a storied place that allows her to possess her whole self” (230). Thus, Offred’s composition “yields her an emergent ‘place’ of her own,” as she “owns both intellectual and property rights over that which she composes” (234). Offred claims power over her own body, the one that has been, as Foucault puts it, “manipulated, shaped, trained” by the state, and her composing becomes something that she can control: “I would like to believe this is a story I’m telling. I need to believe it If it’s a story I’m telling, then I have control over the ending. Then there will be an ending, to the story, and real life will come after it” (Foucault 136; Atwood 52).

Offred’s authorship becomes a very empowering and emancipating means to regain her body and identity as she recomposes and reconstructs her story. Since writing enables one to invent one’s language to resist the repression from the domineering culture, and, as Althusser maintains, break through the “ruling ideology,” it allows one to

also recreate and even change the reality because reality is expressed and perceived through language (139). Cixous comments on women's writing and the new language they have to embrace: "Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse" (399). Offred certainly gains agency through language that she recreates with her narration, since writing and reading is banned in Gilead: even public signs are replaced by symbols and pictures: Loaves and Fishes is fishmonger's—"a wooden sign" with "a fish with a smile and eyelashes" (Atwood 212), All Flesh—a pictorial representation for the butcher's shop, Milk and Honey—a wooden sign with "three eggs, a bee and a cow" (Katz-Roy 126; Atwood 34). Thus, Offred's text symbolizes the rebellion against the erasure of the language and women's deprivation of literacy and education. Obviously, language means power, but unlike its manipulation in *1984*, in Gilead, language is completely ignored and forgotten—women are forbidden to read even the signs at the supermarket. Thus, as Katz-Roy contends, Offred's narration becomes "a confessional sort of writing or story-telling which rehabilitates the female body as the origin of an alternative type of discourse" (128).

In her narration, Offred does not only reflect on her past and her feelings, but also defines and re-defines a lot of words and meanings, thus, holding the language in her power and gaining authority. As Cixous emphasizes, feminine type of writing is highly stylized, "never simple or linear" because the feminine writer "doesn't deny her drives"—"she lays herself bare" (396). What Cixous advocates is a practice of writing that by "sweeping away syntax" (399) "becomes *utterly* destructive," "volcanic," capable

of cutting through and subverting the official discourse (401). Consequently, she concludes that this “*new insurgent writing*” (395) grants one freedom from the repression of the domineering ideology:

. . . it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate. (397)

If we look at Offred’s writing, it becomes apparent that it does fall into the category of the “*new insurgent writing*” that Cixous is promoting. Offred narrates in a circular manner often offering plurality of meanings to many words, sometimes even contradicting and doubting herself. For example, this is how she defines the word “chair”: “I sit in the chair and think about the word chair. It can also mean the leader of a meeting. It can also be a mode of execution. It is the first syllable in *charity*. It is the French word for flesh; none of these facts has any connection with the others” (Atwood 140). In this handling of multiple various connotations that she once learnt, Offred obtains power and gains authority through authorship that comes from freedom to experiment with language and break through the conventional definitions and labels. This power is also provided to her when the Commander suddenly invites her to his study and offers to play Scrabble. She derives an incredible pleasure in playing the game, and, as Katz-Roy points out, among the words she composes are “larynx” and “gorge”—“organs associated with the production of sounds,” which stand for her desire to speak up and be heard (129). She even finds a word that the Commander does not know, such as “zilch,” which gives her a sense of empowerment over him. As Conboy maintains, the Scrabble game

represents in miniature the narrator's text: she employs many words which reflect her bodily restrictions or desires (larynx, zygote, limp...); then she liberates herself as she shapes and tastes the words that she can substitute for those that have been out in her mouth ('Blessed be the fruit' . . .). (356)

As Offred confesses, "I want to steal something," she accomplishes it in stealing and recreating the language, and gaining control over her narrative:

I would like to steal something from this room. I would like to take some small thing, the scrolled ashtray, the little silver pillbox from the mantel perhaps . . . hide it in the folds of my dress or in my zippered sleeve Every once in a while I would take it out and look at it. It would make me feel that I have power. (103)

Thus, her narration becomes something she could hide and keep for her own use, something of her own that gives her power. Another aspect of her composing that resembles the kind of writing Cixous is endorsing is manifested in Offred's frequent manipulation of her own story: she provides three different descriptions of her date with Nick, three accounts of Luke's departure and often doubts her own words and descriptions (Katz-Roy 130). By giving various options through her narration, Offred offers some sort of freedom of interpretation and outcome that grants her authority and power to control. Therefore, the language that she creates in her narrative empowers Offred to break through the conventions of Gilead, resist its rules and regulations, and get her body back by recomposing it through her story. As Conboy asserts: "Offred makes the body her book—one which she both reads and writes in a new mode" (Conboy 355). Indeed, when she narrates her story, she rewrites and reinvents her self: "My self is a thing I must now compose, as one composes a speech" (Atwood 86).

All in all, being under the tremendous control and surveillance that the state employs to discipline its people and their bodies, dystopian citizens seek resistance through writing that grants them authority, new identity and power. Writing becomes an

essential part of survival under oppressive rule, as it not only allows people to express themselves and find their individuality, but also endows them with voice and agency that liberates them from the Party's dogma and grants them self-autonomy in these suppressive conditions. As Anzaldúa assures, women, or anyone subjugated by the dominant culture or authority, should "write to record what others erase," "to become more intimate" and "preserve" oneself because "the act of writing is the act of making soul, . . . the quest for the self" (319). As a consequence, in a dystopian novel, where the concept of individuality is vanishing—personal life merges with the social, human body and mind are appropriated according to the communal needs of the state—writing becomes an imperative mode to free oneself from the collective ideology and gain personal independence, discover one's true identity and recreate one's own body and mind. When people's body and mind are constantly manipulated and exploited, narration or writing becomes a vital agency that can put the pieces of their mutilated bodies and tortured minds together and offer them a space for recreation, remembering and reconstruction of the self. Whether writing allows dystopian citizens to see themselves as individuals with their own personal feelings and ambitions (*We*), or enables them to reconnect with their past and regain their memories (*1984*), or permits them to reconstruct their bodies (*The Handmaid's Tale*), it grants them a sense of authority and identity and presents them with an opportunity for revival and rebirth.

WORKS CITED

WORKS CITED

- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Trans. Ben Brewster. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books, 1971. 121-173. Print.
- Amey, Michael D. "Living Under the Bell Jar: Surveillance and Resistance in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*." *Critical Survey* 17.1 (2005): 22-39. Print.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. "Speaking in Tongues: a Letter to Third World Women Writers." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 316-323. Print.
- Applebaum, Anne. *GULAG: a History*. New York: Doubleday, 2003. Print.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1985. Print.
- Baggini, Julian. *Atheism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- Barratt, Andrew. "The X-Factor in Zamyatin's *We*." *The Modern Language Review* 80.3 (1985): 659-672. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Nov. 2011.
- Beauchamp, Gorman. "Technology in the Dystopian Novel." *Modern Fiction Studies* 32.1 (1986): 53-63. *Project Muse*. Web. 3 Jan. 2012.
- Beehler, Michael. "Yevgeny Zamyatin: The Essential, the Superfluous, and Textual Noise." *SubStance* 15.2 (1986): 48-60. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan. 2012.

- Berman, Michael. "Deceptions of the Self in Zamyatin's *We*." *Disguise, Deception, Trompe-l'œil: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Ed. Leslie Boldt-Irons, Corrado Federici, and Ernesto Virgulti. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 133-148. Print.
- Blakemore, Stephen. "Language and Ideology in Orwell's *1984*." *Social Theory and Practice* 10.3 (1984): 349-356. Print.
- Booker, M. Keith. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994. Print.
- Boye, Karin. *Kallocain*. Trans. Gustaf Lannestock. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1966. Print.
- Christian, Barbara. "The Highs and the Lows of Black Feminist Criticism." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 347-352. Print.
- Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 391-405. Print.
- Conboy, Sheila. "Scripted, Conscripted, and Circumcised: Body Language in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*. Ed. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney. New York: State U of New York P, 1993. 349-363. Print.
- Cooke, Brett. *Human Nature in Utopia: Zamyatin's We*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2002. Print.

- . "Human Nature, Utopia, and Dystopia: Zamyatin's *We*." *Evolution, Literature, and Film: A Reader*. Ed. Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll, Jonathan Gottschall. New York: Columbia UP, 2010. 381-391. Print.
- Courtine, Jean-Jacques and Laura Willett. "A Brave New Language: Orwell's Invention of 'Newspeak' in 1984." *SubStance* 15.2 (1986): 69-74. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Jan. 2012.
- Edwards, T. R. N. *Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak, Bulgakov*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1982. Print.
- Eurich, Nell. *Science in Utopia: A Mighty Design*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967. Print.
- Ferguson, Alfred R. "Newspeak, the First Edition." *Nineteen Eighty-Four to 1984: A Companion to the Classic Novel of our Time*. Ed. C. J. Kuppig. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1984. 260-271. Print.
- Fireside, Harvey. *Soviet Psychoprisons*. New York: Norton & Company, 1979. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. Print.
- Freibert, Lucy M. "Control and Creativity: The Politics of Risk in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Critical Essays on Margaret Atwood*. Ed. Judith McCombs. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 280-291. Print.
- Frye, Northrop. "Varieties of Literary Utopias." *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. Ed. Frank E. Manuel. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1966. 25-49. Print.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 264-274. Print.

- Gimpelevich, Zina. "We and I in Zamyatin's *We* and Rand's *Anthem*." *Germano-Slavica: A Canadian Journal of Germanic and Slavic Comparative Studies* 10.1 (1997): 13-23. Print.
- Gotlieb, Erika. "Political Allegory and Psychological Realism in Orwell's *1984*." *The Aligarh Journal of English Studies* 9.1 (1984): 64-89. Print.
- Howe, Irving. "Orwell: History as Nightmare." *Modern Criticism: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Walter Sutton and Richard Foster. New York: Odyssey Press, 1963. 538-546. Print.
- Howells, Coral Ann. *Margaret Atwood*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1998. Print.
- Jacobs, Naomi. "Dissent, Assent, and the Body in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*." *Utopian Studies* 18.1 (2007): 3-20. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 Jan. 2012.
- Kateb, George. *Utopia and Its Enemies*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963. Print.
- Katz-Roy, Ginette. "Sexual Politics and Textual Strategies in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *History, Politics, Identity: Reading Literature in a Changing World*. Ed. Marija Knežević, Aleksandra Nikčević-Batricević, and Peter Preston. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008. 111-133. Print.
- Kauffman, Linda. "Special Delivery: Twenty-First-Century Epistolarity in *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature*. Ed. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1989. 221-245. Print.

- Kessler, Martin. "Power and the Perfect State: a Study in Disillusionment as Reflected in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*." *Political Science Quarterly* 72.4 (1957): 565-577. Print.
- King, Angela. "The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body." *Journal of International Women's Studies*. (2004): 29-39. *Google Scholar*. Web. 1 Nov. 2011.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Trans. Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia UP, 1984. Print.
- Kryuchkov, Vladimir P. "*Heretics*" in *Literature: Andreev, Zamyatin, Pilnyak, Bulgakov*. Saratov: Lizy Publishing, 2003. Print.
- Langer, Jessica. "The Shapes of Dystopia: Boundaries, Hybridity and the Politics of Power." *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postcolonial Literature and Film*. Ed. Ericka Hoagland, Reema Sarwal, and Andy Sawyer. Jefferson: McFarland, 2010. 171-187. Print.
- Macey, Samuel L. "The Role of Clocks and Time in Dystopias: Zamyatin's *We* and Huxley's *Brave New World*." *Explorations: Essays in Comparative Literature*. Ed. Makoto Ueda. Lanham: UP of America, 1986. 24-43. Print.
- Mairs, Nancy. "Reading Houses, Writing Lives: The French Connection." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 406-416. Print.
- Medvedev, Zhores A. Foreword. *Soviet Psychoprison*. By Harvey Fireside. New York: Norton & Company, 1979. xi-xiv. Print.

- Mencútekin, Mustafa. "Plato Still Dominates: The Case of Huxley's *Brave New World*." *Journal of Academic Studies* 12.46 (2010): 59-76. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 12 Nov. 2011.
- Moylan, Tom. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000. Print.
- Myrsiades, Linda. "Law, Medicine, and the Sex Slave in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Un-Disciplining Literature: Literature, Law and Culture*. Ed. Kostas Myrsiades and Linda Myrsiades. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. 219-245. Print.
- Olney, James. *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972. Print.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. New York: Signet Classic, 1949. Print.
- Parker, Martin. "Utopia and the Organizational Imagination: Eutopia." *Utopia and Organization*. Ed. Martin Parker. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. 217-224. Print.
- Parrinder, Patrick. "Imagining the Future: Zamyatin and Wells." *Science Fiction Studies* 1.1 (1973): 17-26. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan. 2012.
- Plattel, Martin G. *Utopian and Critical Thinking*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1972. Print.
- Rand, Ayn. *Anthem*. New York: Signet Books, 1946. Print.
- Raschke, Debrah. "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: False Borders and Subtle Subversions." *Literature, Interpretation, Theory: LIT* 6.3-4 (1995): 257-268. Print.

- Reedy, Patrick. "Keeping the Black Flag Flying: Anarchy, Utopia and the Politics of Nostalgia." *Utopia and Organization*. Ed. Martin Parker. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. 167-188. Print.
- Riesman, David. *Abundance for What? And Other Essays*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1964. Print.
- Rubenstein, Roberta. "Nature and Nurture in Dystopia: *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Margaret Atwood: Vision and Forms*. Ed. Kathryn VanSpanckeren and Jan Garden Castro. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1988. 101-112. Print.
- Ruppert, Peter. *Reader in a Strange Land: The Activity of Reading Literary Utopias*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1986. Print.
- Stevenson, Sharon. "The Nature of 'Outsider Dystopias': Atwood, Starhawk, and Abbey." *The Utopian Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Twentieth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. Ed. Martha Bartter and Thomas J. Morrissey. Westport: Praeger, 2004. 129-136. Print.
- Thorp, Malcolm R. "The Dynamics of Terror in Orwell's *1984*." *Brigham Young University Studies* 24.1 (1984): 3-17. Print.
- Turner, Bryan S. *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008. Print.
- Tyner, James A. "Self and Space, Resistance and Discipline: a Foucauldian Reading of George Orwell's *1984*." *Social and Cultural Geography* 5.1 (2004): 129-149. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 1 Nov. 2011.

- Varsam, Maria. "Concrete Dystopia: Slavery and Its Others." *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. Ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan. New York: Routledge, 2003. 203-224. Print.
- Walsh, Chad. *From Utopia to Nightmare*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. Print.
- Winter, Alison. "The Chemistry of Truth and the Literature of Dystopia." *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830-1970*. Eds. Helen Small and Trudi Tate. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 212-232. Print.
- Woolf, Virginia. "A Room of One's Own." *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*. Ed. Mary K. DeShazer. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2001. 16-72. Print.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We*. Trans. Clarence Brown. New York: Penguin Classics, 1993. Print.