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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of the *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction* (*MJOSF*). The outpouring of interest and support we received upon release of our first issue has been, quite simply, amazing! As I write this letter, *MJOSF's* inaugural issue received over 25,000 views and our subscriber base has grown by over 800% since the release our first issue. Our pool of peer reviewers continues to grow, featuring members from all over the world. The release of the first issue of *MJOSF* was featured on several prominent websites, including io9. Submissions have continued rolling in steadily, and someone even started a Goodreads page about us!

Because you, our readers, are the people who have made this journal a success, we, the *MJOSF* editorial team, have done our best to address reader feedback. For *MJOSF* Volume 1, Issue 2, we have more thoroughly credited our contributors—check out our "About the Contributors" page for bio blurbs about our cover artist, authors, and editorial team. Several readers requested more accessible formats of the journal, particularly an e-reader-friendly version (EPUB) and improved HTML versions. We hope you will find this issue has addressed these concerns, and as we move forward, updating the *MJOSF* website is one of our top priorities.

On a more somber and personal note, I would like to pay brief tribute to Dr. Thomas Barrett, former History Professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland who passed away last month after a long battle with multiple myeloma. Tom was a great mentor and friend who first introduced me to the world of science fiction scholarship through his course on Cold War science fiction from the United States and the Soviet Union. By introducing me to science fiction studies, Tom unknowingly laid the groundwork for this project. When the Museum of Science Fiction's team was coming up with new ways to promote the Museum, creating an open access journal of science fiction studies seemed like a natural step to me.

This second issue of *MJOSF* features five articles that provide glimpses into the history of science fiction over the past hundred years, addressing major contemporary topics like anarchy, censorship, evolving cultural archives, ecocriticism, and afrofuturism as presented through both literature and cinema. Arguing that critical utopias existed in Spain several decades before the publication of Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, Mariano Martín Rodríguez examines the shortcomings of libertarian communism present in Alfonso Martínez Rizo's novel *Love in 200 Years*. David Christopher analyzes the contemporary contexts that allowed two Soviet science fiction films, *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage*, to escape Stalinist censorship. In his analysis of the loss of individuality present in *Fahrenheit 451*, Joseph Hurtgen explores the shift from a text-based cultural archive to a media-controlled, presentist archive focused on momentary pleasures. Ruzbeh Babaee, Sue Yen Lee, and Siamak Babaee examine both psychological defense mechanisms and how they influence the ecocritical perspective present in *The Girl With All the Gifts*. In her comparative analysis of the afrofuturist young adult novels *Orleans* and *Tankborn*, Melanie Marotta highlights the role of female leaders in neo-slave narratives.

As you read through this issue, don't forget to take a look our "Looking to the Future" page to learn more about the Museum of Science Fiction (MOSF), our sponsoring organization, and *Escape Velocity*, the upcoming STEAM micro-world's fair MOSF will be hosting in National Harbor, Maryland from 1-3 July 2016. *Escape Velocity* will feature celebrity media, literary, and science guests; events, panels, and programs for all ages; and an exclusive museum exhibit from MOSF. Check it out!

My thanks again to all the readers, contributors, peer reviewers, and editors who have made this issue possible, and we hope that you enjoy this issue of *MJOSF* just as much as you did our first!

— Monica Louzon, MLS
Managing Editor, *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction*

Reflecting on Science Fiction

For this issue of *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction*, our editorial team reached out to some of the guests who will be at *Escape Velocity* this July and invited them to tell us about what makes science fiction fun to them. Here's what some of them said.

"What makes science fiction fun?"

Science fiction has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. Having a father who is a science fiction TV producer is a big part of that—I grew up surrounded by VHS tapes of *Thunderbirds*, *Space: 1999, UFO, Captain Scarlet* and *Terrahawks*—but as a young child, I also naturally gravitated towards shows like *Doctor Who*.

For me, science fiction has always served two crucial functions—to provide an escape and to connect me more to the world in which I live. This may sound paradoxical, but I think those aspects of science fiction are the two essential features which make it so popular.

Many fans of science fiction will report that one of their favorite things to do at the end of a long day at work is to escape into a science fiction universe. Immersing oneself in a world so different from our day-to-day experience is a truly liberating experience. The added suspension of disbelief that's involved when watching science fiction serves only to deepen the level of the escape.

Science fiction stories and their settings are, by their very nature, often very different from contemporary life. Part of this difference aids our escape, allowing us sufficient distance from everyday life that we have a chance to gain insight and perspective.

So much science fiction writing, television, and film is inspired by, and often mirrors, contemporary events and troubles. But put into a new and different world, these familiar scenarios take on a new perspective—giving us the space to reflect on them in a different way.

This strange mixture of connection to, and disconnection from, everyday life is (for me at least) one of the magical appeals of science fiction.

That all sounds a bit "serious", doesn't it? Is this really what make science fiction fun? I'd argue that yes, it is. The magical mixture of disconnection and connection, of fantasy escape and real-world thought-provocation that makes it such an exciting way to tell stories. When you add amazing technology, aliens, space travel and great stories over this base layer, how could science fiction not be fun?

— **Jamie Anderson**
Managing Director of Anderson Entertainment
Son of Thunderbirds *creator Gerry Anderson*

Reflecting on Science Fiction, *continued*

"What makes science fiction fun?"

Science fiction explores the world of "what if." Science fiction stories are built upon prevailing knowledge and speculating about what can happen if the human imagination stretches that knowledge and its unexpected consequences. Science fiction also challenges the complacency of conventional wisdom. What if the great minds of the day got it wrong? What would happen then?

Great science fiction stories are built around engaging, relatable characters. The more different from everyday reality the setting of the story is, the more important it is for audiences to experience that world through characters with which they can identify. Everyone imagines what they would do if placed in the same situation as the characters, and we delight in the surprises, shocks, spectacle, and emotional intensity that transport us into realms far from the world in which we live. When the world is at last set right, we also share triumph with the characters in science fiction.

Our species has always been fascinated by speculative fiction, and some of the world's oldest and most enduring literature and myths qualify as science fiction. Humans seem to experience a need to consider things beyond our immediate reality and limitations. It is no surprise that most of the biggest box office films and enduring television franchises are science fiction-based.

There is a wonderful symbiotic relationship between real science and science fiction because each informs and inspires the other. New discoveries in science provide leaping off points for science fiction storytellers: now that we know this, what if that? The explorations of the imaginations of if science fiction inspire real scientists to push further: If we can imagine that, let's make it real. It's no mystery why the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) named the first space shuttle "Enterprise."

Science fiction is fun because it transports audiences away from daily frustrations into worlds and situations beyond what is possible in real life. It inspires the imagination, offers visceral adventures into the unknown, and explores the human condition, ultimately reminding us what it means to be human.

— **Dan Curry**
Visual Effects Supervisor for Star Trek: The Next Generation
Visual Effects Producer for Star Trek: Enterprise, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, & Star Trek: Voyager

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Spanish Anarchism and the Utopian Novel in the 1930s: The Libertarian Society of the Future in *El amor dentro de 200 años (Love in 200 Years)* by Alfonso Martínez Rizo

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Abstract

The concept of critical utopia has been widely accepted since Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), which is more a utopian novel than a typically descriptive utopia. In *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin also touched upon anarchist utopian science fiction, which had already been cultivated much earlier in the context of Spain's thriving anarchist movement in the 1930s. *Love in 200 Years (El amor dentro de 200 años*; 1932) by Alfonso Martínez Rizo presents a society following libertarian communist principles in a technologically advanced future. This is a consumerist society, fully democratic and sexually liberated—homosexuality is not an issue, and even one of the love interests in the novel is queer—but it is not a truly anarchist utopia. The shortcomings of libertarian communism, which Salvio Valentí criticized in his contemporary Spanish dystopia, *From Exodus to Paradise* (*Del éxodo al paraíso;* 1933), are presented with wry humor through plot devices reminiscent of those frequently encountered in modern dystopias. *Love in 200 Years*, an original popular modernist scientific romance, is an early critical utopian novel which deserves to be rescued from oblivion.

Keywords: *Utopian novel, libertarian communism, anarchist science fiction, Martínez Rizo*

Author's Note: An early version of this paper was published as "La ciudad libertaria del futuro en la distopía *El amor dentro de 200 años* (1932), de Alfonso Martínez Rizo" in the Spanish online journal *Ángulo Recto* (2011, 3:2, pp. 151-169). The version published herein is quite different from the aforementioned work.

According to Trousson (1998), "utopia is an essentially descriptive genre"[1] (*l'utopie est un genre essentiellement descriptive;* p. 31), meant to display the imagined place—whose intended perfection excludes any change, as any modification would dialectically imply that the perfection, in reality, has not been achieved—to a traveler visiting the utopia and, through this traveler's records, to the reader. In the unquestioned and unquestionable utopian world, the figure of the visitor only serves to advance the description of the ideal society through their questions regarding its workings. Any event that could distract the reader's attention and stress individual experience, thus undermining the exclusive focus on the collective, is reduced to the barest minimum, so that "the description literally dismisses the narration" (*la description évacue littéralement la narration*; Trousson, 1998, p. 31). In the utopian landscape, plot-related action remains suspended and the figure of the hero remains empty of any believable characterization through his or her actions. The narrative framework is reduced to a mere afterthought by the description, even disappearing entirely, as occurs in some

[1] All translations to English in this article were performed by its author.

nineteenth century anarchist utopias such as Ricardo Mella's *The New Utopia* (*La Nueva Utopia*; 1890).[2]

Utopia as a literary genre is, therefore, distinct from the utopian novel. If their raw material is analogous (i.e., an imaginary society whose plausible and rational appearance is presented in dialectic relation to a real society that serves as a point of reference), their verbal construction tends to be opposite: static and descriptive in utopia, but dynamic and narrative in the utopian novel. In the latter, the "utopian" element is adjective, while the narrative (the "novel") is substantive. A utopian novel can very well be studied for its ideological contents, for its potential usefulness as a blueprint for a utopian order, but such a reading would be reductive. As a novel, its main point is to tell a story that presents a particular utopian (either *eutopian* or dystopian[3]) society and its relationship with its denizens so that the deeds and thoughts of the characters reflect and reveal how they negotiate conflicts that arise in this society. Conflicts cannot exist in classic utopias because a being perfect society means it has achieved full harmony, but the inner and outer conflicts of men and women are the core of traditional storytelling. This lack of action and defined conflict may explain why *eutopian* novels rarely make satisfactory narratives while dystopian novels, which thrive in conflict, include several masterpieces. This is also perhaps why an ambiguously utopian real novel such as Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974) received both critical acclaim and quite a few ideologically-charged criticisms for not having portrayed a fully positive, utopian, anarchist social order, in spite of her personal commitment to anarchism at the time she wrote the novel. In *Political Theory, Science Fiction and Utopian Literature: Ursula K. Le Guin and The Dispossessed*, Burns (2008) argued that Le Guin was first and foremost a novelist (pp. 19-55). *The Dispossessed* was significant not for its doctrine, but for its effective presentation of a society that appeared as much *eutopian* as real. Though Le Guin's anarchist world seems close to the ideal harmony of freedom and equality, its failures and inadequacies make it all the more credible and human. Le Guin's utopia is inhabited by fellow beings, not by the one-dimensional allegorical figures characteristic of (descriptive) utopia.

The literary success of *The Dispossessed*, a primarily *eutopian* novel, was comparable with that of classic dystopian novels such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (*Мы*; 1920; 1924) and is now rarely questioned. Although *The Dispossessed* was not a utopia *stricto sensu*, it was arguably the first masterpiece of its genre, having also contributed to suggest the concept of "critical utopia" (Moylan, 1980). In any event, *The Dispossessed*'s literary value facilitated a welcome broadening of utopianism in fiction. The contents ("critical utopia") and writing ("*eutopian* novel") of Le Guin's novel were the successful culmination of a battle begun much earlier by other writers who did not wish to give up the human perspective of the novel when presenting their readers with

[2] On this significant Spanish anarchist utopia, see Ramos-Gorostiza (2009).

[3] "Eutopia or positive utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better that the society in which that reader lived. Dystopia or negative utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse that the society in which that reader lived" (Sargent, 2005, p. 154).

utopias that were still-to-be-perfected, yet already much-improved societies. Alfonso Martínez Rizo,[4] a Spanish engineer, author, and distinguished anarchist intellectual, can be considered an overlooked forerunner to Le Guin for his novelistic approach to anarchist utopianism in *Love in 200 Years* (*El amor dentro de 200 años*; 1932).

El amor dentro de 200 años was not the first anarchist utopian novel, as French writers had used this genre since the late nineteenth century to present the workings of an anarchist society. For instance, in *The Pacifists*[5] (*Les Pacifiques*; 1914), Han Ryner imagined such a society on an island whose pacifist inhabitants are confronted by some Western castaways. These Westerners murder the pacifists in order to impose colonial authority, but are ultimately defeated, and pardoned, by the sheer number of non-violent islanders (Grenier, 2005, pp. 294-297). In this work, as well as in a Brazilian anarchist utopian novel with a very similar plot (Afonso Schmidt's *Zanzalá*, 1938),[6] there is no conflict within the anarchist society itself, which remains starkly utopian in its unchanging balance. Martínez Rizo, on the other hand, does not present an exterior foe with a compact utopia. As in *The Dispossessed*, his anarchist world has its own shortcomings that inspire the main characters of *El amor dentro de 200 años* to question the prevailing order in a manner similar to contemporary dystopias. Furthermore, unlike Ryner or Schmidt, Martínez Rizo does not place his utopia on an island or in a secluded place during present times, but instead follows a tradition set forth by Zamyatin and similar setting it in a technologically advanced future, far-removed from any pastoral stasis. However, Martínez Rizo's portrayal of the future libertarian society is quite different from the oppressive organization made possible by industrial technology in modern European dystopias, as a more detailed description of *El amor dentro de 200 años* will show.

The population of Martínez Rizo's novel is not centered in a technologically-advanced megacity surrounded by countryside filled with a spontaneous wild population and untamed nature, an otherwise common population distribution in dystopian fiction.[7] The anarchist preference for a decentralized organization that breaks with capitalist production made possible by concentrating large proletarian masses around enormous factories corresponds with a preference for a similarly decentralized pattern of urbanism in anarchist utopias. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, communes are populated by a few thousand inhabitants maximum, in which collective control and the genuine participation of each and everybody in public affairs is guaranteed and the distinction between city and countryside has disappeared. Similar to Argentine author Pierre Quitoule's former anarchist utopia, *The Anarchist American City (La ciudad anarquista Americana;* 1914)[8]. Martínez Rizo himself was a strenuous

[4] Alfonso Martínez Rizo (1877-1951) is still a relatively unknown figure in Spanish utopian and science fiction literature. Nevertheless, a historian of anarchism has discussed his political activity (Paniagua, 1982, pp. 190-197) and, in a volume dedicated to Spanish libertarian utopias, his anticipation 1945 (1932) and a selection from *El amor dentro de 200 años* were reedited in 1991. *El amor dentro de 200 años* is also briefly discussed in a history of Spanish science fiction (Sáiz Cidoncha, 1988, pp. 100-101).

[5] There is an English translation of this novel (Ryner, 2014, pp.183-325).

[6] For a description of this work, see Meneghello (2009).

[7] "Science fiction's romantic polarization of the organic-rural and the mechanical-urban tends to generate plots in which there is no middle ground; there is such a wholesale rejection of the 'urbanization of the territory' that the only option, other than giving in, is to renounce urban life altogether, either seeking an escape route or trying to break down the walls which hold nature at bay" (Horsley, 1995, p. 250).

[8] For a description of this utopia, see Ainsa (1986).

defender of ecological urbanism, as evident in the garden cities of his essay *The Urban Development of the Future* (*La urbanística del porvenir*; 1932).[9] In *El amor dentro de 200 años* "the population of the Earth was spread across its surface" (*la población de la Tierra estaba diseminada en toda su superficie*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 18), because people could build wherever and however each person wanted, no matter the climate zone. In the society of the future, there is no need to adopt a pastoral or Luddite lifestyle to enjoy the natural landscape, fulfilling the dream of many current urbanites. On the contrary, it is "thanks to the telecommunication advances and the ease of transport" (*gracias a los adelantos de la telecomunicación y a la facilidad de los transportes*, Martínez Rizo, p. 18) that the inhabitants of the communist libertarian world-city system described in the novel have reached this ideal. With an engineer's delight, Martínez Rizo describes fast journeys made possible thanks to "estereonautic" (*estereonáutica*) travel, which features flying ships employing aeromagnetic propulsion (pp. 44-46), and such advanced communication technology that everyone enjoys not only television, but also "retrotelevision" (*retrotelevisión*)—a visualizer of the past (1932, pp. 38-40).

In addition, technology has even allowed abolishing the local assemblies that, in anarchist utopias, often meet to make decisions because "every man decided daily upon all things with his direct and secret vote via the immediate totalization of statistical devices" (*todos los hombres decidían diariamente sobre todas las cosas con su voto directo y secreto, mediante la totalización inmediata de los aparatos de estadística;* Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19), i.e. personal devices that allow the individual to immediately give his opinion on topics of common interest from any place at any time.

Technology in *El amor dentro de 200 años* has also allowed labor and work traditionally accomplished in anarchist utopias through free solidarity of the society's membership to disappear. No one tends to do anything useful because "machines do everything better" (*todo lo hacen las máquinas mejor*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19) and produce everything. The mechanization of the world is absolute and humans perform labor activities for recreation. The machines, capable of auto-perfecting themselves, are powered by inexhaustible "intraatomic" (*intraatómica*) energy, which is based on a form of nuclear fission. Some citizens even engage in 'army' play acting, complete with uniforms and military parades comprised of a real armed force of "automatic soldiers" (*soldados automáticos*). These soldiers are anthropomorphic automatons created to battle possible extraterrestrial threats and, more importantly, to distract people who are nostalgic for martial arts, a sport of which the author amusingly makes fun.

In the decentralized landscape of *El amor dentro de 200 años*, common urban spaces are very scarce, limited in fact to a gigantic stadium that seats hundreds of thousands of spectators, highlighting the future libertarians' passion for sports and, in particular, the so-called "Love-Gardens" (*Jardines del Amor*). The Love Gardens are outdoor places among the greenery where people can dance and engage in sexual activities with the same

[9] "This project of the city-countryside surpasses this dichotomy by creating an integrated fabric in nature with a distance, between each house, of one hundred meters of countryside" (*Su proyecto de ciudad-campo supera esta dicotomía al formar un tejido integrado en la naturaleza con una distancia, entre casa y casa, de cien metros de campo*; Roselló, 2005, p. 3). Masjuan (2000, pp. 176-187) discusses in detail Martínez Rizo's ideas on urban development.

freedom (or more so, thanks to universal nudism)[10] found decades later in the sexual revolution in the Western cultures. "The new sexual morality" (*la nueva moral sexual*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, pp. 15-17), clearly supported by the author, focuses on pure pleasure, contrasting with the sexual puritanism prevalent in contemporary utopias. The title "*El amor dentro de 200 años*" indicates the importance of eroticism in the novel. Sex is a physiological need that is freely satisfied, without consideration for traditional taboos such as the obligation of fidelity, in Martín Rizo's anarchist utopia because "exclusivism was an absurdity against Nature" (*el exclusivismo era un absurdo contra la Naturaleza*; 1932, p. 56). Homosexuality is also embraced because "each one satisfies their sexuality in accordance to their character" (*cada uno da satisfacción a su sexualidad como su temperamento le aconseja*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 27), thus offering a true utopia for contemporary queer people who were rarely accepted in such natural way even in anarchist circles.[11] This anarchist world is, therefore, endowed with not just utopian, but also prophetic features: the then-infant consumerist and sexually liberated society has reached a level of tolerance and acceptance beyond that of our own times. Not even the phenomenon of sexual tourism is missing in Martínez Rízo's world: the progress in transportation has made pleasure trips to other planets, such as Mars, possible despite the "intelligent arachnids" (*arácnidos inteligentes*; 1932, p. 93) hindering any access to the planet's surface.

In spite of all of these positive characteristics, the future united anarchist Earth is not a full utopia yet. Commodity-induced political passivity of the consumerist society and the growing conformism in the exercise of democracy as mere routine poses a danger felt by the narrator, who reacts using the rhetoric and structural devices of contemporary dystopia to advance his individualistic and eminently dynamic concept of anarchism.

The subtitle of *Love in 200 Years* is eloquent: "Fictional vision of future rebellions" (*Visión novelesca de rebeldías futuras*). The allusion to "rebellions" links *El amor dentro de 200 años* to Martínez Rizo's previous novel, *1945. The Coming of Libertarian Communism. A Fictional Vision of Things to Come* (*1945. El advenimiento del comunismo libertario. Una vision novelesca del porvenir;* 1991). This short political novel narrates the peaceful triumph of libertarian communism in Spain following a general strike declared by anarcho-syndicalist unions, which represent most of the population, thus expanding the already large base of Spanish anarchists at that time. Money, private property, and all prior institutions are peacefully extinguished as anarchist unions take over their functions. The end of the book promises a sequel, suggesting a possible dystopian development of the society born in 1945:

> I have limited myself to narrating the coming of libertarian communism and leaving it in its infancy. Perhaps at another time I will indulge in narrating something concerning the said regime which will be powerful, too powerful perhaps, since it will hinder the progress of anarchy, by narrating a love story in two centuries[…](*Me he limitado a contar el advenimiento del comunismo*

[10] Martínez Rizo was, in fact, an enthusiastic supporter of naturism, which he would later also defend in his 1936 novel *Death* (*Óbito*), which "shows us the role of nakedness alongside naturist practices through a new model of society freed from capitalism, where there are small populations comprised of freely sterile couples living alongside ones with three or more children, putting into practice the free expression of human aptitudes" (*nos muestra el papel del desnudo conjuntamente con las prácticas naturistas en un nuevo modelo de sociedad liberada del capitalismo, donde existen pequeñas poblaciones en las que hay parejas libremente estériles, y otras con tres o más hijos, y se pone en práctica la libre expresión de las aptitudes humanas*; Masjuan, 2000, p. 440).

[11] On the issue of anarchism and homosexuality in Spain during this period, see Cleminson (1995).

> *libertario dejándolo en su cuna. Quizá otro día me complazca en cantaros algo de dicho regimen ya fuerte, tal vez demasiado fuerte, obstaculizando la marcha de la anarquía, al narrar una historia de amor dentro de dos siglos[…];* Martínez Rízo, 1991, p. 303)

After showing how libertarian communism is superior to the replaced capitalist order in its consideration of the utopian body's material needs, which classic utopias (including the ones mentioned by Ryner and Schmidt) usually overlook, *El amor dentro de 200 años* describes the nature of the future obstacles anarchy will face. In spite of its clear utopian results, the triumphant libertarian communism across the world has evolved toward a mockery of democracy, in which the machine has also assumed the managing functions, replacing trade unions: "the federal system had disappeared thanks to the imposition by the Automatic"[12] (*había desaparecido el Sistema federal por imposición de la Automática*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19), which is a "governing machine" (*máquina gubernativa*; p. 19) that seems to work as a huge central computer administering the planet instead of mankind. Individual voting is meaningless because "making suggestions is prohibited as they would be inferior to those made and disseminated daily by the governing machine" (*está prohibido hacer sugerencias, porque serían inferiors a las que la máquina gubernativa hace y difunde todos los días*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 20). Moreover, the "governing function" (*función gubernamental*) is based on a series of ruling principles that are universally enforced, such as the "prohibition of every harmful thing, subordination of the individual to the collective and, with these exclusive limitations, absolute individual and collective freedom" (*prohibición de todo lo nocivo, subordinación del individuo a la colectividad y, con estas exclusivas limitaciones, libertad absoluta individual y colectiva*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 66). In the name of these principles, the organization of mechanical libertarian communism imposes, among other things, radical eugenics in accordance with some prevalent tendencies in Spanish anarchism.[13] The expected result is achieved: "all of the factions were nobly beautiful and all of the bodies were graceful and all of the movements were rhythmical" (*todas las facciones eran noblemente bellas y todos los cuerpos armoniosos y todos los movimientos rítmicos*); Martínez Rizo adds with wry humor, "the few ugly ones were almost proud of it" (*los pocos feos que había, casi se engorullecían de ello*; 1932, p. 62). However, this improvement of nature comes with a price. Only couples with eugenic compatibility endorsed by the central computer's automatic program are allowed to have children. Breeding without this prior approval immediately entails a sentence of destruction carried out, literally, by the collective. If the computer so determines or if a sufficient number of people believe that any other person or group presents a danger for the libertarian community, rays emerging from the voting device are focused upon the victim(s). These rays, when isolated, are harmless, but their large scale convergence from several devices causes "a death that seemed fair for to the plebiscite" (*una muerte que parecía justa por lo plebiscitaria*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 58). Fair or not, Martínez Rizo makes clear that to him, the repression of inalienable freedom is just as decentralized, and even as personalized, as extreme

[12] The Automatic is a mechanical system based on the theories of engineer Leonardo Torres Quevedo, who is a forerunner to modern cybernetics.

[13] "Eugenics, the improvement of physical human conditions and birth control grounded in a reading of Malthusianism was one of the main axes of libertarian ideology in Spain" (*El eugenismo, la mejora de las condiciones físicas de la humanidad y el control de la natalidad fundamentado en una lectura del maltusianismo fueron uno de los ejes principales de la ideología libertaria en España*; Barona, 2004, p. 16).

manifestations of control in classic dystopias. Unlike the modern Internet, the *Automática* operates from a uniquely physical place in a center separated by a symbolic wall from the rest of the world: "the Bedaón laboratories and the great governing machine were surrounded by high walls" (*los laboratorios de Beda y la gran máquina gubernativa estaban rodeados por altas tapias*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 101). These walls, meant to protect the computer or statistical machine, also indicate the real power core of the alleged libertarian society of the future. Bedaón's machine and laboratories (the scientist who has created it and, consequently, also created the ruling governing system)[14] are the places where the citizens' fates are decided in the name of (eugenic) common good and, from this point of view, "the architecture of the city is presented as conterminous with the machine and with its attendant power structure" (Horsley, 1995, p. 248).

Martínez Rizo introduces original nuances to the dystopian theme of the opposition between the organic-rural and the mechanic-urban. Thus, Bedaón, the scientist who holds the real power, is not a stereotypical dictator. He is rather a mythical figure venerated for the comfort and pleasures he has provided his subjects. A part of the population is, indeed, more than happy with the system, while the true anarchists fight to end this type of libertarian communism because they consider it oppressive, particularly the collective executions implemented as a form of technologically-enabled mob justice. Their dissent is purely political and based on the development of the same principles that inspired the velvet revolution Martínez Rizo described in *1945*. Here, there is no nostalgia for a bygone pastoral, simpler way of life; instead, in keeping with Spanish anarchist tradition,[15] the author believes a technological civilization and the full enjoyment of human freedom are compatible and possible.

As in contemporary dystopias, love is the uncontrollable force that threatens to overthrow the system in *El amor dentro de 200 años*. The main plot device in the novel is love, which unites its protagonists within the framework of their society. The outside witness plays the typical role of the traveler-to-utopia. Through Martínez Rizo's adaptation of the chronotope of a sleeper awakened centuries later in the future, he enables his contemporary readers to identify with the character who comes from the past and is confronted, just as the readers are, with the posited future. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, the sleeper is a soldier named Fulgencio Chapitel, but his function as a docile admirer of utopia is comically negated when he is shown the libertarian world-city. His utopian guide performs his task with little enthusiasm, while Chapitel spends half of the novel running away from the authorized cicerone instead of taking all the utopian propaganda at face value. Chapitel

[14] "He was the last of the wise men of the heroic age of science and, precisely, the greatest amongst them and the one who had mostcontributed to the triumph of the machine ideology" (*Era el último de los sabios de la edad heroica de la ciencia y, precisamente, el más grande de todos y el que más había contribuido a entronizar el maquinismo*). He also "decreed the supremacy of the governing machine he invented" (*hizo decretar la supremacía de la máquina gubernativa de su invención*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 34).

[15] Spanish libertarian utopia engages perfectly with the characteristic vision of great technological power, of the trust in science and the machine expressed in numerous contemporary European utopias: a constant vision of the positive role of science and technology, all aimed exclusively at human liberation" (*Le utopie libertarie spagnole si innestano perfettamente nella caratteristica visione del grande potere tecnologico, della fiducia nella scienza e nella macchina espresso da numerosissime utopie europee a loro contemporanee: una visione costante del ruolo positivo della scienza e della tecnica, tutte tese esclusivamente alla liberazione umana*; Zane, 2007, p. 9). Here, Zane refers to the libertarian utopianism of the nineteenth century that, in a country as backward as Spain at that time, was reticent about condemning industrialism, evidenced by William Morris's pastoral style of making such condemnations. For such influential anarchists like Ricardo Mella, "the new order is fundamentally urban. New Utopia is a 'great city' and a modern one. It has solid and functional aesthetics and iron and electrical forces that are its defining features" (Ramos-Gorostiza, 2009, p. 16). Martínez Rizo's city is located, evidently, in the wake of Mella's.

also falls in love with his guide's daughter, Dasnay Paratanasia, with whom he eventually visits the libertarian communist planet of Mars. Chapitel's role in *El amor dentro de 200 años* allows Martínez Rizo to adopt a critical perspective regarding the love interests the utopia (and the sleeper chronotope) similar to that found in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888). Upon each featured wonder of the future, the ironic, or decidedly controversial commentary of the companion invites the reader to adopt a nonconformist stance. Chapitel embraces Dasnay's individualist anarchy as their relationship deepens in accordance with the concept of love as an impulse oriented toward forming a family, rather than libertarian hedonism, "uniting it to reproduction desires, distinct from physiological pleasure" (*vinculándolo en los anhelos de reproducción, con distinción del placer fisiológico*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 68). This couple, as well as the one composed of Zaraíto, Dasnay's teenage nephew, and a "most ugly" (*feísima*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 62) girl of thirteen, are living expressions of dissidence against the eugenic canon and rules because the *Automática* forbids their union harmful to the human race. Both couples, however, have children, placing them outside their society's system and, in the end, exposing them to the dangerous collective ray.

Martínez Rizo seems to share the underlying sentimental conservatism of dystopias such as Zamyatin's, Aldous Huxley's and George Orwell's, where "in the end, what is opposed to the massive tyranny of state is little more than a bourgeois domestic idyll, a brief, fragile dream of quasi-marital bliss" (Ferns, 1999, p. 124). In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, sex is definitely not subversive, but romantic love is. Nonetheless, Martínez Rizo resolves this conflict very differently than in those aforementioned dystopian examples, in accordance with his own personal humorist approach. *Omnia vincit amor*: love is, indeed, what persuades the true controller of the machine, Bedaón, to deactivate its governing functions, which impede true anarchy. According to the rules, Bedaón would otherwise be forced to lose the object of his (platonic) love, Zaraíto, the handsome boy involved in one of the couples practicing romantic, reproductive dissidence. This is not certainly the sort of romantic infatuation that most contemporary readers would expect as deus ex machina. Martínez Rizo uses the stereotypes of both utopias and dystopian novels, the two main genres of literary utopianism of his age, to deflate expectations. Despite its appearances, the world in *El amor dentro de 200 años* is not fully utopian, but Martínez Rizo ironically deconstructs the dystopian plot devices. The Big Brother, Bedaón, ends up being a Platonic philosopher in every respect, whose unrequited homosexual infatuation makes possible in a surprisingly unconventional way the happy ending that cancels the expected dystopian tragedy. Thanks to Bedaón's decision, the individual will not be crushed by the established system, and the anarchist ideals seem to have won the day. Martínez Rizo also, however ideologically deconstructs this reassuring ending.

The fight to achieve anarchy ultimately leads to an illustrated despotism: "The governing machine is dead! The voting and destruction devices have been rendered useless forever! The mechanical soldiers will never again attack men!" *(¡La máquina gubernativa ha muerto! ¡Los aparatos de votar y fulminar han quedado inutilizados para siempre! ¡Los soldados mecánicos no atacarán jamás a los hombres!;* Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 106). This, too, ends the attempt at democracy because Bedaón assumes total power. Although he claims to do so unwillingly, declaring to his lover, "you

cannot imagine how abhorrent being a ruler is to me!" *(¡no puedes imaginarte lo violento que me es ser providencia!*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 107), he assumes a "ruling role" (*papel providencial*) because most of the population is not prepared for the regimen of true anarchy. Therefore, he and his successors will have "humanity's civilized life" (*la vida civilizada de la Humanidad*; p. 107) in their hands until the society has sufficiently prepared itself. In the meantime, he tells the future anarchists: "You must make do with my immense power and fear my decisions" (*tenéis que contar con mi inmenso poder y temer mis decisiones*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 107). Individualist revolution may have overthrown eugenics, but it also enthroned a kind of scientific superman whose government may not be benevolent. Through Bedaón's reclamation of power, was Martínez Rizo referring to the philosophical tradition that stems from Max Stirner's individualism and, through Friedrich Nietzsche, promotes an anarchism of *Übermenschen*[16]? Was he turning upside down former anarchist utopias such as Quiroule's *La ciudad anarquista americana*?[17] His ironic approach to libertarian utopianism illustrates how his political commitment obscured neither his mind, his logic when it came to addressing the issues that fulfillment of any utopia entails, nor his duty as a novelist to produce an effective story. On both fronts, *El amor dentro de 200 años* is a critical novel in a similar way as is *The Dispossessed* and, therefore, despite the differences in their writing, it should be mentioned as an early example of the modes and genres that Le Guin's novel has established in the utopian canon.

While *The Dispossessed* is a serious novel that assumes and develops the great tradition of the nineteenth century realist novel, by adapting it to both utopian and science fiction, *El amor dentro de 200 años* becomes a popular modernist narrative. Martínez Rizo's skillfully concise style seems equivalent to the geometric architecture he featured in the buildings of his future libertarian city. One could argue his writing has an Art Deco flavor, since its simple functionality is compatible with the presence of some rhetorical devices that animate the text and, at the same time, contribute to its meaning, such as irony. Martínez Rizo's ironic perspective tends to blur the lines of the thematic opposition between eutopia and dystopia, creating a middle ground that allows the work to remain optimistic regarding the prospect of true anarchy despite the intermediary dictatorship imposed at the end of the novel. Therefore, *El amor dentro de 200 años* is rather tragicomic, thus following the trend set by other Spanish early dystopias[18] in which the author's voice softens the admonition with comedy, such as Ramón Pérez de Ayala's short play *Sentimental Club* (1909) and Miguel A. Calvo Roselló's *A Strange Country (Un país extraño*; 1919).[19] These works are all quite different from many of the canonical European dystopias. Perhaps the context in which Martínez Rizo wrote permitted him to craft a hopeful vision of the future. The peaceful 1931 proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic and the subsequent lifting of any bans against political activity as well as the expectations

[16] Nietzsch's *Übermenschen* were "overmen", super-human beings with otherworldly qualities.

[17] If he was familiar with the work, Martínez Rizo could have parodied Pierre Quiroule's *La ciudad anarquista americana*, in which a scientist with pretensions to superhumanity is the one who has worked the most for the coming of the libertarian city in the new continent and who has invented a ray capable of ending all life within a determined radius that he intends to use against the enemies of anarchy in Europe. Such class genocide is not narrated in the work, which is a typical utopia and, therefore, almost fully descriptive, while Martínez Rizo has written a novel with a certain carnavalesque quality in it.

[18] On early Modernist Spanish dystopia and science fiction in general, see Martín Rodríguez (2010).

[19] In this short dystopia a telescreen appears with exactly the same functions as the one allegedly invented by Georges Orwell in *1984* (1948). If Orwell could have heard of this story during his Spanish stay is only matter for speculation.

of change it elicited in the population must have favored belief in a possibly near libertarian victory, reflecting the daydreams about the future from both within and outside the anarchist movement.

Martínez Rizo's work is, perhaps, the most representative example of pro-anarchist speculative fiction in Spain, while the anarcho-syndicalist society of the future was described in fully dystopian terms in a further anticipation inspired by anarchism in Spain, entitled *From Exodus to Paradise* (*Del éxodo al paraíso*; 1933) by Salvio Valentí, whose literary production seems limited to this "essay of libertarian communism" (*ensayo de comunismo libertario*), in truth a novel. While Valentí's work shows a consistency of vision and literary expertise perhaps greater than that demonstrated by Martínez Rizo, he does so with less originality than Martínez Rizo. Although Valentí's *Del éxodo al paraíso* described a fully dystopian anarcho-syndicalist future society, *El amor dentro de 200 años* remains the best example of pro-anarchist Spanish speculative fiction because the denizens of Martínez Rizo's world lack creativity. They limit themselves to taking advantage of ancient achievements, especially the weapon factories inherited from capitalists, which will be used to conquer new places to exploit and to distract the famished population subjected to an oppressive and inefficient politico-economic system. Valentí's novel is certainly well written, but its one-sidedness contrasts with Martínez Rizo's ironic approach to the future, which stresses the need for change and warns against blind devotion to any ideological cause, even if it is utopian. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, Martínez Rizo maintains the important ideal of remaining critically pursued, against all biases of one's times and ideology, true to the genuine spirit of anarchist liberation from all chains, including the mental ones. This idea is effectively conveyed by novelistic means. *El amor dentro de 200 años* might not be a masterpiece, as it is sometimes quite heavy-handed in its humor and its unqualified praise of technology in manner reminiscent of contemporary Gernsbackian pulps and its writing might lack elegance. Nevertheless, it remains an excellent example of anarchist utopian novels, as well as one of the earliest examples of queer science fiction, and it deserves to be rescued from its current oblivion.

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Stalin's "*Loss of Sensation*": Subversive Impulses in Soviet Science-Fiction of the Great Terror

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Abstract

Stalin's rise to power was largely concomitant with the rise of cinema. The history of the nascent field of cinema art is dominated by names like Eisenstein, Kuleshov, and Aleksandrov, alongside Western icons like Edison, Meliés, Keaton, Chaplin, Griffith, and others. In these earlier stages of the industrial era, it is no surprise that early Soviet filmmakers experimented with science-fiction as much as their Western counterparts. However, a cursory survey reveals that early Soviet science-fiction, aesthetically similar to both Meliés' works and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (although predating the latter by a few years), was all but quashed by censorship under Stalin's nascent regime. Astonishingly, however, even during the height of the Great Purge, at least two Soviet science-fiction films emerged that seem to have eluded the censor. *Gibel sensatsii* (Loss of Sensation, 1935) and *Kosmicheskiy reys: Fantasticheskaya novella* (*Cosmic Voyage*, 1936) both seem to have found modest audiences in the Soviet Union without suffering the demise of immediate censorship. While both *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage* are distinctly science-fiction, they remain generic anomalies, sui generis in their own right, for their otherwise unconventional content. This paper proffers a comparison of the two films to elucidate the political, historical, and ideological context which gave rise to these films and to explore the films for evidence of dissent or subversion in their science-fiction narratives that appears to uphold conservative Soviet ideology but that, by virtue of the already subversive generic conventions of science-fiction, contain criticisms of Stalinist ideology.

Keywords: *Kosmicheskiy reys, Gibel sensatii, Soviet Union, censorship, cinema, subversion.*

Stalin's rise to power was largely concomitant with the rise of cinema. The history of the nascent field of cinema art is dominated by names such as Eisenstein, Kuleshov, and Aleksandrov, alongside Western icons such as Edison, Meliés, Keaton, Chaplin, Griffith, and others. In these earlier stages of the industrial era, it is no surprise that early Soviet filmmakers experimented with science-fiction as much as their Western counterparts. However, a cursory survey reveals that early Soviet science-fiction, aesthetically similar to both Meliés' works and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (although predating the latter by a few years), was all but quashed by censorship under Stalin's nascent regime. *Aelita* (1924) was met with profound criticism from Kuleshov and the proletariat media

(Hildreth) and *Aero NT-54* (1925) was banned three years after its limited release ("Aero"). Even Kuleshov's work met an unfortunate fate. Although credible sources are difficult to acquire in English, the first and last reels of his *Luch Smerti* (1926) have apparently been lost. Considering the censorship these early silent films suffered, it would be reasonable to assume that Soviet science-fiction would entirely dissolve under Stalin's leadership. In "The Illusion of Happiness and the Happiness of Illusion," Richard Taylor states that "the new Soviet Constitution of 1936, which serves implicitly as a guarantee of the superior rights afforded to minorities in Stalin's earthly paradise, reflected in the contemporary slogan, attributed to Stalin, 'Life has become better, life has become happier'" (1996, p. 606). With such an illusion of happiness (as Taylor's title indicates) at the fore of Stalinist propaganda, and an environment in which only socialist realism or buoyant, escapist musicals managed to evade censorship, science fiction cinema had little hope of developing under Stalin, particularly because much science-fiction is inherently apocalyptic. It frequently represents the death of contemporary life in favour of fantasies of some future reality (Jameson, 1982, p. 151), a concept contradictory to the present-tense utopia that Stalinist ideology maintained. Astonishingly, however, even during the height of the Great Purge, at least two Soviet science-fiction films emerged that seem to have eluded the censor. *Gibel sensatsii* (*Loss of Sensation*, 1935) and *Kosmicheskiy reys: Fantasticheskaya novella* (*Cosmic Voyage*, 1936) both seem to have found modest audiences in the Soviet Union without suffering demise through immediate censorship, although according to cinema blogger David Jeffers (2007), *Cosmic Voyage* was censored after a limited release on the grounds that its animated sequences were contradictory to the aesthetic of socialist realism that was substantially privileged under Stalin. While both *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage* are distinctly science-fiction, they remain generic anomalies, sui generis in their own right, for their otherwise unconventional content. In this paper, I will compare the two films to elucidate their political, historical, and ideological context and to explore the films for evidence of dissent or subversion in their science-fiction narratives that appear to uphold conservative Soviet ideology but that, by virtue of the already subversive generic conventions of science-fiction, contain criticisms of Stalinist ideology.

In order to understand these films, this analysis will employ a combination of typically Western science-fiction-focused cultural analyses in concert with Žižekian psychoanalytical approaches. In *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, Annette Kuhn (1990) defines science-fiction cinema as a form of fantasy that foregrounds "the conflict between science and technology on the one hand and human nature on the other" (p. 5). Certainly, this seems to be central to the narratives of both *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage*. More significantly, she suggests that science-fiction "proposes estrangement or uncertainty through narrative viewpoint" (Kuhn, 1990, p. 6) as part of what she refers to as "its 'cultural instrumentality'", the cultural work accomplished by the genre (Kuhn, 1990, p. 1). While Kuhn's ideological analysis, along with analyses of other theorists concerned with science-fiction (including Fredric Jameson, Ryan and Kellner, Joshua Bellin, and Vivian Sobchack), are aimed

primarily at capitalist culture, they provide an equally valuable framework for analysis of Soviet science-fiction. In *The Plague of Fantasies*, Slavoj Žižek (1997) exemplifies this theoretical application, simultaneously extending his critique of fantasy into the theoretical realm of psychoanalysis and against all ideological edifices, including Stalinism (*Plague*, pp. 1-2). Together these theories reveal an ideological subterfuge at work in *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage* against what Lilya Kaganovsky (2008) defines as "the perverse logic of Stalinism," in which every male member of Soviet society was required to relinquish his Oedipal masculinity to the cultural construction of a Stalinist super-ego embodied in the single figure of Stalin himself—a sort of universal subjectivity-castration required to prop up the ostensibly 'communist' cult of a single personality (pp. 146, 147, 150, 152, 153). Such an interpretation is deeply informed by Freud's (1922) contention in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* regarding the subject's "relation to his [symbolic] father; what is thus awakened is the idea of a paramount and dangerous personality, towards whom only a passive-masochistic attitude is possible, to whom one's will has to be surrendered,—while to be alone with him, 'to look him in the face', appears a hazardous enterprise" ("Primal Horde," p. 3). These two films mutually reveal and critique such ideological contradictions in this "perverse logic" and help to explain the demise of science fiction narrative under Stalin's rule. In fact, the explicit critique in *Cosmic Voyage* may explain its abrupt censorship following its limited release.

Of course, the science-fiction movies that survived censorship painted Soviet ideologies into their fantasy futuristic narratives. The explicit ideological agendas of *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage*, which aligned with proletariat heroism and the emerging space program respectively, make the reason for their survival clear. These films acted as fantasies of valorization under Stalin's rule. However, such obvious explanations are the first indications of a 'common sense' naturalization of their place and importance within the Stalinist cinema canon, and invite closer scrutiny of their ideological and cultural import. Such an analysis reveals that *Loss of Sensation*'s main character, Jim Ripl, might be read as a proxy for Stalin and a repressed and covert critique of the contradictions of Stalinist ideology. Ripl's autocratic drive towards the creation of utopian labour conditions is ultimately destructive to his social and political environment and to both the security and economic prosperity of the proletariat he claims to represent. While the film's ontological thematic message is congruent with the Stalinist ideological mandate, the characterization required therein exposes "the perverse logic of Stalinism" (Kaganovsky, 2008, p. 146). This "perverse logic" finds an even stronger articulation in *Cosmic Voyage*. If the subversive cultural instrumentality of *Loss of Sensation* is to undermine the perverse logic of Stalinism, the less subtle instrumentality of *Cosmic Voyage* works to expose it.

In *Loss of Sensation*, these ideological fantasies are deeply embedded in its aesthetic and narrative content. While other contemporary examples of Soviet cinema, such as *Chapayev* (1934) or *The Party Card* (1936) are unquestionably sophisticated in their editing, mise-en-scene, and narrative constructions, *Loss of Sensation* is noticeably less polished. In fact, *Loss of Sensation* owes much to the silent film era of acting, long eclipsed by the

aesthetic of socialist realism, possibly due to the neglect of the science-fiction genre under Stalinism since 1922 that left it unable to evolve from the conventional boundaries of its predecessor with as much sophistication. Long scenes are underscored with a sort of intertitular musical soundtrack that frames bombastic facial performances. In *Loss of Sensation* and *Cosmic Voyage*, the viewer is unfortunately left to speculate that perhaps the silent-film era aesthetic of the mise-en-scene was an intentional choice to mitigate the films' apocalyptic science-fiction underpinnings by associating such fantasy with an abandoned and archaic artistic style—a backward-looking aesthetic patina over an otherwise offensively forward-looking narrative fantasy.

An opening observational-style montage reveals scenes of industrial steam ships in the harbour and a vagrant populace lounging in its midst. This stock footage represents the only on-location mise-en-scene with any significant depth of field, but it is otherwise difficult to discern what this footage is intended to signify. It might be read as an American proletariat left idle in the face of industrialism signified by the industrial steam ships against which they remain lethargic. The images carry an aesthetic similarity to newsreel footage of unemployed American workers suffering from idle hands during the Depression.[1] Another interpretation might read these opening scenes as ones in which the workers enjoy reasonable leisure in a natural industrial work setting, before the onset of the narrative disrupts this Marxist fantasy of labour in its idyll. The music underscoring the opening credits that immediately precedes these scenes favors the latter: abrupt flourishes of clashing cymbals and jazz-horns alarm the listener at regular intervals—punctuations of musical anxiety disrupting the otherwise peaceful orchestration. In any case, it is the only scene in the film with such a clearly naturalistic setting, working as a framing introduction against which the remainder of the narrative is opposed.

In that context, the narrative of *Loss of Sensation* reveals that science student Jim Ripl participates in an experiment in which proletariat labourers are subjected to assembly line conditions of toil that break them both physically and emotionally. Inspired by the mechanics of the assembly line itself (and a strange set of marionette dolls in a decadent bourgeois nightclub), Ripl decides to invent an entirely mechanical worker to save the proletariat from their debilitating work. Following his graduation, he introduces a prototype robot to his proletariat family and their social circle. He is chastised by his uncle for his lack of foresight—these robots will not save them from their mundane work, but rather rob them of their employment, a distinct echo of Marx's description of the *grundrisse* (Modleski, 1999, p. 691). Dejected, Ripl abandons his family and friends, and takes up with a Nazi-like fascist military authority to realize his dream of manufacturing an army of robot workers. In the process he becomes increasingly isolated and atrabilious. Eventually, of course, the robots get away from him, and in his efforts to demonstrate their benevolence to the proletariat workers, he accidentally injures one of them. The military authorities reprogram the robots to crush the proletariat uprising that the robotic replacement of human labour has spawned. Ripl is injured in the process, and rendered incapable of defending the proletariat from the technological monstrosity he has unleashed upon them. Underestimating

[1] In her online article "Walkabout: The Bush's and Brooklyn's Industry City, Pt 5," Suzanne Spellen states, "For thousands of workers, Bush Terminal, in Sunset Park, was Brooklyn, for the first half of the 20th century. This massive complex of warehouses, factories, rail yards and shipyards was the largest employer in the borough, employing tens of thousands of people. The Great Depression caused the Terminal to go into receivership, but in spite of that, the massive entity continued on; factories produced, although at lower levels, and ships and trains loaded and unloaded. Life went on" (2012).

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

the ingenuity of the proletariat workers, however, the fascist authorities are eventually foiled in their militant designs.

J. Hoberman (2012) reports that the film is "a most likely unauthorized adaptation of Karel Capek's expressionist drama *R.U.R.*', the [1920] play that introduced the word (and concept) 'robot'".[2] However, there is only minor similarity between Capek's plot and the movie narrative. Ripl's lumbering industrial monstrosities bear no similarity to the human-like androids of Capek's play. One of Capek's androids observes that he has a larger head than a female android, but otherwise they look human enough to confuse Helena as to who is human and who is not. The robot-human distinction in *Loss of Sensation* is unambiguous. The awkward mechanical operation of the robots, apparently a limitation of budget and technology, would have been obvious to even early science-fiction audiences. As they teeter and sway in a narrow upright posture, their non-articulated, conjoined, and wheeled legs render them utterly unthreatening. To find them a threat, one would have to willingly succumb to their embrace, as one member of the proletariat mob of workers literally does in the scene where he is injured. Otherwise they would be easy to overpower simply by knocking them over or putting the slightest obstacle in their path. The visual depiction of the robots openly contradicts their signification as a threat, but their looming and bulky appearance effectively codes them as the industrial menace they are intended to represent. The Frankenstein theme of technology threatening humanity in an apocalyptic uprising is present in both *R.U.R.* and *Loss of Sensation*, and both the play and the movie focus on the dehumanizing and alienating effects of fascist authority on the proletariat. However, the play attributes the selfish abuse of authority at the proletariat robots who eventually effect a human apocalypse. The only human they allow to survive is a proletariat worker incapable of repairing their built-in twenty-year self-destruct failsafe. In the movie, the robots are put in the service of a fascist authority to aim their malevolence at the human proletariat. Eventually, the brilliant cooperation of the human proletariat succeeds in reprogramming the robots, turning them against the fascist authority and averting the apocalypse.

Hoberman (2012) also reports that the film was "Initially a joint German-Russian venture [by] Mezhrabpom". Such a collaboration is somewhat surprising considering the contemporary popularity, and endorsement by Stalin, of such films as Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), in which German soldiers become the irrationally evil villains of the tale. Similar to *Alexander Nevsky*, however, and contrary to its German collaborative inputs, *Loss of Sensation* conflates its capitalist plutocrats with a visual stereotype of Nazi-like fascist military authorities (perhaps not entirely unjustly). According to Hoberman's MoMA review (2012), the narrative is apparently "Set in an imaginary America of top-hatted plutocrats and medal-bedecked operetta generals", although the film makes no explicit reference to the United States. The IMDB website for the movie describes the setting as "an unnamed English-speaking capitalist land" ("Gibel"), although, of course, no one in the film speaks English. The association of capitalist plutocrats and Nazi generals is achieved primarily through the sumptuary presentation of these characters. A scene in which Ripl reveals the upgrade model to the military-industrial fascists who have contracted

[2] *R.U.R.* is a 1920 Czechoslovakian play (suitable fodder for Soviet cinema adaptation, although it is ironic that *R.U.R.* was originally written and produced in the same era that early Soviet science-fiction was almost entirely banned), in which *R.U.R.* are the initials which designate *Rosumovi Um lí Roboti* (*Rossum's Artificial Robots*; Roberts, 2006, p. 168). The phrase "Rossum's Universal Robots" has become the standard English substitution for the original Czech phrase (Kussi, 1990, p. 33). The clumsily placed RUR logo on the second generation Ripl robots is little more than an intertextual allusion. Although the lead character in Loss of Sensation is named Ripl, a name starting with 'R,' like the Rossum of Capek's play, no explicit articulation of a product named Ripl's Universal Robots is made in the film.

him is peopled with a strange mix of tuxedoed private interest investors and high-ranking military officials. The scene also foreshadows the terror the robotic monstrosities will come to represent for the working class. Upon seeing the demo model, one of the servant butlers turns tail and flees in wide-eyed panic. The officials in the scene variously sport such stereotypical Nazi-era German sumptuary icons as high-collared military jackets (complete with medals and badges representing rank) and round spectacles or monocles. Their primary representative, Ripl's less ingenious former fellow student, Hamilton Grim, maintains a rigid posture and physical gait reminiscent of the goose-stepping movement and Hitler-hailing physique of German military agents in myriad examples of both newsreel and fiction film. Later, during the robotic attack on the proletariat populace, Grim follows along in a tank to control the onslaught, armed with a Mauser C96 M1896.[3] Such an iconic weapon works in concert with the physique and sumptuary representation of the fascist authorities to code them as anti-communist fascist Nazi capitalists.

Following this trajectory of representation, it is strange that *Loss of Sensation* maintains a thematic ideology similar to its closest aesthetic kin, a German-made science-fiction film by Harry Piel entitled *Der Herr Der Welt (Master of the World*, 1934). Copies of this film in its entirety are scarce, but the allmovie.com website (2016) for it provides a relatively succinct synopsis of the film which highlights its substantial thematic and narrative similarities to *Loss of Sensation*:

> After a long absence, Dr. Heller (Walter Janssen) returns to his laboratory, where he learns that his demented chief assistant (Arlbert Waeschler) has developed a robot. Dr. Heller approves of this, but he's less happy with the fact that the robot is equipped with a death ray. His objections don't carry too much weight, however, inasmuch as Heller is quickly dispatched by the homicidal robot. The story briefly goes off on another tangent as Heller's widow Vilma (Sybille Schmitz, of Vampyr fame) falls in love with handsome mining engineer Baumann (Sigfried Schuerenberg). Ultimately, both Vilma and Baumann must contend with thousands upon thousands of killer robots, who've been programmed to take over all jobs -- and, eventually, the world. ("Master")

It is in these two films' narrative closures that their ideological differences become clear. *Master of the World* features a conclusion that is wholly opposite to that of *Loss of Sensation*: "After the robot destroys itself and blows up the lab, we see that mining is now being done by robots while the former miners live idyllic lives in little villages" (Hnicolella, 2010). *Loss of Sensation* offers no such utopian conclusion. The denouément of the film shows the robots, now assisting the proletariat in the military overthrow of the fascist authorities, in an apocalyptic landscape, visually reminiscent of the bleak no-man's-land conflict zones of World War I. Based on the proletariat's rejection of the robots as utopian replacement labour, one can assume that an extrapolation of this happy ending might include the dismantling of the robots and the restoration of proletariat labour in their proper and 'natural' working environments. The film does not explicitly offer this conclusion within its narrative, focussing rather on the sheer danger of innovative technology within industrial environments.

[3] Mauser is a German arms manufacturer that produced mass numbers of handguns for use in World War I.

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

The fear of industrial technology, and its threat to the proletariat worker, is the film's explicit thematic ideology. This message is so powerful in the film that it probably represents the sole reason the film evaded censorship, a claim that cannot be made so readily about *Master of the World*. When one considers "how much Adolf Hitler relied upon his scientists during WWII, the anti-technology stance of Der Herr Der Welt (Ruler of the World) is amazing" ("Master"). In contrast, the anti-technology stance of *Loss of Sensation* is more explicable. In his lectures at the University of Victoria, Soviet cinema historian Serhy Ekeltchik (2014) reports that there was a substantial anxiety in Soviet culture regarding the replacement of human labour with dangerous technology, again a subtle reference to Marx's concept of the *grundrisse*: "During the Great Terror there was a pervasive sense of paranoia about saboteurs, spies, etc. Machines were growing too fast and were too complex for many uneducated workers. Industrial accidents were blamed on 'wreckers'". Some movies attempted to ameliorate this fear through the Stalin cult. André Bazin describes a scene from the movie *The Vow* (1937) in which "The first agricultural tractor made in Russia arrives at … Red Square" and promptly breaks down (Bazin, 1978, p. 25). The distraught mechanic is at a loss to identify the problem, but with nearly omniscient genius, a curiously present Stalin makes a cursory perusal of the engine and promptly diagnoses and solves the problem.

In "Technophobia," Ryan and Kellner focus on the fear of technology inherent to much Western science-fiction cinema of the 1970s. While the context and ideology they describe is entirely disparate from that of *Loss of Sensation*, the cultural work accomplished by the films is substantially similar. In this regard, *Loss of Sensation* is significantly prescient. It, along with *Master of the World*, preconceives the motif of anxiety from technology as an ideological construct in Western culture by some thirty-five years. Ryan and Kellner claim that technology in science-fiction is antithetical to nature: "From a conservative perspective, technology [in Western science fiction cinema of the 1970s] represents artifice as opposed to nature, the mechanical as opposed to the spontaneous" (1990, p. 58). Jeremy Hicks and Katerina Clark highlight how such films as *Chapaev*(1934) feature a dynamic in which the spontaneity of such characters as Chapaev must be constrained by a party mentor to achieve the consciousness (as opposed to false consciousness as articulated by Marx) required under Stalinism (Hicks, 2004, p. 53; Clark, 2000, p. 15). In *Loss of Sensation*, the mechanical remains the artifice opposed to the nature of the human worker, but is opposed to consciousness rather than the spontaneous. The opening scene of the narrative proper attempts to characterize the protagonist, Jim Ripl (an apparent Soviet attempt at a typical American name), as a compassionate (albeit ambitious) science student, concerned for the workers labouring under the mechanical conditions of a Moloch machine—an interconnected series of circular conveyor assemblies within each of which workers are expected to endure an ever-increasing tempo of production. Ripl's concern is contrasted against the disregard of the melodramatically opportunistic bourgeois factory manager, who increases the production speed to the point of physically and mentally exhausting a number of the workers. When several of the workers attempt a minor revolt, they are threatened with dismissal.

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

The factory manager sneers that he had expected the proletariat to be a hardier breed. Observing the horror of these labour conditions inspires Ripl to invent his mechanical automatons to do the menial labour assigned to the exploited proletariat. As expected under a thematic of threatening technology, eventually these mechanical automatons displace the workers and attempt to annihilate them, exactly as Ripl's collectively-conscious uncle had predicted.

Only the conscientious efforts of the proletariat collective succeed in halting the mechanical menace, while Ripl becomes increasingly individualized and isolated from the social collective. Immediately following his departure from his family home, the mise-en-scene abruptly adopts a darker tone. In the dark streets, Ripl stands alone in anticipation of a message from his fascist contractors. A single headlight from a messenger's motorcycle frames the stoic expression of his face in the darkness of the night, suggesting a demonic evil has impregnated his person.[4] As Ripl becomes increasingly distant from the proletariat collective, he slowly descends into madness, and eventually loses all connection with his family. His uncle openly criticizes his mechanical prototype and prompts his dejected departure. Later, Ripl attempts to seduce his sister into appreciating the value of his robots with an invitation to a private demonstration of the newer model. When he activates one of them, he momentarily loses control of it, and it corners her against a wall of the factory floor. Terrified of the monstrous technology, she flees. Ultimately his isolation results in a complete break from family and collective as he tries to replace his natural social relations with the machines. In an otherwise bewildering scene, drunk and dejected, Ripl

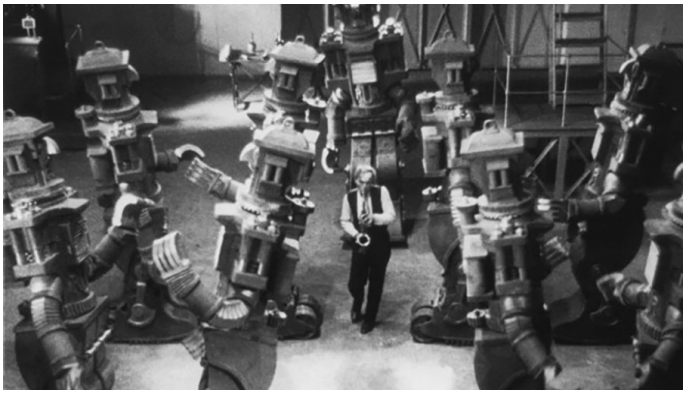

Image 1: *Loss of Sensation* (Hoberman, 2012).

animates a three-dimensional chorus line of robots who dance to the riffs of his saxophone (Image 1).

However, Ripl's individualized evil and insanity is set in contrast against the always-collective proletariat to which his robotic creations represent a threat. When they find themselves facing a factory lock-out, they speak as members of a proletariat mob, expressing fear and frustration over their loss of employment. The group that learns to build their own robotic control device, although much smaller, remains communal, maintaining residence in the domestic space from which Ripl has excluded himself. At the heroic climax, when control of the attacking robots is appropriated by their device, the single heroic manipulator of the control panel is framed within a window of the domestic space, accompanied by a number of accomplices from the collective. Even when the framing focuses on the concentration of this single operator, he turns and nods in deference to his accomplices, reminding the viewer of his subordination to the group. The ontological theme of the film thus valorizes the collective proletariat against an otherwise undifferentiated fascist regime, including the highly individualized Ripl, and the unnatural misuse of technology.

[4] Similar scenography is employed in *The Party Card*. Andrei Shcherbenok (2009) describes the way in which the heroine, Anna, "is progressively taken in, mesmerized by Pavel's manly posture, a series culminating in a thunderstorm scene where Pavel's face is demonically illuminated by lightning" (p. 768).

Beneath the ideological ontology, however, lurks a subversive critique of Stalinism that one might expect from such a genre as science-fiction fantasy. Ideology as it is applied to discussions of Soviet Stalinism is often reduced to his cult of personality and how art of the era, particularly cinema, was always in the service of reproducing the cult. Such reductive essentialism effaces subversive motivations; artists disenchanted with the ideological contradictions and the cult of personality may have deployed subterfuge to challenge the status quo. In "Culture, Power, and Mission to Moscow: Film and Soviet-American Relations during World War II" (2001), Todd Bennett observes how "These popular interpretations exemplified the inability of propagandists, even Stalinist opinion makers, to regulate the multiplicity of public meanings made from cultural artifacts" (p. 509). Bennett (2001) describes the way in which such a film as Mission to Moscow (1943) that depicts or reproduces American landscapes prompts viewers to take "from it imagery of capitalist life-styles that both fulfilled their own desires and … provided a basis for quiet opposition to the Kremlin" (p. 510). Perhaps over-confident with the efficacy of his censorship to eradicate any subversive impulses in cinema, Stalin may have suffered his own '*loss of sensation*' to the subversive impulses within this rare example of a science-fiction film that miraculously survived the censor.

It would be difficult to claim that director Alexandr Andriyevsky intentionally imbued the thematic underpinnings of *Loss of Sensation* with a critique of Stalinism. Information regarding the director is virtually non-existent. *The Internet Movie Database* lists his other directorial credits, and an alternate name which is merely his name with first initial, but his biographical information is blank ("Alexandr Andriyevsky," n.d.). Nevertheless, the science-fiction fantasy genre of the film might speak for itself in that regard. In *The Plague of Fantasies*, Žižek (1997) argues that "fantasy relates to the inherent antagonisms of an ideological edifice" (p. 1) and that the "materialization of ideology in external materiality reveals inherent antagonisms which the explicit formulation of ideology cannot afford to acknowledge" (p. 4). Žižek (1997) uses the example of "the great projects of public buildings in the Soviet Union of the 1930s" to reveal "the truth of Stalinist ideology" (p. 2). Žižek highlights how the architecture encodes the patriarchal oppression of the system: hiding in plain sight so to speak. Rather than masking ideology, as with the Althusserian ideology of state apparatuses, it exposes its symbolism so as to render criticism against it unsophisticated. Žižek (1997) concludes that the Stalinist truth is one "in which actual, living people are reduced to instruments, sacrificed as the pedestal for the spectre of the New Man, an ideological monster which crushes actual living men under his feet"(*Plague*, p. 2). The "materialization" of the political "edifice" within the narrative thematic of *Loss of Sensation* works to reveal the "inherent antagonisms" in Stalin's "explicit formulation of ideology" (Žižek, *Plague*, pp. 2-4).

The inherent contradictions of Stalinism required a form of collective social repression. Shcherbenok, Kaganovsky, and Bazin all articulate the inherent contradiction between Stalin's personality cult and the Marxist economic ideological edifice his administration attempted to champion. Numerous theorists have discussed and explained the way

in which such social repression often returns as symbolic articulation in cinematic art.[5] In the third section of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), he offers a compelling description of the way in which the repression of desires (and, by extension, the fears that emerge from them) that would cause displeasure will inevitably re-emerge in aberrant forms. The repressed never re-enters "consciousness smoothly and unaltered" (Freud, *Moses*, p. 95). Applying this rationale to *Loss of Sensation*, it becomes clear that the film demonstrates a subversive critique of Stalinism. In the case of *Loss of Sensation*, the aberration of repressed anxiety regarding Stalin returns as the character of Ripl in a horrific cinematic science-fiction fantasy.

The Ripl character works as a repressed proxy for Stalin. Ripl's scientific efforts to improve the working conditions of the proletariat can be read as a metaphor for the economic 'science' that Stalin's regime attempted to implement with "the fragile stability" of collectivism (Shcherbenok, 2009, p. 756). Ripl's faith in his own genius to develop technology that would ultimately be used for military purposes is likewise similar to Stalin's faith in his own military genius. In the scene in which Ripl introduces his revised robot prototype, the mixture of German-like capitalist plutocrats and military authorities embrace Ripl, and his technological genius, as their prodigy. Such a depiction of Ripl understands Stalin's self-depiction as genius that he would later articulate himself. "Stalin himself, in his own abridged 'Biography,' wrote: '... Stalin's genius gave him the ability to guess the enemies' plans and to foil them'" (Bazin, 1978, p. 26). However, such a belief in one's own genius typically masks anxieties and paranoia regarding one's own lack.

Ripl's increasing paranoia and isolation, and his contradictory drive to improve proletariat working conditions with technology that will render them obsolete, is congruent with Stalin's increasing isolation and paranoia during the Great Terror and actually anticipates Stalin's behaviour during World War II. As Kaganovsky noted (2008), Krushchev stated only a few years after the release of the film, during World War II, "Stalin hid in the Kremlin, failed the people, lied about [Soviet] abilities, resources, casualties" (p. 152). In *Loss of Sensation*, Ripl hides within the factory from the proletariat mob behind one of his robot army with which he attempts to communicate with them. His efforts to placate the mob utterly fails when a misplaced command from his control panel results in the tragic injury of one of the workers.

Furthermore, Ripl's injury and convalescence towards the end of the film code him as the requisite emasculated male under "the perverse logic of Stalinism" (Kaganovsky, p. 146). Kaganovsky (2008) describes the use of injury in cinema as a device for demasculinizing male heroes in deference to the myth of Stalin's paterfamilial authority: "[T]he Stalinist male subject must acknowledge again and again that power lies elsewhere" (p. 146). Referring to the character Aliosha in The Fall of Berlin, Kaganovsky (2008) states that "The male subject ... has to take failure onto himself, has to accept castration in order to keep it out of Stalin's knowledge" (p. 152). Kaganovsky proceeds to unpack the psychoanalysis of his thesis:

> In the final sequence of *The Fall of Berlin*, as

[5] A significant text which effectively unpacks Freud's concept of the return of the repressed is Valdine Clemens's *the Return of the Repressed: Gothic Horror from The Castle of Otranto to Alien*, SUNY Press, 1999. Contemporary criticism has employed the concept based on a distinction between basic and surplus repression, explored by Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, Vol. 496, Beacon Press, 1974; and again in Gad Horowitz, *Repression: Basic and Surplus Repression in Psychoanalytic Theory: Freud, Reich, and Marcuse,* University of Toronto Press, 1977.

> Stalin ascends from the sky in his white airplane, … [Aliosha], with a freshly bandaged head, makes his way through the crowd to the great leader. The fear that was present in the initial meeting is gone, but it has been replaced by the bandage—the physical sign of lack, the symbol of the incommensurability of penis and phallus, of masculinity with the structures of power. (p. 153)

Loss of Sensation inverts this psychological dynamic and turns it against the structure of power. Rather than deference to authority, the authority itself is injured—replaced by the voice of the people—a fantasy of proletariat power and a repressed representation of the inefficacy of Stalin's totalitarianism. As his robots ravage the proletariat landscape, Ripl—barely recovered from his injury—attempts to blockade them. His broken saxophone elicits no response from the robots, and his weakened body quickly succumbs to their power. The scene initially shows Ripl, wide-eyed as the butler that the robots had so frightened during their unveiling, merely falling out of the frame. What follows, however, is a somewhat gruesome visual depiction in which his body is trampled by the robots. The camera angle moves upwards and above, framing the broken body of the would-be genius, abject and prostrate on a pile of dirt—a godlike perspective on the punishment of his arrogance and hubris and a similar point of view to that of the diegetic proletariat workers from their lofty window as they prepare to take control of the robots.

The scene dramatically indicates a repressed desire to see anyone who would position themselves as a totalitarian genius and the paterfamilias of the people trampled underfoot by the aberrant offspring of their own aspiration. In a similar vein to the paternal status of Stalin upon which his mythology insists (Kaganovsky, p. 147), Ripl maintains a delusional paternal love of the people, particularly contrasted against the evil capitalist factory manager in the opening scene of the narrative proper. Through the death of Ripl (the would-be father), the film maps the Oedipal fantasy onto contemporary socio-economic politics. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud describes the way in which the repressed desire of the male child to dispatch the father who obstructs union with the mother remains in the unconscious:

> King Oedipus, who killed his father Laius and married his mother Jocasta, is only the fulfilment of our childhood wish. … As the poet brings Oedipus' guilt to light in the course of his investigation, he compels us to recognize our own inner life, where those impulses, though suppressed, are still present. (2008, pp. 202-203)

Although the landscape is ostensibly capitalist or American in its ontology, the Soviet source of the film invites a psychoanalytical understanding of the landscape as a repressed projection of mother Russia, a concept deeply inscribed into Stalin-era Soviet culture, as evidenced by the popularization of the "Song of the Motherland" in the 1936 Soviet film *Circus*. As the mechanical offspring of the father penetrates the landscape, the proletariat son dispatches the father and takes possession of the ravaged landscape—a metaphor for the mistreatment of mother Russia under Stalin. This repressed assault on the father is extended to Stalin's administration as well. In a conclusion that would make the creators of the Keystone Cops proud, the plutocrats and military fascists are comically herded against a concrete wall by the

robots, and summarily dispatched—a symbol of Stalin's sycophantic administration, stripped of their leader and their power in a scathing satirical indictment of their risibility and a fantasy of their overthrow.

Loss of Sensation represents Stalin's own '*loss of sensation*': indoctrinated by his own power, he failed to recognize subversive critique from within a film he permitted to evade censorship. His own political delusion provided a veil to conceal the artistic return of repressed dissatisfaction with his leadership under what was ostensibly his own purview. Ripl's descent into madness might be read as congruent with Stalin's increasing delusion. Quoting Nikita Krushchev, in his now infamous secret speech at the twentieth party congress following Stalin's death, Bazin (1978) retrospectively associates Stalin's star-status isolation from the collective with increasing delusion:

> Krushchev states: "Stalin would say almost anything and believe that it was so …" … But what is really amazing is that Stalin started to inform himself on Soviet reality through the cinema's myth of him. Once again Krushchev confirms this. Not having stepped foot in a village since 1928, "it was through movies that he [Stalin] knew the countryside and its agriculture and these films greatly embellished reality." (p. 26)

Bennett (2001) confirms Bazin's interpretation of Stalin's delusionary isolationism:

> Stalin became somewhat obsessed with cinema. In part that was because, unlike the real world, the fictional one depicted on screen was highly susceptible to manipulation, and, thereby, to the full attainment of ideal outcomes. As he withdrew into the make-believe world, Stalin lost some touch with reality 'in the sense of seeing actual factories, collective farms, villages, and even streets of Moscow.' And more and more of his view of the world was determined by what he saw on the screen. (p. 505)

Bazin (1978) goes so far as to liken the chairman to a Hollywood star, primarily due to his literal representation in cinema contemporary with his administration (p. 22).

However, if *Loss of Sensation* indicates Stalin's loss of suspicious sensation against cinematic subterfuge, *Cosmic Voyage* indicates his loss of aesthetic sensation and an acceleration of dictatorial censorship. Rather than viewing the movie as either a cinematic artwork or a valuable document of internal criticism, Stalin's regime censored the film after only a brief run. According to David Jeffers (2007):

> [Although] *Cosmic Voyage* enjoyed great popularity among all ages in January 1936 … [w]hen party officials interpreted animated scenes of the cosmonauts hopping from place to place on the lunar surface as frivolous and contrary to the spirit of 'socialist realism,' the film was abruptly pulled from circulation, the responsible animator's name was stricken from the credits, and *Cosmic Voyage* was virtually forgotten until a revival screening in 1984.

In addition, Richard Taylor (1996) points out how active fantasy-generation was for Soviet audiences: "There was a different phenomenon at work here, an actual willingness to be deceived, a boundless desire to be seduced" (p. 619). Thus, the film's popularity, in the face of its much less subversive

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

critique than that in *Loss of Sensation*, helps to explain its censorship beyond the official party line that its animated sequences were too frivolous.

Furthermore, if the aesthetic of *Loss of Sensation* was backward looking, that of *Cosmic Voyage* is even more so. It is a black-and-white silent film, using conventional intertitles for narrative exposition, even though both conventions had long been superseded in Soviet cinema by colour and sound. Reminiscent of Melies' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) in both narrative and aesthetic, this film returns to the very earliest origins of cinematic narrative, and was perhaps too explicitly close to this otherwise particularly Western influence. *Cosmic Voyage*'s aesthetic is also astonishingly similar to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). Filmed in Germany during the Weimar period, *Metropolis*' aesthetic similarity to *Cosmic Voyage* indirectly codes the Soviet space program as *kindred* with German fascism, rather than associating such fascism with ambiguously American plutocrats as in *Loss of Sensation*, evacuating the distance between German fascism and Soviet Stalinism made apparent in the comparison between *Loss of Sensation* and *Master of the World*. Numerous online blog entries attempt to rationalize this aesthetic as a budgetary constraint that favoured an intentional mandate to leave funding available for as wide a distribution as possible and as part of a narrative construction to appeal to a growing youth audience. If it was intended for younger audiences, its indoctrinating potential was simply too contradictory to the perverse logic of Stalinism. The narrative might appear to celebrate the potential of the fledgling Soviet space program, but a closer examination reveals a rather ostentatious psychoanalytical critique of Stalinism and Stalinist masculinity.

The film opens with an establishing shot of a futuristic world of monolithic technology (an early indication of the way in which *Cosmic Voyage* inverts the technophobia so prevalent in *Loss of Sensation*). The scene depicts an obviously phallic edifice and its contiguous rocket-bridge whose equally monolithic architecture is reminiscent of the iconic soviet sickle, another clear example of the Stalinist architecture to which Žižek refers (*Plague*, 1997, pp. 2-4). Shortly thereafter, an avuncular Professor Sedikh takes adolescent Andryusha to marvel at his space-plane "invention," a word redolent with both fantasy and desire. In the scene that follows, the starry-eyed boy is framed from above, looking upwards in a rapturous gaze eyeline—matched with the professor's spectacular phallic rocket that will be used to 'penetrate' the mysteries of space (Image 2).

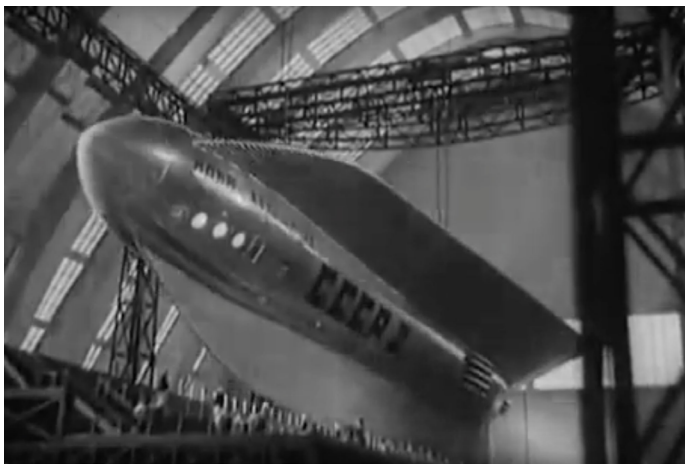

Image 2: *Cosmic Voyage* (Shumyatskiy, 1936).

Entirely awed by the professor's techno-phallus, the boy unsubtly remarks, "Yeah, this is wonderful!" according to the unascribed intertitular translation in one of several YouTube postings of the film

(Shumyatskiy, 1936). The moment is unambiguously Oedipal: the adolescent boy is clearly desirous of the professor's phallic object that he cannot possess; he has already been dismissed by his older brother and told to return to school in the face of his fascination with the space program. Doubly-castrated by both his brother and the professor, the young boy's Oedipal reverence is all-too-obvious. Taken together, these two early scenes, the representation of the sickle and the phallus-rocket, demonstrate substantial Oedipal symbolism, but little of the sophisticated Bazinian montage that Bazin hailed as socialist.

In sharp contrast to the upward-looking reverence of the boy, the camera angle suddenly adjusts to a position above the rocket, rendering the cinema viewer master of the image from an omniscient vantage. While the rocket remains stationary within the diegesis, the tracking motion of the camera creates the illusion of the rocket thrusting left into the empty space of the off-screen abyss, a sort of psychological cinematic gap. In "From Reality to the Real" (2009), Žižek describes such an artistic construction of a symbolic gap as the necessary condition of desire on which tenable subjectivity depends, "a fictional space, 'another scene,' where alone the truth of our desire can be articulated" (pp. 340-1, 344). In more specifically Oedipal terms, Freud (2008) describes any such symbolic construction of an ambiguously enclosed empty space as a vaginal representation in the wish-fulfilment of dreams (*Dream Psychology*, pp. 50, 58). Žižek (2009) goes on to ask, "Can we not recognize in this paradox the very nature of the psychoanalytical notion of drive, or more properly the Lacanian distinction between its aim and its goal? The goal is the final destination, while the aim is what we intend to do, i.e., the way itself" ("Reality to Real", p. 334). Under these theoretical conditions, the "final destination" of the rocket is ostensibly the moon, whereas "the aim" is clearly an Oedipal domination of the feminized subject. Perhaps this almost masturbatory celebration of technology (as opposed to the fear of it in *Loss of Sensation*) was all too garish. Just as blatant is the subsequent moment of meta-cinematic self-deprecation. Both Professor Sedikh and young Andryusha chastise a narratively unnecessary cinematographer for his unwelcomed filming of them at the moment of their arrival; after all, no-one wants to be filmed when they are on the verge of a masturbatory *jouissance* with their techno-phallus.[6]

Enter the 'damsel,' Professor Marina. Peering around the corner with a furtive glance, she is anything but an egalitarian representative of a Stalinist utopia, her professional credentials notwithstanding. Contra ostensible Soviet egalitarianism, gender roles are sharply delineated in the film. In addition to Marina's passive femininity, Sedikh's wife is represented as responsible for mundane domestic chores, subservient to his patriarchal scientific authority: he stands idly by while she prepares a suitcase for him, complaining all the while that she is packing too much. Much like the strange saxophone scene in *Loss of Sensation*, it is odd how the predominantly visual narrative emphasizes the process of packing suitcases. After spending several bewildering minutes on the packing at Sedikh's suitcase at his home, the viewer is regaled with a similarly mundane visual hesitation at Andryusha's residence. In his exploration of cinematic fantasy, Joshua Bellin (2005) reports that "Tzvetan Todorov views fantasy as that which

[6] Žižek (1997) defines Lacan's concept of jouissance as "the abyss of traumatic/excessive enjoyment which threatens to swallow us up, and towards which the subject desperately endeavours to maintain a proper distance" (Žižek, *Plague*, p. 223).

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

engenders a momentary hesitation concerning whether an inexplicable event is real or not" (p. 14). Such an interpretation might be applied to this odd visual detour, and although it remains somewhat unsatisfying, there seems to be no other salient analysis. The hesitation prompted by these depictions of packing before the space flight merely foregrounds the fantastical nature of the events onscreen, rather than working in a process of ideological subterfuge to confuse reality with the narrative. Finally, at the last moment, Sedikh invites Marina to join him on the journey as his science officer. She unambiguously welcomes the *jouissance* of "to the moon" with him and promptly insists, in a sexually charged double entendre, "I'm ready!"

At this point, the cinematography affords a significant change of perspective. An arguably vaginal hangar door opening slowly spreads open to reveal the rocket aimed squarely at the viewer; the formerly off-screen space into which the rocket might have penetrated becomes the viewer's subjective point of view. Such positioning locates the viewer within the vaginal abyss and identifies the viewing audience with the feminine-receptive, entirely congruent with Kagonovsky's (2008) understanding of the requirement of Stalinist logic to define the entire populace as passively emasculated under Stalin's patriarchy. The rocket advances directly upon the viewing position in a more direct penetration than even that of the famous *Arrival of a Train at Le Ciotat*. At the moment of contact, the scene cuts to black and resolves into climactic explosions and fireworks as the phallic-rocket is launched into space.

Much of the rest of the narrative plays out with equally garish Oedipal symbolism, its technical innovation notwithstanding. In all of this Oedipal *jouissance*, Sedikh might readily be read as a mytho-propagandistic proxy for Stalin, exemplifying the perverse logic of Stalinism. Although Jeffers (2007) claims that Sedikh bears a striking resemblance to Tsiolkovsky, the scientific advisor to the film to whom it is dedicated, Sedikh, in his role as an avuncular figure to young Andryusha, is also reminiscent of Freud himself. With his long beard, and aspirations of scientific innovation, he is easily read as a symbolic Darwin/Freud visual composite. This visual stereotype obviates his contrast against Karin at the moment of their face-to-face meeting at the base of the elevator shaft below the revered "space plane." Karin appears very much the plutocrat as represented in *Loss of Sensation*, complete with well-fashioned suit, clean shave, and patriarchal cane. The explicit allegory of good Bolshevik accosted by plutocratic diplomat is clear enough, and in that vein, Sedikh flagrantly challenges Karin's authority. Karin then proceeds to his own space rocket, equally phallic in design, but comically smaller — an unsubtle editorial on his lesser phallic virility. Rather than in horizontal idyll, able to penetrate the empty off-screen space, it is inexplicably mounted nose down, aimed squarely at the concrete floor where no such spatial penetration could be possible (Image 3).

From within its innards Karin retrieves an ill-fated bunny whose poor, weak heart could not survive the exigencies of space travel, to which Karin compares Sedikh's elderly state of vulnerability. Sedikh is unimpressed and offers a rhetorical retort, insisting that he is not a rabbit.

However, Sedikh does not do well as a Stalin proxy.

Stalin's "Loss of Sensation", *continued*

Image 3: *Cosmic Voyage* (Shumyatskiy, 1936).

As the film proceeds, revolutionary disobedience cedes to weakness and inefficacy. According to Freud in Chapter X of *Group Psychology* (1922), such is the inevitable fate of any patriarch, at least on the phylogenetic level, a truth that the keepers of Stalinist doctrine were not eager to expose. In the film, Sedikh takes pause when it is pointed out that he is too elderly for space travel. Already associated with infirmity via the bunny, he is further associated with the feminine when Karin's second experimental animal cosmonaut, a "pussycat," is introduced in the arms of Sedikh's assistant Marina, the only female character in the narrative thus far, who gently caresses it with the same romantic fondness she has already expressed for Sedikh. Already before the journey begins, Sedikh's masculinity and patriarchal authority are called into question. While this works as a critique of Stalinism, it hardly sustains the perverse logic of Stalinism as described by Kaganovsky (2008). In Oedipal terms, immediately following Marina's introduction, she ascends in a phallic elevator shaft towards the revered rocket, and promptly enters a slit-like door in the side of the phallic ship—an inverted and aberrant Oedipal penetration. Once on board the ship, therefore, the characters play the double role of an unsophisticated English homophonic pun: both revolutionary 'sea men' and fertile semen.

Once metaphorically reduced to seamen/semen, things begin to go wrong for the crew and Sedikh. Eventually the cosmonauts journey into space and land successfully on the moon, at which point Sedikh's patriarchal mastery begins to face the imminent crisis intimated earlier in the narrative. When a cliff wall collapses, he tumbles headlong with the avalanche into a lunar crevice where he is immobilized under an oddly-phallic fallen boulder. Meanwhile, young Andryusha and Marina prance gaily about in the low-gravity environment. In psychoanalytical terms, it is in the moment of Sedikh's infirmity that the adolescent boy and heroic beauty achieve their orgasmic *jouissance*. Subsequently, these underlings discover Karin's "pussycat" alive on the moon during Sedikh's invalidism, suggesting the mutual weakness of the two, before rescuing the aged patriarch. Ultimately Sedikh is depicted as elderly and infirm, emasculated at the height of his triumph, a pussycat after all. While this narrative development works to foreground the egalitarian and communitarian strength of child, woman, and patriarch alike, it remains incommensurate with the mythology of masculine patriarchal strength required by Stalinism. Just as Ripl's broken body in *Loss of Sensation* transfers the perverse logic of Stalinism back onto a Stalin proxy, so too does Sedikh's infirmity make the same reflexive move. However, as a Stalin proxy, Sedikh is a too obvious one, boldly exposing the true nature of his patriarchal weakness, surviving only by the aid of his subjects contra Freud's (1922) primal horde theory in which the father isn't supposed to need

anyone, especially not the subjects who defer to the myth of patriarchal authority ("Primal Horde", p. 2).

The censorship of *Cosmic Voyage*, then, demonstrates the contradiction of the perverse logic of Stalinism in its purest form. If the film's explicit ontological project is to celebrate the Soviet space program, it works instead to expose a space program riddled with weaknesses—a damaged oxygen tank and elderly cosmonaut who almost dies—as well as the perverse logic of Stalinism that Stalin was only too eager to keep under strict censorship. Moreover, any aim to celebrate the Soviet space program was eclipsed by the film's psychoanalytically-informed ideological project that directly celebrates technology without an explicit Stalinist endorsement. Such a short-circuit of the access to Oedipal *jouissance*, eliminating an acceptable Stalinist interlocutor, was intolerable to the regime. Read in this way, ironically, the lack of a diegetic Stalin proxy, like the one so subversively present in *Loss of Sensation*, is the very reason for *Cosmic Voyage*'s censorship, even though the Stalin proxy in *Loss of Sensation* clearly inverts the perverse logic of Stalinism. While Ripl was ultimately punished for his technological hubris, reverence for the phallic technology is too strong in *Cosmic Voyage* to have evaded Stalin's megalomaniacal stranglehold on all phallic representation for long. The men in *Cosmic Voyage* do not surrender their masculinity to any representation of Stalin, but rather to a utopian future technology that is not specifically coded as in the service of Stalin's cult of personality.

Stalinist-era cinematic art, like all art, finds a way to express the repressed social contradictions of the environment in which it was created. Under the repressive conditions of Stalinist ideology, the science-fiction of *Loss of Sensation* displaces its critique onto the character of Ripl and reveals a repressed dissatisfaction with the contradictions of the Stalin cult. Stalin made explicit efforts to quash any such criticism, in the case of science-fiction by attempting to almost efface it entirely, but his '*loss of sensation*' regarding the importance of such fantasies as a mode of keeping the populace satisfied with the contradictions of their social reality may have been detrimental to the fantasy of happiness and utopia he was trying to sustain. On the ideological level, the ontology of *Loss of Sensation* champions the proletariat masses against the threat of industrial technology. However, on the psychoanalytical level, the repressed contradictions of Stalinism find strange expression in a science-fiction film Stalin was unable to recognize as a subversive criticism of his own leadership. Ironically less apocalyptic than *Loss of Sensation*, and more celebratory of the potential of Soviet space technology, *Cosmic Voyage* was only too explicit in its contradiction of the perverse logic of Stalinism, and appears to have been the film that rang the death knell for Soviet science fiction under Stalin. Other than *Mysterious Island* (1941), an only vaguely 'science-fiction' fantasy, no faction of the formerly Soviet cinema industry has produced another significant or notable science fiction film to date.

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Archival Domination In *Fahrenheit 451*

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Abstract

This essay will discuss how the state in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) uses new media as a tool to create passive, surveilled subjects, entertained by programs engineered to embed state ideology into the viewer. In the 1950s, television—a machine for reproducing state and corporate ideology—threatened to replace the written cultural archive with a presentist modality. The written cultural archive of *Fahrenheit 451* is constituted by works Bradbury posits can overcome institutionalized prejudices of race, class, and gender. The inaccessibility of this written cultural archive, the isolation, and loss of individuality the populace experiences reflect how much denizens of Bradbury's world are willing to sacrifice to gain access to gain access to a media archive of momentary pleasures. By turning the car into a measure of class and success, corporations have also succeeded in splintering a sense of community that might otherwise encourage intelligent discourse in public spaces. The written word once carried arguments formulated in the public sphere to private spaces, but now wall-to-wall screens dominate private spaces, reinforcing state ideology in homes as if they were public spaces. *Fahrenheit 451* maps both the shift from reliance on the written word to the emergence of the televisual archive as the primary site of a society's archive and that archive's relationship to corporate and state powers seeking maximum control over the population. Though modern technology evolves by the day, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* remains a touchstone in discussions of social anxieties and replaced cultural archives in science fiction.

Keywords: *Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451, archive, surveillance, ideological state apparatus, television*

"The usual vantage point from which we talk about the archive—at least from a European cultural point of view—is still the notion of the print-based, paper-formatted archive. The media-archaeological task, then, is to rethink archival terminology in order to embrace a multimedia concept of the archive. The book belongs to the first external memory devices through which culture as memory based has been made possible, but the book now has lost its privilege as the dominant external memory of alphabetic knowledge. Europa is still fixated on the book, that is, the library and archive; in contrast, the media cultures in the United States have already cultivated a culture of permanently recycling data rather than eternally fixed memories."

—Wolfgang Ernst, 2013, p. 122

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) reflects the anxiety of the early 1950s about the ascendency of television and reflects the fear that new technologically-backed media might supplant books and be used as a mechanism for state and corporate-based social control of American society.

Television was profoundly linked to the present in Bradbury's day—television shows weren't recorded for repeat broadcasts until 1951—and its rise invoked discussion of more than just media usage. The emergence of televisual media and the interlinked media feed created a shift from a cultural archive composed of books promoting an egalitarian society to a commercialized, televisual archive that manipulated its viewers to generate sales and disseminated messages of discipline to ensure obedience to the state. Ideology is embedded in *Fahrenheit 451* in archives that are not merely the written, stored record; ideas and behaviors are archived in the population. Bradbury's novel thus presents the real possibility that corporate and state powers might coopt televisual media to remove independent thought and personal agency from viewers to more easily control them. This essay analyzes the state's use of new media to create passive, surveilled subjects, entertained by programs that embed state ideology.

Fahrenheit 451 is set in a futuristic America where firemen burn books rather than putting out fires and everyday citizens consume audiovisual media rather than exploring the world around them, reading books, or thinking for themselves. Guy Montag, a fireman, lives in a house with his wife Mildred, who constantly watches televisions that take up entire walls. Montag encounters Clarisse, a teenage girl who forces him to begin questioning the world around him through her strange free-thinking questions, but a few days later, a speeding car hits Clarisse and kills her. This, when combined with the fact that Montag watched an elderly woman opt to be burned alive with her books, made him create his own cache of books and begin reading. Mr. Faber, a retired English professor Montag once met in passing, agrees to help Montag continue reading and to eventually overthrow the status quo by printing books. Mildred informs Montag's boss, fire chief Beatty, about Montag's strange behavior and that Montag has been reading books rather than burning them. Mildred abandons her husband and Beatty ultimately confronts Montag, forcing Montag to burn the books he has collected and his own house. Montag turns his flamethrower on first Beatty, killing him, and then destroys the Mechanical Hound, a mechanical dog capable of delivering a lethal injection, before fleeing to Faber's house. Faber helps Montag, providing him with tips to escape the other Mechanical Hounds, the helicopters, and the television crew pursuing him. Though Montag does escape, the authorities televise a lethal injection performed by a different Mechanical Hound on another captive forced to serve as Montag's replacement for the viewers watching the live broadcast. Montag flees into the woods, where he meets a group of men who have memorized books to preserve them for future generations. The group, led by a man named Granger, welcomes Montag and gives him a book to memorize. At the end of *Fahrenheit 451*, a nuclear attack destroys the city from which Montag escaped, and he chooses to help the scholars use their knowledge to rebuild their civilization.

Control via archival imprinting (i.e. the writing onto the body and mind), entraps subjects through internal manipulation. In *Fahrenheit 451*, this action is derived from media and technology, or more specifically, the television screen. Robert Wilson (2013) sees no escape from such manipulation whether in the form of government ideology or corporate advertisements. He maintains that "an

individual's identity and agency" are "hopelessly intertwined with the countless, contradictory media that have colonized his or her mind" (Wilson, 2013, p. 16). Bradbury demonstrates that televisual media does more than colonize individuals, as it is not unnecessary for the state to carry out surveillance of subjects by recording their movements and watching them on-screen. By regularly viewing television, the citizens of *Fahrenheit 451* become obedient and passive reflections of what they view and hear. Book burning in *Fahrenheit 451* ensures that government controlled televised programs that surveil, entertain, and interpellate are the only remaining media sources available to citizenry. The television presents an archive of acceptable ideas and behaviors for citizens and displays the results of failing to follow protocol. When viewers are alerted that an execution is about to take place during Montag's nocturnal flight from the Mechanical Hound, they wake to view it. There are no regulations against not watching the execution, just as there are no requirements to having television screens in the home. The populace wakes to watch the execution because it is—as Montag narrates—a kind of carnival, an entertaining spectacle masking its political use as a tool of the state.

Montag's flight and pursuit symbolize the presentist television archive's threat to destroy the historical archive of books in Montag's world. Broadcast to the masses, this entertaining spectacle guarantees viewers that civil disobedience results in severe punishment. Montag's punishment serves as entertainment, entertainment that communicates those rules of behavior expected from the totalitarian state. Thus, entertainment is disguised as interpellation. Public discipline in *Fahrenheit 451* comes as a consequence of accessing the banned literary archive, an act of resistance against the state-supported archive. The goal of discipline is to punish these offenders, with televised spectacles serving as forceful displays of the rule of law. Televising Montag while the Mechanical Hound pursues him through the streets acts as a surveillance mechanism, changing private spaces (homes) into public arenas. As Montag flees through their streets, the viewing society watches his efforts televisually. Even though they could open their windows and doors to witness the action, the state program incites viewers to first watch the screen to ensure a mediated experience. Viewers are later commanded to open their doors and peer into the streets so that Montag has no safe hiding place. The citizens are so indoctrinated that they do not turn from the mediated view of the screen until the government demands they do so. The program allows the state to feed its viewers an interpretation of the event sympathetic to its aims. For instance, even after Montag destroys the first Hound sent after him, a second Hound is sent out and the televised program remarks that the "Mechanical Hound never fails. Never since its first use in tracking quarry has this incredible invention made a mistake" (Bradbury, 1953, p. 112). The first Hound fails and is destroyed, but in replacing the first mechanical Hound with another, the state makes good on its claim that the Hound does not make mistakes. With continued replacements, one of these machines will eventually find its mark and affirm the foolishness of resisting the state. Montag notes that if he were to open a window he would be able to watch his own death on the screen:

> If he kept his eye peeled quickly he would see himself, an instant before oblivion, being

> punctured for the benefit of how many civilian parlour-sitters who had been wakened from sleep a few minutes ago by the frantic sirening of their living-room walls to come watch the big game, the hunt, the one-man carnival. (Bradbury, 1953, p. 125)

With Montag's realization that he could be simultaneously executed in the house and on the screen, he demonstrates that the perceived safety from viewing is false: Montag realizes that private and public spaces have merged together. Viewers choose a technological view over a non-mediated experience, believing the screen acts as a barrier from violence, both on and off-screen; viewers, it is believed, cannot possibly become participants. Montag's realization demonstrates that watchers are very much participants. By engaging with the new media the population is simultaneously made passive by fear of the repercussions of acting against the state and becomes incapable of intervening in the creation or destruction of different archives.

Television viewers in *Fahrenheit 451*, relieved that their plight is not that of the criminal hunted and butchered in the streets by the Mechanical Hound, feel removed from the oppressive system in which they live. While the Repressive State Apparatus provides a distraction from oppression, it ensures that people are aware of the state's power and produces both conformity and obedience. Though Montag eludes the police, a substitute for Montag receives the robotic Hound's lethal injection so that the state can reinforce to the public that no one escapes state discipline. At the same time, viewers are cognitively distanced from the reality that they could easily replace Montag. The idea of the Hound as an internal surveillance mechanism is also implied in the actions of the firemen who remove and burn books found in citizens' homes and in Mildred's decision to separate from Montag and inform his book reading to the police rather than live in a house with books. The Hound, the firemen, and Mildred embody those penalties associated with breaking the law, rules that citizens acknowledge and embrace. Entertainment qua punishment is a grander scale of old forms of public punishment as spectacle like the auto-de-fé, public hanging, or guillotining. Louis Althusser describes public punishment as part of the "Repressive State Apparatus" (2014, p. 76) and Baudrillard argues that these displays provide a distraction from other, subtler oppressions (1994, p. 85).

A direct result of the four-wall televisors in *Fahrenheit 451* is increased inaccessibility to the cultural archive, which Bradbury believes will result in a loss of individuality. In the 1950s, technological and informational advancements, which were facilitated by the emergence of television, created cultural change in United States that gave rise to postmodernity. Television in *Fahrenheit 451* filled the space of public consciousness, space that had previously been taken up by reading and social interaction. Those books—authored by diverse writers such as Edna St. Vincent Millay, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Plato, Einstein, Confucius, Gandhi, and the Gospel writers of the New Testament—make up Bradbury's canon of social equality, works linked together by an interest in overcoming institutionalized prejudices of race, class, and gender. The erasure of the written archive is connected to the loss of the subject's identity; Fire Chief Beatty verbalizes this idea when he connects physical death to burning: "Ten minutes after death

a man's a speck of black dust. Let's not quibble over individuals with memoriams. Forget them. Burn them all, burn everything" (Bradbury, 1953, p. 58). In *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern* (1998), Fredric Jameson lists the factors that have erased subject identity: "Today, in the age of corporate capitalism, of the so-called organization man, of bureaucracies in business as well as in the state, of demographic explosion - today, that older bourgeois individual subject no longer exists" (1991, p. 5). "The organization man"—an idea developed by William H. Whyte in *The Organization Man* (1957)—proposes that Americans have become largely collectivist in practice rather than individualistic, preferring organizations to make decisions as a result of pressures associated with living in a cooperative society (p. 13). As exemplified in *The Organization Man* and *Fahrenheit 451*, Whyte and Bradbury demonstrate their awareness of the same trends in society. A citizenry of addicted viewers in *Fahrenheit 451* demonstrate the presence of the novel's organization man society, divesting themselves of a valuable cultural archive as a result of dominating and manipulating televisual media. In *Fahrenheit 451* Bradbury maintains that watching television and listening to radio are less thought-provoking and convey less detailed information than reading, and thus, by extension, these means of information-sharing are less effective educational tools than reading: "The same infinite detail and awareness [of books] could be projected through the radios and televisors, but are not" (1953, p. 82). This perspective that books are unparalleled in conveying details describes the state of mediatic technology as Bradbury saw it in the 1950s as a deliberate strategy for broadcasting programs that engender the populace to being easily controlled, passive consumers. The mediascape provides collective decisions for every facet of life, answering how one should behave, what one should eat, wear, speak, and think. Montag's wife Mildred lives for her interactive programming, where she responds to television actors from a prepared script. This interaction reflects collectivist embodiment and signals the death of individuality, with Mildred's loss of identity culminating in an attempted suicide via overdosing on pills. In contrast, Montag's mark of individualism in a media-driven society is indifference toward television flow and the ability to make decisions without regard for larger organizations of society.

Television consumes and impacts both individual and public consciousness in *Fahrenheit 451*, as evidenced by the isolation and loss of individuality of women in Montag's world, particularly Montag's own wife, as they choose to belong to a collective, television culture. Mildred is a housebound, middle-class and suburban housewife with nothing to do but watch TV. Bradbury was not alone in recognizing the effect that suburbia and televisual culture took on women—ten years after *Fahrenheit 451*, Betty Friedan (1963) characterized suburbs as "comfortable concentration camps" for women (p. 426). With little more to interact with than television, Mildred comes to bodily reflect the pacing of television shows as a result of her viewing:

> The door to the parlour opened and Mildred stood there looking in at them, looking at Beatty and then at Montag. Behind her the walls of the room were flooded with green and yellow and orange fireworks sizzling and bursting to some music composed almost completely of trap? Drums, tom? Toms, and cymbals. Her mouth

> moved and she was saying something but the sound covered it . . . The fireworks died in the parlour behind Mildred. She had stopped talking at the same time. (Bradbury, 1953, p. 59)

The television display not only inhibits Mildred from effectively communicating, but televisual media has literally colonized Mildred's speech, as evidenced by the fact that Mildred stops talking in time with the frenetic sounds of the television, which also demonstrates her closer relationship to television than people, including her own husband. Television viewers receive a set of lines to say during shows so they might more actively participate in the television programming and thus ultimately enter into a collective televisual identity. The words Mildred speaks are her part in the interactive television program. Regardless of what Mildred says, she cannot contribute to Beatty and Montag's conversation as a result of being trapped too long in suburban isolation. Commenting on the effects of media overexposure, Scott Bukatman (1993) stresses that viewing media results in the emergence of a new subjectivity characterized by a loss of individuality and agency (p. 15). Mildred's lack of agency condemns her to a life of terminal subjectivity, passively consuming television shows because she is no longer capable of taking part in other types of social engagement.

Mildred trades individuality for access to the archive—media feed coupled with momentary pleasures available as a result of a corporate-engineered consumer culture. Manipulated by corporate media, Mildred embodies the perfect image of the consumer. In "Mass Exploitation and the Decline of Thought in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*," Rafeeq McGiveron places responsibility for the formation of a dystopic state on the citizens of Montag's world because they voluntarily sacrificed their individual thought for conformity (1996, p. 248). This implanted desire for easily accessible momentary pleasures drowns out creative thoughts with constant danger and competition, demanding attention and, through it, conformity. In *Fahrenheit 451*, watching televised athletic events (and other programming), taking drugs, and speeding along in newly manufactured cars looking for animals or people to run over all satisfy the need for momentary pleasure. Momentary pleasures are often the easiest pleasures to attain but this does not imply that momentary pleasures are antithetical to archives because their full meaning depends on the type of archive discussed. The corporate and state complex in *Fahrenheit 451* relies on an ongoing media feed to suppress the cultural archive. While the media feed does not eliminate the cultural archive entirely, constant creation of a present moment archive through televisual media diverts attention from the original cultural archive. Consumers spend their time in the mediatic archive instead of in cultural archives so they can learn what products they "should" buy. Loss of individuality in *Fahrenheit 451* is further ensured by the Seashell, which constantly broadcasts news and other programs, keeping viewers tethered to the media feed even while they are away from television screens. Bradbury describes Mildred's Seashells vividly: "And in her ears the little Seashells, the thimble radios tamped tight, and an electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk and music and talk coming in, coming in on the shore of her unsleeping mind" (1953, p. 42). Increasingly, as the individual in *Fahrenheit 451*'s society trades reflective activities like reading or regular conversation for scripted televisual

engagement and endless immersion in the media feed, the concentration required for more reflective, personal experiences is eclipsed by a reliance on outside media.

After Montag emerges from his prior media-controlled state, he realizes both just how much televised media dominated his life and that he can no longer recall how he first met Mildred. When he asks her about it, she can't recall either:

> "Millie...?" he whispered.
> "What?"
> "I didn't mean to startle you. What I want to know is..."
> "Well?"
> "When did we meet. And where?"
> "When did we meet for what?" she asked.
> "I mean-originally..."
> "I don't know," she said.
> He was cold. "Can't you remember?"
> "It's been so long."
> "Only ten years, that's all, only ten!"
> "Don't get excited, I'm trying to think." She laughed an odd little laugh that went up and up. "Funny, how funny, not to remember where or when you met your husband or wife."
> He lay massaging his eyes, his brow, and the back of his neck, slowly. He held both hands over his eyes and applied a steady pressure there as if to crush memory into place. It was suddenly more important than any other thing in a lifetime that he knew where he had met Mildred.
> "It doesn't matter," She was up in the bathroom now, and he heard the water running, and the swallowing sound she made.
> "No, I guess not," he said. (Bradbury, 1953, p. 40)

The constant info-stream that they have been subject to over the course of ten years has erased their individuality and diminished their ability to remember the past. The televisual archive has so colonized Mildred's mind that she views her own personal history as unimportant, and while Montag comes to value his personal history, his immersion in the right-now world of televisual media has eroded his ability to recall his own life events and dulled his capacity for introspection. Mildred represents the extreme conformist in Montag's world: her near-constant involvement in a simulated life has irreparably compromised her individuality. To Mildred, the only tasks to complete are those with a nexus to the lives of television characters. Mildred's emotional and social life is defined by the events and fictional characters portrayed in audiovisual media and designed not just to provide amusement but also to benefit the corporate and state alliance that controls the politico-economic realities of Montag's world.

Because they were aware of the suppressed cultural archive, some individuals, such as Professor Faber or Granger and his book-memorizing followers, never found momentary pleasures and their associated archives enticing. Aware of the cultural archive that became suppressed, Faber and other like-minded characters could distinguish between the two types of archives and therefore value the literary archive for its cultural merit. By embracing Faber's beliefs as he learns of a suppressed cultural archive replete with diverse information, Montag realizes the artificiality of a televisual archive filled with talking heads and state executions.

A strategy for state and corporate control in *Fahrenheit 451* is to shape desire through the

television feed. Television broadcasts deliver messages of collective identity and social norms, which are a new immediate cultural archive and serve as a primary method through which both the state and corporations establish and maintain control of viewers. The thoughtful concept of reading books is replaced by a streaming television feed that holds its audience captive. Faber, who helps Montag comprehend the scope of changes that have occurred in their society with the loss of books and thus, the cultural archive, decries the role of the television:

> ...you can't argue with the four-wall televisor. Why? The televisor is 'real.' It is immediate; it has dimension. It tells you what to think and blasts it in. It must be right. It seems so right. It rushes you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn't the time to protest... (Bradbury, 1953, p. 84).

Indeed, the addicted viewer craves watching television to experience its pacifying effect, its ability to allow the viewer to achieve an idealized state of thoughtlessness. In his discussion of science fiction (SF) tropes in *Movement SF and the Picaresque* (2013), Robert Wilson finds "the identity and agency [of subjects] are being erased by powerful social and economic forces exterior to and normally imperceptible by the individual" (p. 5). The television broadcast represents both state-based ideologies and the marketing campaigns working together to erase their subjects' identities and agency, usually without the victims growing aware of what is happening to them.

Before media was beamed across regions, the written word carried arguments formulated in the public sphere to private spaces. In *Fahrenheit 451*, televisual entertainment in private homes is a controlling mechanism of state power that threatens a cultural archive of literary works. Readers of the books, the cultural archive, seek knowledge suppressed by the televised façade of a determined society and the freedom to question that society. Bradbury juxtaposes readers with television viewers, who are pacified, exploited, and controlled by a television spectacle "which functions as either a supplement or simulacrum of the state" (Bukatman, 1993, p. 69). The homes of citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*'s society have transformed from private domestic spaces into public dissemination zones for state ideology. In Montag's home, his wife Mildred is almost constantly enraptured by the television media feed to the point that Montag and Mildred cannot have meaningful conversations with one another due to her focus on television programs portraying raucous, empty-headed characters: "the uncles, the aunts, the cousins, the nieces, the nephews, that lived in those walls, the gibbering pack of tree-apes that said nothing, nothing, nothing and said it loud" (Bradbury, 1953, p. 42). Likewise, Robin Reid notes *Fahrenheit 451* demonstrates "the extent to which technology can be used for social control, specifically through the use of the mass media for all education and entertainment" (2000, p. 59). The substitution of new media for books marked a great cultural shift in America. The new politics associated with this event-instant televisual archive represents a relinquishing of democratic values and the loss of individual subjectivity as demonstrated by the destruction of the cultural archive in *Fahrenheit 451*. The firemen in *Fahrenheit 451* further cripple the integrity of the private, domestic space with their removal of books from public discourse, thus regulating their society's

intellectual landscape. In *Fahrenheit 451* televisual communications increase the range and effect of state ideology and make it public. The end result, as Robert Wilson notes, is a skewed "extension of the media pap-feed" where individuality and agency is lost (2013, p. 6).

Wall-to-wall screens in *Fahrenheit 451* also dominate private spaces, reinforcing state ideology in homes as if they were public spaces. While citizens once went to central meeting spaces to hear someone speak or witness some form of discipline, the television in *Fahrenheit 451* became a substitute for these areas. This example is reminiscent of Michel Foucault's so-called "Discourse on Language" (1972), where the author discusses a means of social control that isolates individuals from discourse with each other. In Foucault's model, discourse flows only between the source of power and the individual. By removing this capability for public discourse—and even through eliminating the home as a private state—Bradbury argues that televisual media has ensured that the only possible conversations occur between the state (or corporations) and the average citizen. The final private space that the state attempts to turn into a public arena is the individual's mind. If the individual's thoughts can be made to reflect the attitudes and policies of the state, the removal of private space is complete. In *Fahrenheit 451*, corporations have succeeded in turning the car into a measure of class and success and have simultaneously splintered a sense of community. While the state removes private space in *Fahrenheit 451*, highways afford the illusion of freedom, privacy, and isolation: the average citizen(s) can anonymously drive nearly one hundred miles an hour and run down anyone in their way without risking personal harm to themselves, as exemplified by the youths that nearly hit Montag as he flees from the Mechanical Hound. The highways in *Fahrenheit 451* reflect newly built American highways of the 1950s; it was these highways that allowed developers to build suburbs, providing greater privacy and isolation. When Montag shares with his wife conflicted feelings about his work, that he would rather read books than burn them, Mildred advises a solitary drive, reinforcing his status as an outsider:

> The keys to the beetle are on the night table. I always like to drive fast when I feel that way. You get it up around ninety-five and you feel wonderful. Sometimes I drive all night and come back and you don't know it. It's fun out in the country. You hit rabbits, sometimes you hit dogs. Go take the beetle. (Bradbury, 1953, p. 62)

In *Fahrenheit 451*, the vehicle is but another agency-stealing technological prosthesis, and the act of driving further isolates the individual from society. The lack of penalties for killing another human reduces the ethical responsibility drivers would otherwise feel to their society, demonstrating a lack of social conscientiousness that would otherwise prevent such behavior.

In *Fahrenheit 451*, television blinds society while it dominates citizens. In Bradbury's fictional America, the American Dream is to have a perfect setup to watch television, with rooms walled with floor-to-ceiling screens that perpetuate a dreamlike viewing experience. But the television's dreamlike experience in *Fahrenheit 451* coopts the American Dream. David Mogen (1986) observes, "*Fahrenheit 451* warns that tyranny and thought control always come under the guise of fulfilling ideals, whether they be those of Fascism, Communism, or the American Dream" (p.

107). Like the car, having a home with wall-to-wall television screens in *Fahrenheit 451* is a measure of class and success that only serves to isolate individuals from society. This need for televisual screens is artificial, just like the need to drive at high speeds. The television and its programming are a system of control, emphasizing that the American Dream has been co-opted, made to serve as a tool of the state ideological apparatus. Owning a television in *Fahrenheit 451* is costly, suggesting a class bias, but—more importantly—Bradbury highlights that people will willingly pursue their own subjection to enhance their cultural status. At $2,000 a wall, Bradbury's wall-to-wall televisions were a major expense to his contemporary readers; by 1960, the average annual family income in the United States was still only $5,620 (Markham, 2002, p. 325). Citizens in *Fahrenheit 451* consider having four screens in a room fashionable; owning a television room functions as a display of class. The four-television setup would have nearly cost the same as a house and so would have been impossible for families of lower socio-economic status to install.

Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* maps both the shift from the reliance on the written word to the emergence of the televisual archive as the primary site of a society's archive, and that archive's relationship to corporate and state powers seeking maximum control over the populace. Entering a public sphere of ideas via books—allowing individuals to take part in wider social discourse—is traded for a manufactured experience of isolation, including driving alone and faux-interaction with television characters. Similarly, punishment in *Fahrenheit 451* is carried out in the isolation of vacant city streets. Citizens in the era of the televisual archive live and die in isolation, subjected to a society that puts death to nonconformists just as readily as it burns books.

Fahrenheit 451 is an iconic example of totalitarian government and corporate use of changed cultural archives to manipulate people in SF; the relationship between developing technology and new forms of control in modern society serves as a reminder why Bradbury's novel is part of the science fiction canon. Modern SF continues exploring anxieties about the use of new technology to manipulate the populace and establish social control in connection with changing cultural archives. In the 1980s and 1990s, SF authors like William Gibson and Neal Stephenson similarly used science fiction to explore shifting cultural archives, but they shifted the discussion of types of technology influencing individuals from televisual media to developing technology like cyberspace—as seen in in *Neuromancer* (Gibson, 1986) and *Snow Crash* (Stephenson, 1992/2008)—and interactive books—represented in *The Diamond Age* (Stephenson, 1995/2003). In doing so, these authors imagined new permutations of social control and human interaction that could emerge and, thus, also create new cultural archives. Though technology evolves by the day, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* remains a touchstone in discussions of social anxieties and replaced cultural archives in modern SF.

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Ecocritical Survival through Psychological Defense Mechanisms in M.R. Carey's *The Girl With All the Gifts*

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Abstract

M.R. Carey's *The Girl with All the Gifts* unveils a devastated Great Britain in which humans are beset by deadly monsters that threaten their very existence, making survival the story's central issue. This study examines the profound relationship between Melanie, a cannibalistic hungry, and Helen Justineau, her human teacher, through a psychoanalytic lens. This study will demonstrate how psychological defense mechanisms underpin their dependency upon one another as they struggle to survive. Psychological defense mechanisms are employed by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny, or distort reality to defend oneself against anxiety. In Carey's novel, these psychological defense mechanisms create a mutual dependency between a human and a monster. This dependency ultimately transforms *The Girl with All the Gifts* into an optimistic example of ecocritical science fiction by allowing Miss Justineau and Melanie to survive through peaceful coexistence in world dominated by non-humans.

Keywords: *Survival, relationship, psychoanalysis, defense mechanisms, ecocriticism, dystopia.*

Introduction

The societies depicted in science fiction are diverse and investigate issues ranging from totalitarian states to extreme anarchy. Popular themes uniting most science fiction societies include an exploration of the role and condition of human beings living in them and a call for change. Science fiction narratives typically use dystopias to exaggerate flaws in society in order to inspire a need for revolution. Such speculative fiction addresses concerns about individuality and humanity in societies where political and moral autonomy have been lost and can be regained. Science fiction texts of the past century reveal contemporary anxieties about the times in which their authors wrote, disclosing much about the effects of technological, cultural, social, psychological, and ecological changes on humanity.

The need to survive is a basic human need and, as Robert Heinlein (1959) argued, every aspect of one's personality derives from this one need in order to allow one to endure challenging circumstances threatening their continued existence (p. 94). The manner in which we humans perceive and handle our emotions in turn evokes behaviors that could increase our chances of long-term survival. In his novel *Life of Pi* (2015), Yann Martel observed that survival is a state of mind (p. 215). The human "fight or flight" reaction may be the best-known expression of our survival instinct because it presses us to choose whether to flee in the face of danger or to accept risks and stay the course. Ayn Rand (1992), an American novelist and philosopher, remarked that a man's mind is his basic tool for survival (p. 64). Cheryll Glotfelty

(1996) defined ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (p. 25). An ecocritical analysis of survival in science fiction literature allows for the study of human interaction with the surrounding environment while humans try to survive in a dystopian world. Loretta Johnson (2009) noted, "Over the last three decades, literature has emerged as a field of literary study that addresses how human relate to nonhuman nature or environment in literature" (p. 7). Similarly, Glotfelty's (1996) ecocritical analysis examined the relationship between humans and their environment by placing equal emphasis on the importance of human and non-human species. In his essay, "Why Look at Animals?" John Berger (2009) further examined the interaction between humans and the wild as a social and aesthetic issue (p. 5). He noted, "When we look at animals, they return our gaze, and in that moment we are aware of both likeness and differences" (Berger, 2009, p. 8). This study will explore how the relationship between Miss Helen Justineau and Melanie, like humans recognizing and acknowledging the wild in animals, centers on achieving this very awareness in terms of human and non-human.

The Girl with All the Gifts (2015), a dystopian novel by Michael R. Carey, revolves around the theme of humans struggling to survive in the face of nature's unwavering forces. The novel is exceedingly visual, vividly portraying a bleak Britain ten decades after the nation suffered the outbreak of a mysterious pandemic and ensuing chaos caused by a lethal infection that transforms humans into cannibals, or *hungries*. Survival becomes the primary focus of the novel as the few remaining humans establish a kind of totalitarian government on military bases that imposes specific responsibilities upon base denizens in order to preserve their battered race. The ordinary *hungries*, devoid of any intellect, possess a cannibalistic nature which has been programmed by the mutant plague within them to solely exist in two states—sleeping and hunting. Some *hungries*, however, still retain their intellect despite the infection and are almost able to control the hunting state—unless they smell humans. Scientists believe these highly intelligent *hungries* carry the elixir that would allow humanity to overcome the plague and regain control of the land.

In the novel, scientists study, test, and, sometimes, kill and dissect captured intelligent *hungries* on an isolated military base to try to obtain the evolutionary advantage present in these child monsters. Though scheduled for dissection, the child hungry Melanie is saved by both the intervention of her teacher, Miss Justineau, and a massive *hungry* attack on the base. Miss Justineau, Melanie, and a few other staff members escape and flee to a deserted laboratory where they encounter a group of intelligent child *hungries*. Melanie ultimately learns intelligent *hungries* are the biological offspring of ordinary *hungries*, and she realizes humans must all become infected *hungries* in order for their race to survive the ravaging plague. In the end, the only remaining survivor who fled the military base with Melanie is Miss Justineau, and she chooses to remain forever with the child *hungries*.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, conceived of several subconscious psychological defense mechanisms that correspond to survival and many psychoanalytic researchers today acknowledge that humans instinctively use

these mechanisms to defend themselves against definite threats. This study will utilize four of these psychological defense mechanisms—namely denial, repression, identification, and altruism—to explain the affectionate relationship between Melanie and Miss Justineau. This paper will also employ the concept of ecocriticism to explore the close relationship between human and non-human beings caused by environmental catastrophe in *The Girl with All the Gifts*.

The Function of Psychological Defense Mechanisms in *The Girl with All the Gifts*

By presenting its readers with a grim dystopian world where human lives are endangered by a devastating plague, *The Girl with All the Gifts* creates a narrative of survival despite seemingly impossible odds. This novel portrays the devastation and despair caused by the loss of thousands of lives in quick succession while still conveying the ultimate message that the human ability to adapt in times of crisis empowers humans to rise above dire situations. The function of psychological defense mechanisms in such overwhelming circumstances directly pertains to the struggle of inner willpower versus outward helplessness (Cramer, 2008, p. 1968), a struggle that, in the novel, promotes a relationship between Melanie and Miss Justineau that defies human logic in their dystopian world.

Miss Justineau is warned and threatened by one of the officers from the base for her showing care to Melanie because *hungries* are so dangerous. Sergeant Park, an armed officer, risks attack by seemingly innocent child *hungries* to talk Miss Justineau out of her capricious desire to teach them. Park exclaims, "Not everyone who looks human is human" (Carey, 2015, p. 16) in his futile attempt to convince Miss Justineau that her personal safety is at risk. Despite the cruel circumstances of her captivity, Melanie vows to herself never to hurt Miss Justineau, despite a growing sense of awareness about her true cannibalistic self. Miss Justineau, at various junctures, encourages Melanie to believe she is human because Miss Justineau herself is adamant in believing that these child *hungries* are harmless, passionately arguing her beliefs with her colleagues.

Other exchanges between Sergeant Park and Miss Justineau in *The Girl with All the Gifts* indicate that Miss Justineau is in denial about the grave consequences and risks of violating Park's orders. The more she gets involved with educating the child *hungries*, the more she resists the thoughts that they are actually monsters, fully capable of harming her:

> "They're children," Miss Justineau points out. "Psychologically speaking, yes. They're children." [...]
>
> Sergeant says[, ...]"You carry on that way, you'll start thinking of them as real kids. And then you'll slip up. And maybe you'll untie one of them because he needs a cuddle or something. I don't need to tell you what happens after that." [...]
>
> But Miss Justineau starts to read again, like she can't hear him, like he's not even there, and in the end he leaves. (Carey, 2015, pp. 16-17)

Because Miss Justineau has chosen to care for the child *hungries*, denial inevitably steps in as an unconscious psychological defense mechanism. While denial functions allows one to ignore reality,

it is a primitive defense, which, in long term use, would endanger the person employing it to escape an unwanted situation (Freud, 1946, p. 239). By engaging in denial, Miss Justineau unintentionally leads Melanie to believe that she was as much a normal child as those depicted in the children's stories that Miss Justineau regularly read to the child *hungries*. Miss Justineau's refusal to give in to Sergeant Park's fearmongering does temporarily encourage the blossoming relationship between Melanie and Miss Justineau:

> Melanie's feelings about Miss Justineau have changed too, after that day. Or rather, they haven't changed at all, but they've become about a hundred times stronger. There can't be anyone better or kinder or lovelier than Miss Justineau anywhere in the world[.] (Carey, 2015, p. 18)

Miss Justineau's willingness to stand up for the child *hungries* to Sergeant and her belief that the child *hungries* are like normal human children lead Melanie to identify herself with the human world. Even though she is aware of inhumane treatment she and the other child *hungries* receive at the base camp, Melanie conveniently puts off the unpleasant thoughts in Miss Justineau's presence.

Besides denial, Melanie also unconsciously employs identification, which is a "psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988, p. 205). Instead of changing the reality of her situation, Melanie wants to change herself to imitate the person of whom she deeply respects. The new identity Melanie wishes to adopt radiates hope and joy, and Melanie begins to envision herself as a heroic persona, possessing human attributes, capable of protecting and defending her beloved teacher from harm. Indeed, "Melanie wishes she was a [...] Titan or a Trojan warrior, so she could fight for Miss Justineau and save her[...] she likes the idea of saving Miss Justineau so much that it becomes her favourite thought" (Carey, 2015, p. 18). Thus, Miss Justineau's protection of the child *hungries* inspires Melanie to try to be more human, in turn making her want to protect her teacher, illustrating their growing mutual trust and platonic affection.

As events in Carey's dystopian novel unfold, they create an environment which facilitates Melanie and Miss Justineau's progressively interdependent relationship through subconscious, psychological defense mechanisms. While trying to protect Melanie from dissection by the base's scientists, Miss Justineau witnessed the unthinkable, "seeing the child turn into the monster, right before her eyes, has made her understand at last that both are real. There is no future in which she can set Melanie free, or save her" (Carey, 2015, p. 72). The occurrence evidently traumatizes Miss Justineau. In a sudden and vicious attack by thousands of *hungries* on base camp, Miss Justineau and her fellow teammates are forced to evacuate the combat field. During this attack, Melanie devours her first victim of flesh and blood while defending herself:

> Now she bites and tears and chews and swallows, the sensations filling her and battering her like the torrent of a waterfall[...] the man's scream is a scary sound, shrill and wobbly. Melanie doesn't like it at all. But oh, she likes the taste! (Carey, 2015, p. 127)

During this disaster, Miss Justineau is forced to come to terms with the reality of the monster before her. Despite the chaos around them, Miss Justineau regains her composure almost immediately and grabs Melanie, just as if she were "plucking a blood-gorged tick from a dog's belly" (Carey, 2015, p. 129), before they sprint for their lives. Despite protests from her surviving colleagues, who are aghast that she had brought a *hungry* to their place of refuge, Miss Justineau secures space for Melanie in an enclosed vehicle. Here, both Miss Justineau and Melanie use repression as a vital psychological defense to block off the memory of pain and trauma. Again, this unconscious act of repression functions to distort the realities in both Miss Justineau and Melanie's consciousness.

According to Anne Freud (1946), the psychological defense mechanism of repression is the cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory (p. 16), but its effects may be dissolved over time. Melanie, motivated by the deep need for a reconciliation between human and monsters, begins to repress the memories of her cannibalism. Although she has "always been a good girl", "she ate pieces of two men, and very probably killed them both. Killed them with her teeth. She was hungry, and they were her bread" (Carey, 2015, p. 137). Here, Melanie attempts to rationalize and repress what she has done, but after a period of time, whilst in quieter moments, Melanie finds herself suddenly remembering what she has done and is thus jolted back to face her stark reality—the repulsive acts of murder she undeniably committed. When the reality and severity of one's situation is suddenly thrown back into the conscious mind, this is referred to as a "Freudian slip" (Freud, 1946, p. 18), a term which aptly describes Melanie's experience during these moments of recall.

Altruism is yet another psychological defense mechanism evident in Carey's novel that could explain Miss Justineau and Melanie's relationship. The concept of altruism was first established by Sigmund Freud in *Libido Theory and Narcissism* (1920), and Anna Freud further developed the term as a coping mechanism which is employed by individuals as a means to deal with their emotional conflicts by whole-hearted dedicating themselves to help satisfy others' needs (Freud, 1946, p. 122). It is through the function of this psychological defense mechanism that Miss Justineau's utmost dedication for Melanie and the rest of the child *hungries* can be better explained. Much of her devotion for the children, even though they are *hungries*, stems from guilt of a past offence she committed. Later in the novel, Miss Justineau finally opens up about her past—and, perhaps, the reason why she was so protective of the child *hungries*: she had once accidentally killed a child:

> I was driving home. After a party. I'd been drinking but not that much. And I was tired.[…] Someone ran into the road in front of me[…] He was just there, suddenly, and I hit the brakes but I was already on top of him.[…] he bounced off the car like a ball[…] A boy. About eight or nine years old, maybe. I'd killed a child. Broken him in pieces, inside his skin, so his arms and legs didn't even bend the right way. (Carey, 2015, p. 247)

Miss Justineau is obviously shaken by the turmoil of her past crime. At her lowest point in the novel, she reveals the agony and remorse that she had tried to bury in her heart and forget. She could never pardon herself for her cowardice, trying to run

away from her crime. Thus, as a result of her guilt and altruistic compulsion, Miss Justineau wholly commits herself to caring for the needs of the child *hungries*. To her colleagues, her steadfast devotion for the care of these child *hungries* defies human understanding; yet when the few remaining other base survivors have died, Miss Justineau's devotion to the *hungries* remains unshaken:

> I'm coming back. I'll take care of you.[...]
>
> Melanie runs to her and embraces her. Gives her love without hesitation or limit, whether it's earned or not—and at the same time pronounces sentence on her. "Get dressed," she says happily. "Come and meet them."
>
> The children. Sullen and awkward sitting cross-legged on the ground, cowed in silence.... (Carey, 2015, p. 454).

At the end of *The Girl With All the Gifts*, Miss Justineau seals her relationship with Melanie by dedicating the rest of her entire life to educating the intellectual *hungries*, without reservation in a relationship only made possible through Miss Justineau's altruism.

The Ecocritical Survival: A Reconciliation between Human and Non-human

Scholars are raising new, important issues in the study of postcolonialism, particularly the question of how analysis of postcolonialism can be analyzed without considering the environment. The modern planetary consciousness has been shaped by environmental illustrations of the vulnerable Earth, as seen around the world through the environmental arguments surrounding global warming, the destruction of local ecologies, and the poverty and migration caused by environmental changes wrought by the spread of humanity.

Ecocriticism presents a new analytical perspective in science fiction scholarship that goes beyond more typical politico-economic and sociological analyses. Ecocriticism pushes scholars and readers to inquire beyond basic postcolonial issues such as sexuality and race and to turn a critical eye to topics such as reprocentrism, speciesism, and the relationship between the human and non-human. Trends in science fiction, such as the idea of planetary connectedness, of the relations between the human and the non-human and of the animate and the inanimate, illustrate a new and ongoing literary revision and criticism of postcolonialism.

Ecocriticism principally examines how the environment or nature is represented in a literary text. The development and expansion of ecocritical studies has resulted in a blending of the human-centric analysis of literature with a new perspective that also considers place, setting, and, most notably, the environment. When subjected to ecocritical analysis, literature of all periods and places—not only science fiction, ecocentric or environmental literature, or nature writing, but all literature—takes on richer meaning. Ecocriticism emerged from more traditional approaches to literary analysis in which the critic explores the local or global, the material or physical, or the historical or natural history in the context of a work. Such approaches can be interdisciplinary, invoking knowledge of environmental studies, the natural sciences, and cultural and social studies. Furthermore, through an ecocritical lens, the relationship between human and their physical world can be seen in a clearer perspective.

Glotfelty (1996) defines ecocriticism as "a critical

Ecocritical Survival through Psychological Defense Mechanisms, *continued*

MECHANISMS	DESCRIPTION	TEXTUAL EXAMPLES
DENIAL	Primitive defense which involves blocking external events from awareness or the refusal to accept a reality	Miss Justineau refuses to acknowledge the child *hungries* as monsters who would pose as potential threats to humankind. (Carey, 2015, p. 56)
REPRESSION	Involuntary exclusion of a painful memory from consciousness	Miss Justineau tries to suppress the memory of Melanie devouring human flesh and blood. (Carey, 2015, p. 71)
IDENTIFICATION	Unconscious modelling of oneself to conform to others	Melanie often associates herself with the human world through knowledge and action in futile hope of becoming more human. (Carey, 2015, p. 94)
ALTRUISM	Dealing with an inner emotional conflict by an outward dedication to the needs of others	Miss Justineau is deeply affected by her past accidental killing of a child and therefore channels her energy and care to the child hungries. (Carey, 2015, p. 99)

Figure 1: Summary of Psychological Defense Mechanisms Exhibited by Characters

stance which negotiates between the human and the nonhuman" (pp. 18-19). As *The Girl with All the Gifts* comes to a close on a somber yet final note, the realization of what is left of the human race becomes an unalterable reality for Melanie's teacher, paralleling Glotfelty's definition of ecocriticism as negotiation:

> Justineau understands what that means now. How she'll live, and what she'll be. And she laughs through choking tears at the rightness of it. Nothing is forgotten and everything is paid. (Carey, 2015, p. 449)

The surviving humans from the base where Melanie was kept have been utterly and completely defeated, except for Miss Justineau. In other words, Miss Justineau becomes the sole survivor of a dying human race who will spend the rest of her life dwelling amongst intelligent *hungries*. An indefinite environmental crisis has presented itself through the birth of a new generation of species called *hungries*.

Though at first the emergence of the *hungries* represented a crisis for the human race, by the end of *The Girl With All the Gifts*, a new different world has emerged that will one day be ruled by a society of intellectual *hungries*. Rather than display resentment at the fate of her species and the world, or regret for all that has happened, Miss Justineau embraces the dawn of this new world with open arms because she views this change as a form of cleansing and consenting to the natural order of the environment.

Miss Justineau's relationship with Melanie, therefore, foreshadows a coming age where the human will be required to cohabitate with these new species of *hungries* in order to survive.

The ultimate survival of Miss Justineau clearly reflects ecocritical elements present throughout Carey's novel. The optimistic—and, perhaps, cautionary—conclusion to *The Girl with All the Gifts*, features a new, natural world order in which humans and *hungries* can coexist harmoniously.

Without psychological defense mechanisms, however, Miss Justineau and Melanie never would have forged their mutually-beneficial relationship that spurred them to survive in their harsh, unforgiving world.

Conclusion

This study of M.R. Carey's *The Girl with All the Gifts* employed both psychoanalytic and ecocritical perspectives to reveal the defense mechanisms that enabled Miss Justineau and Melanie to develop a relationship in the midst of a plague-infested Britain and reflects ecocritical principals of survival for the human race. Our analysis has revealed that psychological defense mechanisms are coping strategies which played pivotal roles in constructing and reinforcing the bond between Miss Justineau and Melanie. Melanie and her teacher manipulate their realities subconsciously through denial, repression, identification, and altruism, altering and distorting their respective perceptions of the world around them to manifest a continual expression of love and care for one another. As the characters conceded to an ecocritical survival, they accepted the establishment of a calm and tolerable post-human state, transforming the former totalitarian and dystopian world of human military bases versus *hungries* to a new, free utopia where both species would ultimately survive.

The ever-changing nature of science fiction means there is always room for further analysis of the genre. In this study, we have considered the ecocritical and psychological factors present in *The Girl with All the Gifts* that contribute to the strange coexistence between humans and *hungries* at the end of the novel. The present study, however, does not extensively examine the transformation of human beings into post-humans in other works of science fiction, and we recommend future studies of *The Girl with All the Gifts* perform a comparative analysis of this transformation in Carey's novel and in other examples of ecocritical science fiction.

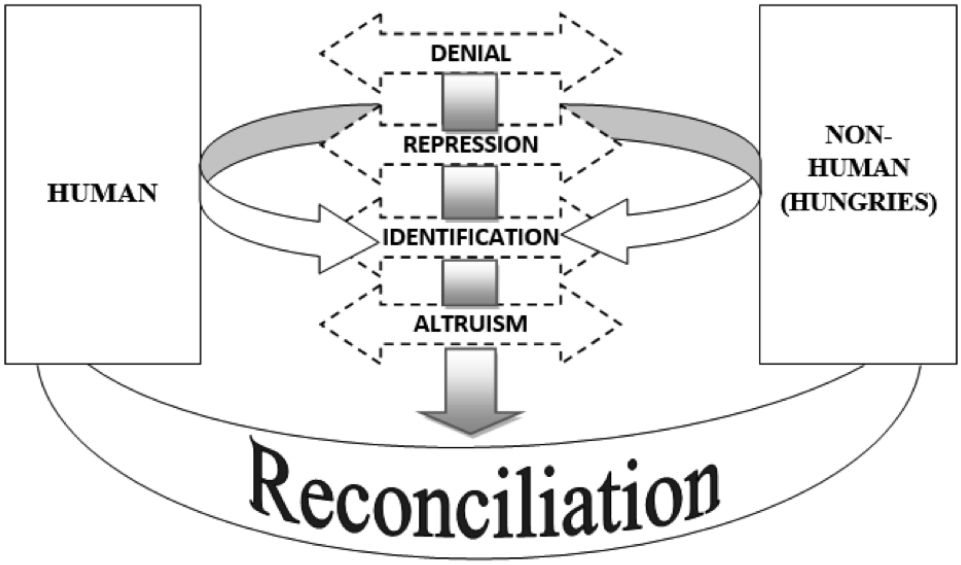

Figure 2: The Process of Reconciliation & Survival through Psychological Defense Mechanisms

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Sherri L. Smith's *Orleans* and Karen Sandler's *Tankborn*: The Female Leader, the Neo-Slave Narrative, and Twenty-first Century Young Adult Afrofuturism

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Abstract

The neo-slave narrative allows contemporary writers to reinforce the African American female experience in science fiction. In the Young Adult (YA) Afrofuturistic novel, *Orleans* (2013), Sherri L. Smith creates a neo-slave narrative and, through it, sends a positive message about the strength of African American females to her readers. Smith's fifteen-year-old female protagonist, Fen de la Guerre, lives in a post-apocalyptic urban space. Hurricanes and plague, Delta Fever, decimate New Orleans; as a result, the government has quarantined the city behind a wall. Whereas in Smith's text, Fen's race is given a cursory mention, Kayla Sandler's *Tankborn* (2011) centers on the issue of race and its influence on identity (Leonard 2003). In *Tankborn*, societal prejudice segregates characters, thereby placing them into a caste system. Much like Fen, Sandler's protagonist, Kayla, exists in a society divided into trait-specific groupings. This society, however, is designed to oppress those deemed necessary for physical labor. Kayla's societal placement is determined by her physical appearance and her origins, which categorize her as a genetically-engineered being (GEN), or a human who was engineered in a tank. Significantly, the discrimination that both Fen and Kayla experience during their respective quests for freedom is reminiscent of that portrayed by slaves in African American narratives. The examination for this study is as follows: in order to ensure the survival of the future generations, Smith's Fen and Sandler's Kayla place themselves figuratively in the role of mother, specifically the twenty-first century version of the slave narrative mother—the community leader.

Keywords: *neo-slave narrative, Tankborn, Orleans, young adult, afrofuturism, post-apocalypse*

In an effort to ensure that the past is remembered and the female-centered aspects of the slave narrative are reinforced, the female neo-slave narrative was created (Beaulieu, 1999, p. xvi). Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu (1999) writes, "Contemporary writers have embraced slavery [...] the details of the enslaved existence become a sort of homage to the very humanity of the protagonists and lends to the works a reverence for the past and its attendant hardships" (p. xiv). Ashraf Rushdy (1999) defines neo-slave narratives as "contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions, and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative" (p. 3). Unfortunately, the majority of slave narratives tend to be focused on the male experience rather than that of the female. The neo-slave narrative is a way for contemporary writers to reinforce the African American female experience.

In the Young Adult (YA) Afrofuturistic novel, *Orleans* (2013), Sherri L. Smith creates a neo-slave

narrative and thereby sends a positive message about the strength of African American females to her readers. Smith's fifteen-year-old female protagonist, Fen de la Guerre, lives in a post-apocalyptic urban space. Hurricanes and plague, Delta Fever, decimate New *Orleans*; as a result, the government has quarantined the city behind a wall. Those that reside in *Orleans* are carriers of the fever, which is transmitted by blood. In an effort to stop the disease from spreading, the survivors have separated into tribes according to blood type; those with O-type blood are inherently more resistant to the fever. This grouping of individuals is reminiscent of segregation, but, at first, they look as if that have been selected for self-protection rather than forced by racial discrimination.

Elizabeth Anne Leonard (2003) states that in science fiction (SF), race tends not to be highlighted, but instead appears as one of a character's physical attributes. Leonard (2003) also notes that in some cases, the issue is bypassed entirely. Whereas in Smith's text, Fen's race is given a cursory mention, Kayla Sandler's *Tankborn* (2011) centers on the issue of race and its influence on identity (Leonard 2003). In *Tankborn*, societal prejudice segregates characters, placing them into a caste system. Much like Fen, Sandler's protagonist, Kayla, exists in a society divided into trait-specific groupings. This society, however, is designed to oppress those deemed necessary for physical labor. Kayla's societal placement is determined by her physical appearance and her origins, which categorize her as a GEN, or a genetically-engineered human who was created in a tank. When Kayla asks her highborn friend, Devak, how society decides hierarchal order, he responds, "'You're *tankborn*. My mother gave birth to me'" (Sandler, 2011). Significantly, the discrimination that both Fen and Kayla experience during their respective quests for freedom is reminiscent of that portrayed by slaves in African American narratives. The examination for this study is as follows: in order to ensure the survival of the future generations, Smith's Fen and Sandler's Kayla place themselves figuratively in the role of mother, specifically the twenty-first century version of the slave narrative mother—the community leader.

The common thread throughout YA dystopian literature featuring female protagonists is the protagonist's journey from object to subject, from powerless to powerful. Amy Montz, Miranda Green-Barteet, and Sara Day (2014) assert that "contemporary dystopian literature with adolescent women protagonists place young women in unfamiliar, often liminal spaces—caught between destructive pasts and unclear futures—in order to explore the possibilities of resistance and rebellion in such unreal settings" (p. 7). Writers focusing their examinations on YA dystopian novels featuring female protagonists often highlight the fluctuating state of the protagonist's identity and lifestyle, arguing that it is symbolic of the transitional position of the adolescent, which also ensures that the audience can relate to the text at hand. Montz, Green-Bartleet, and Day set out the standard formula for the structure of YA dystopian texts in their introduction, as do their counterparts in the collection. The issue that should be noted, however, is that in many twenty-first century dystopian texts featuring female protagonists, writers utilize a white protagonist, thereby relegating characters of color to minor roles. In Smith's *Orleans*, ethnicity is alluded to—Fen is African American—but not explicitly featured. Although the novel does not focus on race, Smith has structured her text to include traditional aspects of the slave narrative,

thereby making Fen's Bildungsroman journey from oppressive forces to self-actualization take on a new significance.

In many YA dystopian novels, stage one of the protagonist's identity development begins by showing the reader the protagonist's place in society as object. In other words, Fen is not powerless, but her behavior is dominated by the desires of others. In a traditional slave narrative, authenticating accounts from white sources are placed before and after that of the slave. Smith has structured her novel much like a slave narrative, dividing her novel into two sections. Smith has placed a "Before" section from 2014 in advance of Fen's "After" section not to validate Fen's story, but rather to show societal aspects from the past that cannot be recreated in Fen's present (Elphick, p. 184). According to Ruth Levitas (2010), "Dystopia (or anti-utopia) represents the fear of what the future may hold if we do not act to avert catastrophe, whereas utopia encapsulates the hope of what might be" (p. 190). In the "Before" section, the narrator does not give information about Fen. Instead, this section functions as a way for the reader to contrast what life is like before and after the onset of the disease and the governmental separation of *Orleans* from the rest of America. Regarding Octavia E. Butler's dystopic *Parables* (1993), Keith Elphick (2014) wrote, "Unlike many novels in the 'topia' genre, Butler understands that once a society has declined past a certain point of debasement, there is no returning to antiquated notions of the past" (p. 184). The "Before" section serves to show the reader what society was once like and that it may not be recreated. The 2056 "After" section contains two narrators, Fen and Daniel, a scientist from the Outer States who comes to *Orleans* to find a cure to the plague. By having a "Before" and "After" section, Smith shows the past utopic space (New *Orleans*) and present dystopic space (*Orleans*). Here, Fen's story is juxtaposed with Daniel's, but it is Fen's voice that is first heard from *Orleans*. This type of narration serves to temporarily place Fen in a subordinate position. Daniel's point of view—the voice from the Outer States—appears more valuable than Fen's. It is also meant to show that, like Lauren from Butler's *Parables*, Fen's code of conduct, her approach to life, will ensure the survival of future generations (Elphick, 2014, p. 185). As Elphick (2014) observes it is not the adults with their past societal notions that will be successful, but the youth of the present with their new outlook on life. Eventually in the novel, Fen's voice will dominate Daniel's, thereby showing that hope for the *Orleans*' future generations exists with an African American female who prizes community and survival.

In her first stage of development, Fen is subject to the ideologies of adults: her parents, her tribe, and the Outer States' government. As the "After" section, which is aptly titled "Tribe", begins, Fen seems like a typical YA dystopian protagonist. Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hint (2014) identify the primary themes in YA dystopian literature, noting "conformity" as a method of achieving status as object (p. 3). The authors demonstrate how "[o]ften such conformist societies embrace their uniformity out of a fear that diversity breeds conflict" (Basu, Broad, and Hintz, 2014, p. 3). Fen is first shown at the *Orleans*' market involved in an illegal blood trade with McCallan, a smuggler. Members of her tribe are not permitted to trade for blood because it is dangerous. Fen looks like she is rebelling against her community's precepts by engaging in this trade. She is, in fact, trying to protect Lydia, her tribe's chief, by

obtaining untainted blood for her. Lydia is about to give birth, and Fen thinks that she may need a blood transfusion. Lydia is both Fen's community leader and surrogate mother, so she takes on substantial risks to protect her and the tribe. While Fen appears to be rebelling against her tribe's guidelines by bartering for blood, she is, in fact, offering her subjectivity to the head of her tribe. Even though *Orleans* does not have an official governing head (Pulliam, 2014, p. 172), the behavior of the populace is guided by the chief of each tribe and, through them, the precepts of the government are transferred.

Fen, like Katniss in Suzanne Collins's novel *Hunger Games*, transcends the constraints of the gender-based roles assigned to her by her society, as evidenced in both her actions and appearance. When Fen initially appears in the novel, her behavior is comparable to that of slaves in narratives instead of the community leader. While a small number of female slaves were expected to perform domestic duties, such as working in the houses, the majority worked in the fields completing the same tasks as men. In her discussion of masculine and feminine behavior in District 12 of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008), June Pulliam related (2014) that "women of the districts do not have the luxury of cultivating learned helplessness or dressing in ways that would constrain their mobility, as their labor is required to ensure the survival of all" (p. 175). *The Hunger Games*, one of the most famed YA dystopian novels currently in existence, is similar to Smith's novel, as both *Orleans* and *The Hunger Games* are reminiscent of the slave narrative. Fen and Katniss's actions are much like that of the female slave, meaning that they are willing to complete any task necessary to ensure the survival of their respective communities (Pulliam, 2014, p. 176). In reference to the formation of identity, Trites (2000) remarks, "How an adolescent defines herself in terms of race, gender, and class often determines her access to power in her specific situation" (p. 47). When Smith introduces Fen, she is trading for untainted blood. Because the marketplace is dangerous, she trades outside of it instead of in it. Fen is not clearly marked as masculine or feminine by her appearance, nor is her ethnicity clearly identified. The only identifier of both gender and ethnicity is a minor note Smith includes about Fen's hair: Lydia, her tribe's chief, has plaited it in braids and piled it on her head. Fen also says that McCallan refers to her during the trade as "Miss Fen" and suggests that she may be the one who is pregnant. Fen's description of her physical appearance and McCallan's statements label her female; her placement and behavior at the market, a traditionally female space, make her gender neutral. Because she takes the role of the caregiver, she is female, even though she may not otherwise appear to belong to this gender. She follows the guidelines of her society by protecting Lydia, the member that can assist in her survival, so Fen's breaking the rules about illegal blood trades is well worth the risk to her. Since *Orleans* is a twenty-first century YA dystopian novel, Fen, like Katniss, is able to transverse traditional gendered boundaries. In fact, when Fen is labeled feminine rather than gender neutral, she is less powerful, less effective in her tasks. McCallan attempts to take advantage of Fen, keeping the gold she gave him without giving her the blood. When Fen calls attention to McCallan's ogling her and demands her refund, he complies.

In the first stage of her development towards becoming the community leader, Fen is compliant with the guidelines of her society. Throughout *Orleans*, Fen repeats the phrase "Tribe is life". The code for survival has been taught to Fen first by

her father and then by her chief; these behavioral guidelines are revealed in fragments until the second stage of Fen's development where more information is disclosed. By herself, Fen ventures away from her tribe in order to procure the supplies needed in order to ensure her leader's survival. Fen rigorously follows social procedures and exudes confidence while away from Lydia's. Once her gaze falls upon Lydia, however, Fen reveals her liminality with regard to gendered behavior. Pulliam (2014) notes that Collins' Katniss despises her mother's failure to care for her family and sees it as "feminine weakness" (p. 175). In a similar moment, when Fen encounters Lydia tending to the sick in the hospital, she feels uncomfortable and inadequate. Fen describes Lydia's appearance, highlighting distinctly feminine features—braids and a dress. Comparing Lydia appearance to her own, Fen thinks that Lydia looks "like a queen" whereas she is "a scarecrow next to her" (Smith, 2013). Fen is highly critical of Lydia's femininity; the comments she makes are a defense mechanism used to mask her true feelings of uncertainty. Lydia is shown as feminine and a leader; Fen calls attention to her sovereignty and her advanced pregnancy. In her statement, Fen refers to herself as unrefined and a follower, not like Lydia. To Fen, Lydia completes the ultimate transgression, placing herself in danger of contracting the plague, but Fen is powerless to stop her. Fen's "access to power" has been negated (Trites, 2000, p. 47). Even though she is close to Lydia, Fen's self-importance has been deflated. She has been reduced to inexperienced adolescent and community member rather than mature, confident leader.

In the first stage of Fen's development, Lydia is the slave mother figure, but once she dies, Fen takes on this role. In Fen's second stage, she unconsciously takes action in order to alter the future for Lydia's newborn child, aptly named Baby Girl. In reference to the slave mother and her legal state as property, Beaulieu (1999) observes that any offspring "would by law follow the condition of their enslaved mother" (p. 11). Just as children of slaves become slaves themselves, children born in *Orleans* are objectified as their families are before them. They are not valuable Outer States citizens, but remnants of a former society monitored by the Outer States' government. Smith continues to follow the pattern of the slave narrative: the child, Baby Girl (later named Enola), is forcefully separated from her mother, only to be raised by a surrogate parent, Fen. Historically, in the antebellum South, children born into slavery were frequently removed from their mothers at an early age to be raised by elderly female slaves. According to Frederick Douglass (1995), this occurred because slave masters desired to stifle or destroy the emotional attachment a slave child has to his or her mother. When Lydia dies after giving birth, Fen feels obligated to take responsibility for Lydia's child as Lydia was her chief and surrogate mother. During Baby Girl's birth, Fen's O-positive (OP) tribe is massacred, so, in actuality, Fen and Baby Girl are the only community each other has remaining. Fen goes to great lengths to save Lydia's child from becoming infected with the fever. At this point in her development, Fen is not emotionally attached to Lydia's child, but she still sees herself as an OP rather than an individual. Beaulieu (1999) identified the neo-slave narrative as concentrating on developing the main character's identity and her connection to her enslaved family (p. 25). Once Lydia dies, Fen draws on the teachings from her past, which help her to form an identity as an individual; her individuality is Fen's third stage of development. As a young child, Fen loses two communities: her parents and that at the research

institute. In her youth Fen and her parents reside at a research institute because the scientists claim that by studying her they can cure the plague. In this second stage, these communities are gone and all that remains is the knowledge that they passed on to her, which often appears in the form of memories. These teachings guide Fen's life choices, and these memories are how she makes contact with her past relations, as Beaulieu (1999) observes.

By intermixing Fen's memories and her present day accounts, Smith highlights the influence of her various communities on the formation of her identity. As Fen's tribe lies in ruins, she chooses to hide with Baby Girl, but inadvertently falls asleep. When Fen rises, she discovers that she is grasping her knife, prepared to defend herself against an attack. Elphick (2014) observes, "Dystopian authors achieve their goal of reawakening citizens to their own troubled social structure" (p. 172). Here, Elphick discusses the writer/reader relationship in the dystopic text, but the concept applies to Fen's situation. When she regains consciousness, the severity of the situation impacts Fen and she chastises herself for her human response to exhaustion. Regrettably, her first thoughts are not for her community, which is represented as Baby Girl, but for herself.

While Lydia is alive but Fen is separated from her, Fen is sure of herself and understands what needs to be done in order to protect her leader. Once she renews contact with Lydia, however, Fen appears uncertain and subservient, deferring major decisions to Lydia. Fen behaves in this manner because her identity is in transition and she continues to need authority figures to help her change into a self-assured adult. When Lydia dies, her education from her tribe has come to an end; this moment also marks Fen's shift in power. Fen is thrust into the caregiver position for the child. She obtains food for the baby and must rely on herself for survival. Even though Fen acknowledges that the tribe no longer exists and she is on her own with the child, she falls back on tribe teachings. These teachings are modified—Fen discards archaic notions about gender and utilizes the knowledge that gives her confidence about her choices.

In her third stage of development, Fen consciously takes action in her society in order to enact change. Both Fen and Daniel have been kidnapped by those wishing to steal their blood; after they meet in captivity, they agree on a trade. Elphick (2014) states, "the characters in many critical dystopias painstakingly struggle to *adapt* to and *better* the problems facing them in these texts' microcosmic societies" (p. 173). Whereas Daniel seeks knowledge about the city's layout, Fen wants food, clothing, and an escape from *Orleans* for Baby Girl. For Fen, taking care of both Baby Girl and Daniel is a required chore. Only once they reach Mr. Go, a family friend, and learn of the liminal state of *Orleans* does Fen choose to claim the child as her own. As in the African tradition, Fen waits to name the child until she is in the presence of a community elder, Mr. Go. Her naming the child—Enola after East New *Orleans*—shows her desire to acknowledge the child as part of her community rather than just as a debt owed to Lydia. When the trio leaves Mr. Go and encounters the O-Negative (O-Neg) tribe, Fen announces to their leader, Davis, while the child may have been Lydia's, "'She mine, now'" (Smith, 2013). In order to show she refuses to accept her objectified state, Fen chooses to make a public display denouncing it. Similarly, Pulliam (2014) documents two of the most renowned open rebellions in *The Hunger Games*, specifically when Katniss grieved for her friend, Rue, on camera,

and when she and Peeta attempted suicide. In a discussion of race, Leonard (2003) refers to this moment in SF as "rendering the invisible visible" (p. 257). Fen rebels against her objectification, removing herself from her liminal space once she asserts her power in her meeting with Davis, the head of the O-Negs. Many of Davis's tribe died in the attack on the powwow with the Ops and he wants this debt to be paid with Baby Girl's life. When Fen refuses, she engages in a very public scene, an "open rebellion," and launches herself into the role of tribe leader (Pulliam, 2014, p. 179). Davis tries to ensure that Fen remains in her objectified state by referring to her as "'Lydia's pet,'" a slight to which Fen responds with strength. Instead of sacrificing the child, as she tries to do in her second stage of development while they are being chased by dogs, she offers herself (much like Katniss does) as payment for the deaths and fights Davis publicly. She allows him to win for appearance's sake, and, as a result, she saves the trio from death. Fen's ultimate sacrifice, however, comes when she chooses to save her child's life over her own.

Fen comes to the realization that there is no place safe for this child, who is not valued in this space as anything but a commodity, so she has Daniel take Baby Girl over the Wall. In an interview about *Kindred*, the foremost female neo-slave narrative, Octavia E. Butler discussed the slave's escape with Nick DiCharrio (2004, pp. 206-207). DiCharrio (2004) asked Butler about her choice to set *Kindred* in a border state, to which she responded, "Because I wanted my character to have a legitimate hope of escape" (p. 206). Like Butler, Smith places her novel in a border state, making a route to freedom possible for a fortunate few. In reference to the critical dystopia, Elphick (2014) stated, "there is a sense of hope and unity in these novels that has kept it apart from the despair engulfing the classic dystopias" (p. 173). Both Butler and Smith elect to save the characters that represent the possibility for a favorable future. During the escape, Fen draws attention away from Daniel and Baby Girl: she takes Daniel's coat, which she forms to look like the baby's body, and runs screaming through the moat towards the soldiers. The image of the escaping slave appears repeatedly throughout Smith's text, calling to mind the image of the slave fleeing pursuing slave hunters toward freedom, wading through water in order to flee pursuing masters and/or fugitive slave hunters, but Smith uses Fen to create a new image. Daniel and the child reach freedom while Fen is repeatedly shot; through her ultimate ruse, she enables her child to reach the plague-free Outer States. In a twist to the traditional slave narrative structure, Fen is depicted running in the direction of the soldiers. Fen chooses her own version of freedom—she elects to die by the hand of the soldiers while saving her community rather than succumb to the plague. To the soldiers, Fen is only a body, another sufferer of the plague. In actuality, Fen regains control of her commodified body and chooses to surrender her life in exchange for her child's freedom. In slave narratives, the slave's escape is the pivotal moment. Smith uses both the standard escape closing from the slave narrative and the critical dystopian ending to close the novel. She leaves her readers with the image of resistance, of Enola "waving her small fists at the weeping sky," the resilience of the next generation, and the symbol of the fight to escape oppression still to come (Smith, 2013). As the text closes, the audience comes to the realization that the slave's journey to freedom depicted here is not just that of Fen, but rather of the next generation, that of Enola.

Just as Smith's *Orleans* tracked Fen's own neo-slave

narrative, Sandler's young adult novel *Tankborn* documents a female protagonist's—Kayla's—journey from oppression to freedom, following her escape from socially-endorsed slavery. In a discussion of Butler's *Kindred* and Gayl Jones' *Corregidora* (1975), both novels which emphasize the effects of familial slavery on their protagonists, Beaulieu (1999) observes, "these authors work like archeologists, attempting to uncover the secrets of the past, sometimes to instruct heroines who are confused about their present and unsure of their future " (p. 142). In reference to the most famous neo-slave narratives from female writers, Madhu Dubey (2009) stated, "what distinguishes [Toni] Morrison's and Butler's uses of this genre is their focus on black women's unique experience of reproductive slavery" (p. 164). Sandler's novel follows Kayla's origin story: during childhood, scientists transform Kayla from a physically challenged child into one who is genetically engineered. In reference to the most famous neo-slave narratives from female writers, Madhu Dubey (2009) stated, "what distinguishes [Toni] Morrison's and Butler's uses of this genre is their focus on black women's unique experience of reproductive slavery" (p. 164). In order for Kayla to reach stage three of her development she must, much as former slaves have depicted in narratives, document her knowledge of her origins. By uncovering the truth of her trueborn origins, Kayla determines Loki is a false utopia, and through this revolation, thereby destabilizes the social constructs that place beings in a discriminatory hierarchal society. In stage one, however, Kayla appears in her socially-constructed familial space awaiting her assignment in the trueborn sector.

Scholars have criticized science fiction as a genre for the failure to clearly identify the ethnicity of their protagonists even in neo-slave narratives, a shortcoming partially evidenced in Smith's ambiguity about Fen's race. On one hand, Rushdy (1999) argues that during the 1960s writers created a new genre, the neo-slave narrative, in order to reclaim the slave narrative from white writers, thereby ensuring that the authentic African American experience may be shown. On the other hand, Mary J. Couzelis (2014) notes, in SF race tends to be either ignored, thereby placing preference on whiteness, or depicted as existing singularly. Couzelis writes, "Novels that ignore race or present a monochromatic future imply that other ethnicities do not survive in the future or that their participation in the future is not important" (2014, p. 131). Unlike Smith, who only hints at Fen's ethnicity, Sandler places race in the foreground as she introduces Kayla and Jal. When the text opens, Kayla is objectified by certain members of Lokian society and by the community's precepts. By describing Jal as "her slender, black-skinned nurture brother" (Sandler, 2011), the narrator instantly emphasizes race and non-standard familial relations. Kayla is black, female, and a GEN. While Kayla's status as a slave is not directly stated upon the text's opening, she is immediately cast as the slave mother character.

In the first stage of her development, Kayla is objectified: she is the commodified body. Historically, slaves were seen as having value and were considered property, much like GENs are. Each GEN has a "sket," a skill set incorporated into her or his genetic make-up while in the tank; Kayla's is her excessive physical strength. In the American slaveholding South, both female and male slaves were expected to be physical laborers. By emphasizing Kayla's physical abilities, Sandler draws a parallel between GENs and African

American slaves. Unlike her best friend, Mishalla, who is described as having the nurturer sket, Kayla has been built for physical labor. On her Thirdday holiday, Tala, Kayla's nurture-mother, directs Kayla to watch Jal. As Kayla describes her duties, her familial structure, and her religious studies, she shows that she is not permitted to have a normal adolescence. She is, instead, thrust into the role of slave mother. While Jal gets to play, Kayla tends to him rather than spending time with her companions. While it may appear like a task required in ordinary adolescence, that a female look after a child, this image of the female pressed into service leans towards the stereotypical behavior of the slave mother. Kayla is placed in this role, defined not by her individual identity but by her race, gender, and class. When the Earth is deemed a wasteland, people moved to Loki in an effort to start again; unfortunately, they brought their caste system with them in an effort to recreate their former society (Elphick, 2014, p. 184). Kayla does not get the opportunity to explore who she could become. Instead, societal members with status deem her imperfect, place her in the tank, and alter her body. Those with rank choose her life for her.

It must be noted that critical examination of YA literature featuring African American characters is lacking. There is, however, one exception. With the rise in popularity of *The Hunger Games*, examinations of both Rue and Katniss have been prevalent. Meghan Gilbert-Hickey (2014) examines Rue's district, noting the similarities to the antebellum Southern United States. Rue resides in District Eleven, an area concentrated on agriculture, "where the children miss school during the harvest and workers are publically whipped for eating the crops" (Gilbert-Hickey, 2014, p. 12). Subsequently, the district's characters evoke images of field slaves. In *Tankborn*, even though the GENs' Chadi sector does not appear to contain a specific industry, it is reminiscent of the Jim Crow South. Its industry is, in fact, the readying of GENs for assignment; this preparation includes ensuring that GENs are conditioned to understand their position in Lokian society. Throughout the novel, GENs are often segregated from the rest of the Lokian populace. For example, while Kayla and Jal are by the Chadi River, it becomes clear that the river separates the poverty-stricken Chadi sector from wealthy Foresthill, the trueborn sector. While working for Zul Manel, her trueborn master, Kayla is required to stand in a marked section of a clothing store, away from other castes, but always in full view of everyone. She is also required to ride in the back of motor vehicles, just as the Jim Crow Laws of the U.S. South had required.

The Chadi sector and the river are the first symbols in the novel of people forcefully separated by space. The GENs live in their own sector but, according to Kayla, it is not safe even though they are permitted to be there. They must constantly live in fear of racial violence from the trueborns. As Kayla grows wary of the trueborns' presence near their sector, she calls for Jal to move away from the river. Unfortunately, he does not comprehend Kayla's warning about impending violence and refuses, thereby placing them both in danger. As in the American antebellum south and Lokian society, it is irrelevant whether or not a slave errs; she or he is punished regardless. The GENs are conditioned to adhere to societal guidelines for their caste, and if any are violated, their personalities may be erased. Their bodies may be recycled and used to create other GENs. In other words, a violation of behavioral guidelines or a false accusation of such an act may result in literal, or figurative death for

GENs. In order to transform from object to subject, Kayla must put aside her fear of reprisal and become a leader for her people.

Although Kayla has little power in her society, in her role of slave mother, she proves adaptable and fights to safeguard her people despite her disadvantaged status. While Kayla is objectified in Lokian society—she is considered to be powerless—she also exists as the slave mother, there to protect her community. Even though Kayla believes in ensuring that the statutes regarding GENs are not violated, she sees her nurture-brother in danger and acts. In reference to Butler's *Parables* (1993), Elphick (2014) documented the religion, Earthseed, that Lauren creates and how it "places the individual's ability to adapt to his world as the ultimate power" (p. 188). Once Kayla witnesses the trueborn Livot injure Jal with a rock, she prays to the GEN god, the Infinite, and puts herself in harm's way by running to aid Jal. She also proceeds to verbally insist that Jal flee from incoming danger. As with the slave mother figure, Kayla's first thought is of protection for her community. Unfortunately, Kayla's heroic act is tainted by the narrator's description of the next steps she takes to save Jal. Instead of focusing on Kayla's selfless act, the reader's attention is placed on Kayla's non-human qualities—the animal DNA, which makes her extremely strong and links her to the stereotype of the slave as being animalistic.

Throughout slave narratives, slaves are repeatedly documented as being treated as chattel. In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1995), Douglass writes about his return to the plantation in Talbot County, Maryland, in order to be valued after the death of his master. Here, Douglass delineates how the slaves are placed alongside the farm's livestock as both are categorized as property. Throughout this quintessential slave narrative, Douglass repeatedly compared the slave's existence to that of an animal's in order to reinforce the notion that slaves were looked upon as animalistic and also to promote the need for a reclassification of slaves as human beings rather than property. Although Kayla steps in, physically takes hold of Jal, and proceeds to carry him ashore when trueborn Devak Manel prevents his friend, Livot, from tossing another projectile at Jal, Sandler's description of Kayla's animalistic state undermines her heroism and agency. While Kayla's behavior may look heroic—she is protecting Jal from physical injury and/or death—this impression is short-lived. The narrator notes that because "The bank was steep enough she had to pull herself up on all fours, but as usual the hyper-genned strength of her upper body got the better of her lower. She fumbled more than once, muddying her knees, adding to the ugly ankle-high sludge staining her best leggings" (Sandler, 2011). Kayla is portrayed as animalistic and uncoordinated. Before she maneuvers Jal out of the river, the two trueborns converse about Kayla's animal DNA, indicating their belief that she is partially porcine. As Kayla is in stage one of her development, she is objectified by both the trueborns and the narrator. The description of Kayla's heroic act is disparaging, her act of rebellion repressed and overshadowed by her analogy to a brute, another stock trait of the slave stereotype. Before Devak gets too close, Kayla informs Jal that he must go to their residence and, if she does not arrive later, tell their nurture-mother, Tala, where she has been. Kayla acts as a leader once more, protecting her community, before she reverts to her former objectified self and loses her power. Once Devak arrives in front of her, the comparisons regarding her appearance begin and her oppression continues.

While whiteness is not predominant in Sandler's novel, a certain appearance is shown to be preferred amongst the characters. Upon meeting Devak, Kayla looks him over appraisingly and then herself disparagingly. First, she admires Devak's "straight and glossy" hair while criticizing hers for being "wild and kinked"; she also includes Jal's "tight curls" in her description of appearance, a trait unsuitable in Loki as it indicates GEN association (Sandler, 2011). She splits traits into two groups: those which belong to trueborns and that which identify GENs (which, therefore, the majority consider undesirable). Devak's skin is described as "the perfect color, a rich medium brown. Not near black like Jal's, nor the pale mud color of her own skin, but a warm shade in between. The color of status" (Sandler, 2011). Devak is neither white nor black, thereby symbolically shown as inhabiting an in-between space. Devak and other trueborns are able to travel to any sector, their travel permits existing in the form of the body. Trueborns' complexions and ornate ear balis reveal their status to others, ensuring freedom of movement even as appearance hinders movement for other castes. In the "Author's Note" that follows *Tankborn* (2011), Sandler imparts the origins of the novel, stating that first it was a screenplay; however, when it was not produced, she revised the text, turning it into a novel. Specifically, Sandler retained Kayla and the GENs' characters, but the "caste system crept in, inspired by my long-ago conversations with an Indian-born co-worker" (Sandler, Author's Note). Sandler attempts to call attention to the plight of many oppressed peoples, but the inclusion of too many obscure her point by making it appear that all oppressed people have the same experiences, which is untrue. Devak, who may represent a person of Indian descent, has his appearance designated as ideal by Kayla. Kayla disparages her own appearance, which resembles that of a person of African descent, and focuses her comments mainly on hair and complexion. The remarks that Kayla makes about her appearance are primarily within her mind, showing how her oppressed state leads to self-hatred and loss of voice. Kayla fleetingly wonders about the differing appearances of humans on Loki, noting her GEN friend Beela's physical traits and their similarities to those of the trueborns.

Though Fen and Kayla both free themselves from their objectified states in the end, the process of doing so for Kayla requires more developmental stages than it did for Fen. Fen's first stage of development includes the identification of the objectified state; subsequently, in stage two, she unconsciously takes action to remove herself from her oppressed state. Unlike Fen, Kayla does not take action to free herself from oppression until her third stage. During Kayla's first stage of development, she acts to protect Jal, but not to remove him or herself from the objectified state. Even though Kayla violates social codes by defending Jal, speaking with Devak, and questioning her origins, she is still immersed in an oppressed community. When offered her first Assignment, Kayla begrudgingly accepts it, thereby continuing the practice of the GEN as slave. Notably, if Kayla had refused her Assignment, she could have been reset, or murdered. When she accepts, doubt creeps into her mind before being forcefully separated from her nurture-family. It is pushed aside by her devotion to the GEN god: "She knew it was the Infinite's will, that a GEN's trial of servitude was the only way back to His hands" (Sandler, 2011). This god, unbeknownst to Kayla until her third stage, has been created in order to ensure obedience from the GENs to the trueborns and their societal hierarchy. For Kayla, as with

many slaves, religion offers strength. Even when it is revealed that her god is created as a method of control, Kayla continues to worship, thereby revealing that she refuses to be dominated. Trites (2000), in reference to power, stated that there is a "relationship between discourse and action" (p. 48). In her mind, Kayla protests by expressing distaste for her societal guidelines, creating a solitary discourse; by doing so, she acknowledges that the hierarchy is flawed. Despite its flaws, however, she retreats in prayer, refusing to take action and repressing her rebellious spirit due to her fear of reprisal. In front of Tala and Jal, Kayla verbally asserts her loathing for the trueborns, but only when she is safely within the domestic space; once she is removed, she is alone amongst those that see her as inferior.

In the second stage of her transition, Kayla is offered illegal information from the rebels while she is in her domestic space, but it is in front of a GEN enforcer. At this point, Kayla does not know that Skal is a member of the resistance. In order for information to be transferred to the GENs, a datapod is placed against the GEN's tattoo. The transfer is a symbolic rape. During this transfer, the GEN may lose consciousness, does feel pain, and bleeds from the point of insertion. Even though Kayla knows Skal, he is a GEN enforcer and cannot be trusted. When uploaded, the information from the Kinship—the rebels desire for equality in Loki—informs her that there is a mysterious packet that she must hide. Debra Walker King (2008), in *African Americans and the Culture of Pain*, documented multiple moments during lynchings of African Americans where the men elected to remain silent. King stated, "Silence emerges as a defensive strategy, a mobility that allows torture victims some control over the way they experience and navigate pain and racial hurt. It is a way of rising above victimization, if only symbolically" (2008, p. 93). Once Kayla receives the message, she debates within herself its authenticity. She does not verbalize that she has received a message from the rebellion, nor does she tell anyone about the packet of information she is to protect. When she cannot find the packet in her bag, she dismisses the message until after Tanti is reset. Once Jal's friend, Tanti, is realigned by enforcer Ansgar for doing something as harmless as touching his datapod, Kayla begins to take more chances with her life and for her freedom. When Kayla locates the packet of information, she unconsciously takes action towards her freedom. At this time Kayla is unaware that the packet is from the Kinship, but she is still willing to conceal it stitched into a pair of her leggings. When she goes on Assignment, Kayla brings this packet to the trueborn sector. Importantly, Kayla becomes the caregiver for Zul, Devak's grandfather. It is Zul that is the leader of the rebellion and who also assisted in creating the GENs. He is able to offer Kayla information about her origins that she lacks.

At the Manel house, Kayla continues on her journey to the subjective position; in order to enact change in her society, Kayla must first obtain information that she will use to alter her own perspective regarding her place in Lokian society. Kayla cares for the elderly Zul, who, unbeknownst to her, unwillingly aided in the creation of the GENs and is a founder of the Kinship. Here, Sandler alludes to the master/slave relationship prevalent in slave narratives. In the traditional slave narrative, the narrator recounts many instances in which false information has been transmitted to slaves; this information is not discounted because the slaves, due to illiteracy, are unable to do so. Repeatedly in the novel, GENs assert the rumor that if a GEN touches a trueborn, then the GEN will be injured.

In her neo-slave narrative, Sandler addresses the master/slave relationship from a new standpoint: Zul is the contrite, heroic figure for which Kayla has sympathy. Because of this relationship, many myths are debunked—the GEN creation story and the establishment of the caste system—which results in Kayla defying the ruling authority's guidelines. Importantly, the body becomes a site of resistance that enables Kayla's rebellious acts. According to King (2000), in order to secure survival for their children, African American mothers in literature often relinquish a part of their bodies. In particular, King (2000) referred to Toni Morrison's Sethe's loss of mother's milk and Eva Peace's leg. In *Tankborn*, Kayla touches Zul without gloves and finds that there are no ill effects; later, Kayla verbally asserts to Devak that she is a human as he is. Kayla gives up the false beliefs regarding GENs instilled in her. Both aforementioned acts show that unconsciously her behavior regarding her enslavement is changing and she is headed towards freedom for herself.

In the third stage of her development, Kayla consciously acts to free herself from her forced confinement. As subject, Kayla chooses to take action that will, inevitably, change her society's caste system. Kayla's friend, Mishalla, is kidnapped by those, including Director Manel, who steal children in order to change them into GENs. Zul requests that Devak illegally enter the GEN monitoring Grid and that Kayla assist him. At this point, Kayla has been used to store data regarding the Kinship's uprising; she rightfully questions Zul's placing the information within her without her permission. She also accepts the task of illegally entering Director Manel's office and aids Devak in doing so in order to obtain the information needed to find Mishalla and the missing children. Once Kayla understands that she and other trueborn children who have been born with physical challenges are being transformed into GENs, she consciously chooses to assist the resistance. Kayla both voices her idea for breaking the door to Mishalla's prison down and completes the physical act. After Director Manel and his associates have been arrested and the stolen children returned to their families, Kayla officially joins the resistance in order to locate any other missing children. As in the slave narrative, Kayla is last witnessed freed from slavery and on her way to assisting others to break free as well.

Through their activism, both Fen and Kayla assist in securing freedom for future generations. When Fen is shown in her objectified state, she seems strong-willed and independent, but not community-minded. Stereotypically, the slave mother thinks more about the community, sacrificing herself in the process in the same way Lydia risks her health to care for the dying. Fen does not verbally reprimand Lydia about her actions, noting "No use telling her she a fool for being here when she carrying a new life and her time being so close" (Smith, 2013). Fen's parents show her how to protect herself, but only herself. Lydia teaches Fen to not only care for others through her ministering to the dying, but also to make choices that serve her community well. Through her parents and Lydia's teachings, which she applies while caring for Baby Girl, Fen transitions from adolescent to community leader. Her consciously chosen act of self-sacrifice, her life for Baby Girl's, reveals her desire to protect the *Orleans* society and to ensure its survival. When the novel concludes, both Fen and Baby Girl are depicted as slaves freed from societal objectification. In her own way, by embracing her ability to choose, even Fen escapes her state of bondage.

In *Tankborn*, Kayla is born into slavery, her

societal ideology engrained into her identity. Kayla is discontent in her objectified state, but is powerless to alter it until she obtains knowledge from the rebellion. Once she enters her second stage of development, Kayla fluctuates between rebelliousness and compliance. During the third stage of her development, Kayla discovers that there is a cure for being a GEN; if taken, the GEN will transform into a human. In a discussion of what she termed "identity politics", Trites (2000) stated that "Those who rebel against the mores of their social class are still identified in terms of the institution they are rejecting: their behavior as rebels is defined in terms of what they reject about social class as an institution" (p. 46). Kayla, rather than take it herself, elects to give the antidote to Mishalla, thereby remaining a GEN. Even though not taking the cure means that she cannot move from her state of bondage, she chooses the freedom of another over her own. Through her act of electing to remain a GEN, Kayla shows that she not only embraces her identity, but also that she is willing to work as an activist, helping to transform her society into one that values equality instead of intolerance and the community over the individual. By emphasizing both the community and the individual, Fen and Kayla reveal themselves to be true leaders. In authentic critical dystopian style, Smith and Sandler conclude their respective novels by hinting to their readers the possibility for future societal change in Fen and Kayla's communities (Elphick, 2014, p. 173).

It is the SF critical dystopia that allows readers to see adolescents as powerful, as enacting change in their respective communities. Unfortunately, SF texts featuring African American female characters still appear infrequently. When they do, the characters tend to have minor roles, their plotlines buried behind that of the white characters. While both Smith and Sandler's characters' portrayal could have been improved by placing more emphasis on ethnicity, *Orleans* and *Tankborn* drew much-needed attention to African American females in twenty-first century YA SF.

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Editors

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Alexander Cendrowski (Editorial Assistant) is currently pursuing his MFA at the University of South Florida (USA). He is a lemonade, ocean, and writing enthusiast, and his fiction recently appeared in *Word Riot, The Legendary,* and *Perversion Magazine.*

Looking to the Future

ESCAPE 2016 VELOCITY

Join the Museum of Science Fiction for *Escape Velocity*, an upcoming event that the Museum will host at the Gaylord Resort and Conference Center in National Harbor, Maryland from 1-3 July 2016. *Escape Velocity* is a micro-world's fair promoting science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) education within the context of science fiction by combining the fun of fan conventions with the fascination of science and engineering festivals. *Escape Velocity* seeks to make a measurable, positive impact in the community by boosting informal learning opportunities about complex academic areas. Its goal is to invigorate young people with an interest in STEAM learning by creating a world-class showcase of science and technology.

Highlights at *Escape Velocity* will include an exclusive Museum of Science Fiction exhibit; engaging discussion panels; virtual reality demonstrations; a starship bridge simulator; indoor drone racing; book signings; a programming track for kids; a science fiction film festival; comic book art workshops; a vendor and exhibitor hall; a VIP gala awards dinner; and an opening concert featuring Shaun Canon and headliner Megan Rüger.

Celebrity guests include keynote speaker Rod Roddenberry (*Star Trek*, 2017 series), Jamie Anderson (*Firestorm*), Gigi Edgley (*Farscape*), Morgan Gendel (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*), Dan Curry (*Star Trek*), John Morton (*Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*), Adam Nimoy (*For the Love of Spock*), and Mark Okrand (creator of the Klingon language). Literary guests include authors Greg Bear (*Eon*), David Brin (*The Postman*), and James Suriano (*Inbiotic*).

Science guests include Kellie Gerardi (Masten Space Systems), David Grinspoon (astrobiologist), Pam Melroy (retired Air Force test pilot, former NASA astronaut), Mason Peck (Cornell University), Michelle Thaller (NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center), C. Alex Young (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center).

To learn more about *Escape Velocity* and to purchase tickets, please visit www.escapevelocity.events/

Museum of Science Fiction

Based in Washington, DC, the Museum of Science Fiction is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a narrative on the science fiction genre across all media and its relationship to the real world. The Museum's mission is to create a center of gravity where art and science are powered by imagination. Science fiction is the story of humanity: who we were, who we are, and who we dream to be. The Museum will present this story through displays, interactivity, and programs in ways that excite, educate, entertain, and create a new generation of dreamers.

In the first step to fulfilling the Museum's mission, our team will construct a Preview Museum in the Washington, DC metro region where we can test exhibit concepts, programs, and interactive technologies. This will give visitors a place to provide feedback that will help shape the development process for our full-scale facility. The Preview Museum will also allow us to share how interactive exhibits can be used as educational tools in conjunction with classroom materials that teachers can integrate into their daily lesson plans.

To learn more about the Museum of Science Fiction and its current projects, please visit www.museumofsciencefiction.org