

Feminist Implications of Anti-leisure in Dystopian Fiction

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This essay provides a feminist perspective on dystopian anti-leisure. Dystopias are futuristic anti-utopias where leisure is distorted and individuals are manipulated to further the agenda of the politically powerful (Rabkin, 1983). The purpose of this essay is to illustrate how women in dystopian societies are subjected to anti-leisure as evidenced by the devaluation of their personal leisure spaces. A feminist definition of leisure is used to guide a poststructuralist feminist analysis of four dystopian novels: Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* and George Orwell's *1984*. Synopsis and discussion are then employed to demonstrate how two binary oppositions of female disempowerment are evidenced in the novels and to consider how these same forces operate in reality to jeopardize women's personal leisure spaces.

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Introduction

When considering ultimate terms and their implications, rhetorician Richard Weaver (1985) states, "if one has to select the one term which in our day carries the greatest blessing, and—to apply a useful test—whose antonym carries the greatest rebuke, one will not go far wrong in naming 'progress'" (p. 212). Yet this same term, when applied to anti-leisure in dystopian fiction as experienced by women, carries a great curse. For it is in the name of progress that the personal leisure spaces of women become compromised.

In fiction, a dystopia is a futuristic anti-utopia or "bad place," generally dealing with a societal vision that dramatically addresses universal fears of a monstrous situation (Rabkin, 1983). The horrors of dystopian societies are often depicted in part by the overt distortion of leisure. As defined by Burnett and Rollin (2000), anti-leisure in dystopian fiction is "closely akin to our acceptable leisure, but perverted to suit dystopian ends. . .dystopias use leisure as a means of retaining power of the elite by regulating identity, suppressing individual thought, manipulating self-sufficiency and modera-

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tion, providing distraction and requiring non-voluntary and often vicious forms of leisure” (pp. 2-3). Underlying these four themes is human inferiorization. The current analysis reveals how this inferiorization targets women.

The purpose of this essay is to illustrate how women in dystopian societies experience anti-leisure as evidenced by the devaluation of their personal leisure spaces. First, a brief historical consideration of women’s leisure is offered, followed by a feminist definition of leisure and an introduction to two binary oppositions that suggest female disempowerment. Second, the feminist definition of leisure is used to guide a poststructuralist feminist analysis of four widely read dystopian novels: Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Player Piano* and George Orwell’s *1984*, with an emphasis on demonstrating how anti-leisure compromises women’s personal leisure spaces. Third, synopsis and discussion are used to illustrate how two binary oppositions of female disempowerment are evidenced in the novels, and to consider how these same forces operate in reality to jeopardize women’s personal leisure spaces.

Women’s Leisure

Gaarder (1996) summarized a common Athenian view of women by stating, “Aristotle was inclined to believe that women were incomplete in some way” (p. 116). Gaarder continued by noting the long-term impact of this perspective: “Aristotle’s erroneous view of the sexes was doubly harmful because it . . . held sway throughout the Middle Ages” (p. 117). Some two thousand years later, we learn from Veblen (1899) that perceptions of women’s societal roles had changed little. In his critique of the leisure class, Veblen stated that women were treated as “chattel” (p. 35) to be appropriated against their will if necessary and exploited for their pecuniary value to the master:

In a sense which has been greatly qualified in scope and rigour, but which has by no means lost its meaning even yet; this tradition says that the woman, being a chattel, should consume only what is necessary to her sustenance,—except so far as her further consumption contributes to the comfort and good repute of her master. (p. 45)

Thus, a woman’s “leisure,” as defined by the procurement of material goods, was best dictated by its reflection on her husband or keeper.

The social structuring of women as the inferior “second sex” (de Beauvoir, 1988) whose existence and worth are defined in relation to the males who possess them has continued over the century from Veblen’s time to the present day. While women actively banded together during what is commonly referred to as the first wave of feminism associated with the 1920 women’s right to vote, freedom and equality had not yet been achieved. This articulation of the meaning and value of a women’s life defined only in relation to husband and family was echoed, for example, by Simone de Beauvoir (1988) in France in 1949:

Now, woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. . . In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. . . To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal—this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. (p. 680)

Friedan (1963) brought an American context to de Beauvoir's ideas. Associated with the second wave of feminism, Friedan explained how at the end of World War II, American women were still openly discouraged from seeking independence:

They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights—the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists fought for. Some women, in their forties and fifties, still remembered painfully giving up those dreams, but more of the younger women no longer even thought about them. . . All they had to do was devote their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children. (pp. 11-12)

Contemporary third wave feminists acknowledge the on-going struggle against the inferiorization of women. Henderson noted, "Women's leisure is not impossible, but neither has leisure become more accessible for most women in the world" (1995, pp. 9-10). In fact, it has been repeatedly argued that access to leisure has steadily declined for women as increasing role demands place further constraints on their discretionary time (e.g., Deem, 1986; Karsten, 1995; Wimbush & Talbot, 1988). The historic struggle against men's power to define (Lerner, 1993) continues, with the recognition of social, political, economic and physical exploitation faced by many women (Scraton, 1994).

The purpose of feminist leisure research is to move a "social change agenda forward in a way that is necessary if leisure is to be an entitlement to all people" (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999, p. 173). Two specific ways in which an agenda regarding leisure for women has been established are through: 1) the establishment of a feminist definition of leisure as personal space; and 2) a movement for the elimination of juxtaposed oppositions that imply female inferiority (Wearing, 1998).

First, Wearing, drawing on Foucault's views of power, resistance and objectification (Faubion, 1994; Foucault, 1982), challenged traditional definitions of leisure. Wearing (1998) stated an alternative, feminist definition of leisure:

So leisure here does not signify non-work time, activity or experience or space—it is resignified to mean personal spaces, physical and metaphorical, where

women can explore their own desires and pleasures and perform acts that allow them to become women in their own right, to constitute diverse subjectivities and femininities which go beyond what women have been told they should be. . .one's own space. . .which one has control to fill with whatever persons, objects, activities or thoughts that one chooses. (p. 149)

Second, poststructuralist feminists challenge binary oppositions that lead to the placement of women as inferior. Two common oppositions that poststructuralist feminists seek to eliminate are: (1) body in opposition to mind and (2) nature in opposition to culture (Wearing, 1998). Wearing (1998) stated, "it has been left to poststructuralist feminists to suggest ways in which the deconstruction of these dichotomies may be specifically applied to women's leisure" (p. 149).

One way in which these dichotomies can be deconstructed is through a consideration of how they impact the personal leisure spaces of female characters in fiction. Dystopian fiction offers the reader a glimpse of a hypothetical future that is seemingly horrific, while challenging the reader to consider the reality of these same horrors. In dystopian fiction, social changes lead to the transformation of a given culture, often resulting in a return to chattel status for women. Thus, often in the name of social progress, women are forced to regress. In the four novels under consideration, women's personal leisure spaces are severely compromised, as evidenced by the continual manipulation and distortion of their leisure opportunities.

Analysis of Dystopian Fiction

Burnett and Rollin (2000) emphasized that anti-leisure perverts acceptable views of leisure to further the socio-political conditions of the dystopia. The dystopian societies of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Vonnegut's *Player Piano* and Orwell's *1984* are examined individually using poststructuralist feminist analysis to illustrate how anti-leisure is used to distort women's personal leisure spaces in order to perpetuate the dystopian social structure.

The Handmaid's Tale

Booker (1994) summarized Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* by stating that the novel describes "A dystopia projecting a nightmare future where religious fundamentalism is imposed by brute force on a stupefied populace" (p. 78). By and large, the victims of this brute force are women.

Atwood's Handmaids are sexually objectified. In the Republic of Gilead, where sterility has become the rule rather than the exception, the potentially fertile Handmaids are a politically charged commodity, and are treated as such. They are taught to think of themselves as "seeds" (p. 25) "ovens" (p. 211) "chalices" (p. 211) and "cradles" (p. 353). Even their names are taken away, as described in the epilogue:

She does not see fit to supply us with her original name, and indeed all records of it would have been destroyed upon her entry into the Rachel and Leah Re-

education Center. "Offred" gives no clue, since, like "Ofglen" and "Ofwarren," it was a patronymic, composed of the possessive preposition and the first name of the gentleman in question. (p. 387)

Controlled access to leisure reinforces the Handmaids' enslavement. They are not allowed to read, to play or to even talk freely. Offred, the protagonist, ponders, "How I used to despise such talk. Now I long for it. At least it was talk. An exchange of sorts" (p. 14). The fitness they receive through regimented exercise and daily walks to market is enforced as a way to keep their reproductive systems functioning and is strictly monitored, as Offred reflects, "We aren't allowed to go there except in twos. This is supposed to be for our protection, though the notion is absurd: we are well protected already. The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers" (p. 26). Friendships, then, are strictly forbidden, this mandate taken to the extent that the Handmaids can only speak to one another in dictated generalities and are not permitted to look at one another directly.

Mandatory group leisure also reinforces their status as portrayed in the rituals of Birth Days and Salvagings. The excitement of Birth Days is palpable, during which the Handmaids are permitted to witness and allowed to assist one of their Sisters in the ultimate of accomplishments, giving birth. During Birth Days, leisure interaction constraints are lifted to an extent as suggested in the following passage where Offred and another Handmaid rejoice in Ofglen's good fortune:

Impulsively she grabs my hand, squeezes it, as we lurch around the corner; she turns to me and I see her face, there are tears running down her cheeks, but tears of what? Envy, disappointment? But no, she's laughing, she throws her arms around me, I've never seen her before, she hugs me, she has large breasts, under the red habit, she wipes her sleeve across her face. On this day we can do anything we want. I revise that: within limits. (pp. 142-143)

In contrast to the leisure allowances of Birth Days, Salvagings are mandatory bloodbaths. An arena of spectators watches, with "the television camera discreetly off to the side" (p. 351), while some dissenters of the Republic are hanged and others literally torn to pieces by the Handmaids. The "Participation" (p. 357) is a perverse gift, a heinous game in which the Handmaids must participate or else be perceived as dissenters themselves. When the whistle blows, the Handmaids can do as they please to a chosen convict until the whistle blows again. Offred describes the performance:

There is a surge forward. . . The air is bright with adrenaline, we are permitted anything and this is freedom. . . Now there are sounds, gasps, a low noise like growling, yells, and the red bodies tumble forward and I can no longer see, he's obscured by arms, fists, feet. . . I see the Wives and daughters leaning forward in their chairs, the Aunts on the platform gazing down with interest. They must have a better view from up there. (pp. 359-360)

Offred despises the situation into which she has been forced, but realizes the futility of resistance, "I want everything back, the way it was. But there is no point to it, this wanting" (p. 157). Throughout the novel, however, she continues an inward battle to retain her sense of self: "I want to be valued,

in ways that I am not; I want to be more than valuable. I repeat my former name, remind myself of what I once could do, how others saw me" (p. 126).

Atwood's Handmaids, then, are an extreme example of almost complete loss of personal leisure spaces. They have no choice regarding the treatment of their bodies; no permission to select the individuals with whom they pass time; no control over their lives.

Brave New World

If Atwood's Handmaids can be said to be in a state of painful self-awareness of their social condition, then, in contrast, the women of Huxley's *Brave New World* reside in a realm of blissful ignorance. Unlike Atwood's Handmaids, the women in *Brave New World* are fully accepting of their status as objects of sex. Matter (1983) describes *Brave New World* as "A satiric attack upon. . . trust in progress through science and mechanization" (p. 94). The progress of the World State includes extensive genetic manipulation and complete conditioning through hypnopaedia, or sleep-teaching, in the norms governing socially desirable behaviors. For women, this means that the values of femininity are so deeply engrained that it seems absurd to question them. Thus, through scientific progress and technology, women have been programmed to desire interactions which require "submissiveness and passivity—qualities at odds with a fundamental goal of feminist advocacy—self-determination" (Campbell, 1990, p. 393). Thus, the women of Huxley's *Brave New World* lose their personal leisure spaces because they have no ability to go beyond what they have been told they should be.

In terms of leisure behaviors, World State women are trained to be consumers of sex, soma and material goods. World State women put forth much effort in preparing for and engaging in sexual activity. Thus, bodily perfection is a constant source of time consumption and psychological concern:

Lenina got out of the bath, towed herself dry, took hold of a long flexible tube plugged into the wall, presented the nozzle to her breast, as though she meant to commit suicide, pressed down the trigger. A blast of warmed air dusted her with the finest talcum powder. Eight different scents and eau-de-Cologne were laid on in little taps over the wash-basin. She turned on the third from the left, dabbed herself with chypre and, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, went out to see if one of the vibro-vacuum machines were free. (pp. 36-37)

Monogamy is frowned upon and openly discouraged, as evidenced through the following exchange between Lenina and Fanny, upon Fanny discovering that Lenina has been sleeping with only one man:

"But after all," Lenina was protesting, "it's only been about four months now since I have been having Henry."

"Only four months! I like that. And what's more," Fanny went on, pointing an accusing finger, "there's been no one else except Henry all that time. Has

there? . . . Of course there's no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that's all. He has other girls, doesn't he?"

Lenina admitted it.

"Of course he does. Trust Henry Foster to be the perfect gentleman—always correct. And then there's the Director to think of. You know what a stickler. . ."

Nodding, "He patted me on the behind this afternoon," said Lenina.

"There, you see!" Fanny was triumphant. "That shows what he stands for. The strictest conventionality." (pp. 40-41)

Thus, World State women are highly trained objects of pleasure, and perceive no costs associated with their socially designated roles. Interestingly, the few who object to the sexual treatment of women are men. Bernard continually despairs that the object of his affection, Lenina, "doesn't mind being meat" (p. 93). However, his attempts at alternative leisure activities, such as going for a walk, are consistently shunned by Lenina. Further, in rebuttal to Bernard's desire to discuss emotions with Lenina, she states a trained verse, "When the individual feels, the community reels" (p. 94) and despairs that Bernard's obvious misery is because "Perhaps he had found her too plump, after all" (p. 94). John, the Savage, also attempts to woo Lenina with "old-fashioned" methods. He wishes to prove himself worthy of her love, he wishes to court her, to marry her, to "live together always" (p. 195). Lenina is appalled by these "horrible" (p. 195) ideas. Thus, while the World State women have been conditioned beyond the point of questioning their sexual roles, it is two men who are ostracized for confronting the sexual status of women and, in the case of John, ultimately maddened into committing suicide.

When not involved in sexual activities, World State women are conditioned to indulge in two other "major instruments of social stability" (p. 5), soma and consumerism. Soma is a happiness drug, provided by the World State as a form of emotional control: "Lenina and Henry were yet dancing in another world—the warm, the richly coloured, the infinitely friendly world of soma-holiday. How kind, how good-looking, how delightfully amusing every one was!" (p. 77). Materialism is encouraged through hypnopaedia as yet another outlet for time, as well as an economic maneuver. Night after night the voices would whisper, "I do love flying, I do love having new clothes, I do love. . ." (p. 48). In short, World State women are programmed pleasure seekers, incapable of exploring the diverse subjectivities that allow women to realize personal leisure spaces.

Player Piano

Similar to *Brave New World*, the women in Vonnegut's *Player Piano* are little more than decorations. Technology has advanced product development to the point where little assistance is needed from men to keep society running. And, due to their lower status, even less aid is needed from women. Having no occupation of consequence, women are consistently shown to be

in search of self-confidence through their male counterparts. As summarized by Segal (1983), technological progress in Vonnegut's America led to material prosperity but resulted in "loss of meaningful labor and in turn of personal identity and social purpose" (p. 163).

Women's leisure in *Player Piano* is in direct contrast to that of Atwood's *Handmaids*. While the *Handmaids* have all freely chosen leisure time taken away, the women of Vonnegut's *Player Piano* suffer from anomic leisure. Anomic leisure occurs when a lack of societal obligations leads to too much free time. Anomic leisure implies a "lack of structural constraints and obligations, coupled with feelings of dislike, antipathy, confusion and possibly a sense of powerlessness to combat such conditions" (Gunter & Gunter, 1980, p. 369).

The lack of sufficient occupation and the associated psychological and social impacts are stressed throughout the novel. Anita, the wife of the protagonist, Paul, is all too well aware that her social position is directly attributable to her marriage. She was born on the "wrong side" of the river and, as Paul's former secretary, used her sexuality to trap Paul into marriage because she had no other avenue for advancement, a fact that she is reminded of in the following dialogue as they are discussing the lower class, a group Anita now despises:

"I must have had something these people don't, or you wouldn't have married me."

"Oligomenorrhoea," he said

She blinked. "What's that?"

"Oligomenorrhoea—that's what you had that these others don't. Means delayed menstrual period."

"How on earth did you learn a word like that?"

"I looked it up a month after we were married, and it etched itself on the inside of my skull." (p. 153)

Anita's weapons are her sexual and social prowess. Paul concedes that Anita has "a sexual genius that gave Paul his one unqualified enthusiasm in life" (p. 117). Anita also recognizes that the success of her anomic lifestyle is dependent on her social status, and she works unceasingly to promote Paul, and thus herself. Paul caters to her need in a condescending manner:

This was a game she never tired of—one that took every bit of Paul's patience to play. She was forever casting herself as a person of influence and making Paul play dialogues with her. There would then be a critique, in which his responses were analyzed, edited and polished by her. No real dialogues ever came close to her phantasies, which served chiefly to show how primitive a notion she had of men of affairs and of how business was done. (p. 68)

Paul's attitude towards Anita is emphasized by his allowance of objectified communication by his acquaintance, Ed Finnerty, directed at Anita when she is trying to get Paul to leave for a social function:

"It's time to go to the club."

"It's time for *you* to go to the club," said Finnerty. "Paul and I'll be along later."

"We're going together and now, Ed. We're ten minutes late as it is. And I won't be bullied by you. I refuse." She smiled unconvincingly.

"Let's go," said Paul.

"Anita," said Finnerty, "if you don't show more respect for men's privacy, I'll design a machine that's everything that you are, and *does* show respect." (p. 35)

Anita's dream of social advancement is realized upon Paul being offered a powerful position in Pittsburgh: "Anta slept—utterly satisfied, not so much with Paul as by the social orgasm of, after years of the system's love play, being offered Pittsburgh" (p. 116). When later faced with Paul's imminent loss of social stature, Anita flees to the highest bidder, Shepard, who is Paul's colleague. Anita defends her adultery with Shepard by claiming sexual objectification by Paul: "All you need is something stainless steel, shaped like a woman, covered with sponge rubber, and heated to body temperature" (pp. 215-216). In actuality, Anita would rather move on than be trapped with a soon-to-be lower class husband. Therefore, having few opportunities for independence due to technological progress, the upper class women in *Player Piano* learn to manipulate their sexuality to maintain their desired leisure status. By defining themselves in terms of the men who support them, upper class women are deprived of the diverse subjectivities of personal leisure spaces.

Lower class women in Vonnegut's *Player Piano* do not fare any better than the upper class women. When Paul and Finnerty visit a bar across the river, upon discovering their status as engineers, one of the women with whom they are drinking states self-deprecatingly, "What are you doing over here—having a good laugh at the dumb bunnies?" Trapped by low IQs, these women have even fewer employment and social opportunities than their upper class counterparts, and their self-esteem suffers accordingly.

The anomic status of lower class women is further illustrated when an international politician arrives in New York to learn about the American experience. As part of his tour, he visits the home of Edgar and Wanda, and insistently questions Wanda about what she does with her time since modern conveniences have taken over most housework (p. 142): "Wanda blushed and looked down at the floor, and worried the carpet edge with her toe, 'Oh television,' she murmured. 'Watch that a lot, don't we, Ed? And I spend a lot of time with the kids, little Delores and young Edgar, Jr. You know. Things.'" During the same visit, upon the tour guide discovering that Wanda's ultrasonic washer was broken, Wanda interjected, "Oh, I don't mind. . . Really, I like doin' 'em that way. It's kind of a relief. A body needs a change. I don't mind. Gives me something to do" (p. 142). The visit brings to the forefront Wanda's feelings of uselessness and spawns the following reaction to the realization that her husband is having an affair:

"It's me that's no good to anybody," said Wanda wearily. "And now I'm too fat for anybody but the kids to love me. My mother got fat, and my grandmother got fat, and guess it's in the blood; but somebody needed them, they were still some good. But you don't need me, Ed, and you can't help it if you don't love me any more." (p. 144)

As noted by Gunter and Gunter, "uninterrupted leisure cannot be consistently satisfying" (1980, p. 369). The state of anomie in which the vast majority of the women in *Player Piano* face, coupled with the societal degradation of women that is prevalent in the novel, results in despairingly low self and life satisfaction. While leisure time is plentiful, persistent feelings of inferiority inhibit their ability to experience true personal leisure spaces.

1984

Orwell's *1984* depicts a totalitarian society where "mechanical applications of technology lend themselves directly to political oppression" (Booker, 1994, p. 208). The roles of women in *1984* are illustrated primarily through the experiences and reminiscences of Winston, the main character in the novel.

Similar to *The Handmaid's Tale*, leisure as a whole in Orwell's *1984* is severely constrained. Two primary social classes reside in the country of Oceania, Party members and the proles. Leisure, generally, and the female experience specifically, differ accordingly. Leisure for all Party members is highly structured. Each morning Party members awaken to an "ear-splitting whistle" (p. 29) over the telescreen at 7:15 a.m. to take part in mandatory "Physical Jerks" (p. 29). Throughout the day, Party members are surrounded by telescreens, so privacy is impossible. Basic necessities including clothing and food, as well as luxury items such as chocolate, coffee, cigarettes and gin, are severely rationed. At 11:00 a.m. Party members participate in "Two Minutes Hate" (p. 14), a political spectacle where they are to scream out against a perpetrator of freedom, Emmanuel Goldstein. As pondered by Winston:

The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretense was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. (p. 16)

A further encouraged leisure activity for Party members is attendance at hangings of war prisoners, a "popular spectacle" (p. 23) that occurred about once a month. Party members spent most other evenings at the Community Center. The goal of consistently planned activities is Party control: "In principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed. . .to do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous" (p. 70).

Party women are encouraged to spend any spare free time volunteering for Junior Anti-Sex League, a political organization whose purpose is to advocate "complete celibacy for both sexes" (p. 57). Women are trained from a very early age to repress their sexual instincts and are given monthly talks conditioning them to hate sex. Similar to *Brave New World's* hypnopædia, but

with opposite intent, the women of Oceania are so conditioned regarding their views of sex that to go against them implies deviance. When reminiscing about his wife, from whom he is separated, Winston recalls, "To embrace her was like embracing a jointed wooden image" (p. 58). The goal of the Party in altering women's views of sex is to "remove all pleasure from the sexual act" (p. 57). Wives of Party members force themselves to have sex with their husbands and are taught to think of the act as "Our duty to the Party" (p. 111) to propagate the species. As explained by Julia, Winston's lover and fellow social deviant:

When you make love you're using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don't give a damn for anything. They can't bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you're happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot? (pp. 110-111)

Party members are encouraged to consistently participate in anti-leisure activities to further the goals of the political Inner Party. In the process, women are trained to hate men and hate each other. As noted by Julia, "How I hate women!" (p. 108). Winston's affair with Julia is a symbol of rebellion towards the perversion of sex by the Party: "Their embrace had been a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act" (p. 105). Of course, this form of leisure rebellion is intolerable to the Party and Winston and Julia's eventual forced betrayal of one another annihilates their sexual instincts: "They could have lain down on the ground and done *that* if they had wanted to. His flesh froze with horror at the thought of it" (p. 239). Thus, the exploration of physical desires and pleasures, an essential component of women's personal leisure spaces, is forbidden.

The leisure of the proles differs in distinct ways from that of Party members. Because of their low class status, proles enjoy relative leisure freedom in comparison to Party members:

Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbors, films, football, beer, and, above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult. . . The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished; divorce was permitted. . . They were beneath suspicion. As the Party slogan put it: "Proles and animals are free." (p. 62)

Proles do not benefit in all leisure arenas, however. They live in abject poverty, with access to desirable material goods even more severely restricted than it is for Party members. Further, due to lack of financial resources, female proles must prostitute themselves to Party members as a means of survival:

Tacitly the Party was even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which could not be altogether suppressed. Mere debauchery did not

matter very much, so long as it was furtive and joyless, and only involved the women of a submerged and despised class. (p. 57)

Therefore, women's leisure instincts are manipulated and extorted to further the Party's political goals. Whether Party member or prole, the women depicted in *1984* are denied access to personal leisure spaces.

Discussion

Although the novels analyzed for this essay are fiction, the feminist issues they raise are not. International debate over reproductive choice (e.g., Davis, 1997; Guerrero, 1997; Ollenburger & Moore, 1998; Sanger, 1988a; Sanger, 1988b; Threlfall & Rowbotham, 1996) and genetic manipulation (Haraway, 1997) continues. A multibillion dollar body-shape industry sets standards that scarce few can achieve (e.g., Greer, 1999; Valdes, 1995), resulting in "painful disciplines, and discourses which choke out the active participation in definitions of women's identity and women's well-being" (Mason, 1999, p. 244). Economic equality in the workplace remains elusive (e.g., Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Faludi, 1991; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Sidler, 1997). Each barrier impacts a woman's choice and identity. Each barrier constrains women's personal leisure spaces.

Two common oppositions that poststructuralist feminists seek to eliminate, which are instead reinforced in the four novels, are: 1) body in opposition to mind, leading to a treatment of women as sexual objects and the dismissal of women's intellectual worth; and 2) nature in opposition to culture, leading to the disunity of women. The following discussion is used to summarize the presence of these binary oppositions of female disempowerment in the novels, and to consider how these same forces operate in reality to jeopardize women's personal leisure spaces.

Body in Opposition to Mind

The women featured in the four dystopian novels analyzed are, whether willingly or unwillingly, treated as little more than sexual objects. This socially constructed convention dictates their leisure options and resources. The Handmaids are slaves, World State women are toys, Anita cannot advance without her sexual prowess, and the women of Oceania are sexual automata. For dystopian women, healthy sexual relationships are not an option.

Sexuality is central to many of the cultural, social and political issues that have been raised by second wave and contemporary feminists (Jackson & Scott, 1996). "Within dominant cultural discourses, men are cast as the active initiators of sexual activity and women as passive recipients of male advances; men's desires are seen as uncontrollable urges which women are paradoxically expected both to satisfy and restrain" (Jackson & Scott, 1996, pp. 17-18). This ongoing perception of power in sex as being a male-exclusive domain deprives women of the ability to express or act on their own desires and creates an arena of acceptance for sexual violence (Hollibaugh, 1996).

Simultaneously, the body in opposition to mind dichotomy results in a devaluation of women's cognitive capabilities, thus undermining the state-of-mind aspects of leisure. In dystopian societies, women's intellectual endeavors are stifled. For example, reading is a leisure activity that is discouraged or denied in three of the four novels. Handmaids are forbidden access to any reading materials. World State women are trained that, "You can't consume much if you sit still and read books" (Huxley, 1932, p. 50). Julia of *1984* is bored by reading and insists to Winston, "I am not literary, dear. . ." (Orwell, 1949, p. 109).

The dystopian discouragement of women as intellectually curious readers is a present day concern. In discussing the portrayal of women's leisure in magazine advertisements, Bolla (1990) stated, "Analysis of more than 1000 advertisements spanning 24 years failed to uncover a single example of a woman reading. Women's leisure appears to be highly sedentary, often mindless, and heavily dependent on men" (Bolla, 1990, p. 251). As women's creative thought processes are stifled, in both work and leisure, their sense of identity suffers and reality becomes hazy and other-defined.

The consequences of the body in opposition to mind experiences of women can be life-defining and life-threatening. The experience of "base women" (Enloe, 1989, p. 65), that is, wives of American soldiers living within military bases, is used to illustrate. As military superiority is often an indicator of a nation's progress, and as militarism is a theme that runs throughout dystopian fiction, parallels between dystopian women and base women offer an exemplar of dystopia realized. Enloe's (1989) analysis of base women includes the following discussion of keeping military wives satisfied in the late 1960s:

The Hoovers, washing machines and electric organs flown into the US base at Effingham are evidence of the American army's attempt to satisfy not only male soldiers, but also their wives, while serving abroad. Many women are quite content with these privileges. They find life on base secure and comfortable. They adopt the military's way of viewing the world: the military's adversary is their adversary; their husband's rank is their rank. . . Those conventions lower wives' expectations of paid work and careers of their own, encourage them to derive their own sense of self-worth from their husbands accomplishments, and suppress wives' stories of depression and physical abuse for fear that they might damage their husbands' chances of promotion. Base commanders also need beliefs about femininity that encourage wives to take care of family affairs when their husbands are away on maneuvers yet gladly relinquish any authority that comes from such responsibilities when the husband returns. (p. 72)

While the roles of women associated with the military have evolved substantially since the 1960s, the base women phenomenon continues for many military wives. Enloe (1989) notes in general that "A women living on a military base wants to feel secure. And her own advancement depends on her husband performing successfully enough to win promotion" (p. 91). Thus, dependency and other-defined self-concepts, rather than independence and intellectual pursuit, are a fact of life for many base wives. This lack of independence can have tragic consequences. In a six-week stretch in

the summer of 2002, four women, all mothers married to soldiers stationed at Fort Bragg Army base, were murdered by their husbands (ABCNEWS Internet Ventures, 2002). This string of killings brought international attention to a social environment that deters mental health counseling, as it can jeopardize a soldier's career to be seen as unstable, yet has above average marital stress and domestic violence, with a military domestic violence rate of 16.5 incidents per 1,000 people in 2001, in comparison to 3.1 incidents of domestic violence per 1,000 people in the civilian population (in Feminist Daily News Wire, 2002).

The murders of these four base women are an extreme example of a male-defined dystopia come to life. This victimization highlights the fact that women's personal leisure spaces, which include going beyond what women are told they can be, are not universally accessible. Importantly, the base women concept is neither universally within, nor unique to, military relationships. Instead, it stands as an illustration of the consequences of systemic female inferiorization.

Nature in Opposition to Culture

For feminist views of leisure access to be realized, women must respect themselves and each other. Dystopian societies, on the contrary, advocate self and other loathing. In *The Handmaid's Tale* and *1984*, friendships are forbidden and spying is encouraged. In *Brave New World*, relationships are purposefully superficial. In *Player Piano*, jealousy and competitiveness overshadow contrived conviviality. By tearing down the social fabric of the given societies, dystopian political agendas are maintained. Simultaneously, women are denied a culture of their own.

Feminist researchers point out the results of women disunited. In the mid-1900s de Beauvoir wrote of circumstances in which the disunity of women promoted the reproduction of an unequal social structure in which woman represented only negative aspects of human nature (de Beauvoir, 1988). Women were unable to organize themselves to change this perception of their sex because they lacked a sense of community, which stemmed from their allegiance to men before other women:

They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men—fathers or husbands—more firmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women; if they are white, their allegiance is to white men, not to Negro women. (p. 679)

While the second wave of feminism may be condemned for similar disunity across barriers of class and race, a major component of the second wave was consciousness-raising. Through this respectful communication, women began to see that the discrimination they faced was not of their own making. It became clear that the inferiorization of women was instead collective and systemic—a function of the structure of the society in which they

lived (Echols, 1989; Myers, Anderson, & Risman, 1998). As explained by Jackson and Scott (1996):

Women discovered that many of their individual problems and anxieties were shared by others and concluded that they were more than merely personal, they derived from our social situation and were characteristic of our oppression as women. . . Consciousness-raising was not, then, a self-indulgent collective act of introspection. On the contrary, the purpose of talking about our personal lives was to pool our experiences, to discover common ground among us and to use this as the basis of political analysis and action. (p. 5)

The sense of unity and sisterhood brought about by consciousness-raising was, and is, being met by social pressure for disunity among women as evidenced through popular culture representation. For example, in an analysis of images of women at leisure in women's magazine advertisements from 1965 to 1987, Bolla (1990) found that, "Both the adult and young female markets have been heavily exposed to the message that leisure depends on a man. Women were shown participating mainly with men and rarely with other women" (p. 251). As the second wave of feminism gained momentum and Title IX was passed, the depiction of women as dependent on men for their leisure would ideally have followed suit, with a marked decrease in this representation. Not so, as Bolla (1990) found that advertisements dated from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s illustrated a substantial increase in women's dependency on men for leisure. Similarly, in an analysis of human images in travel magazine advertisements from 1969 to 1999, Bowen (2002) found that women tourists were most likely to have appeared as part of a heterosexual couple, then solo, and then as part of a family unit. Women's leisure was depicted as dependent on men. If a woman was not with a man, then she was alone or with her family, rather than at leisure with other women. The powerful force of the media continues to operate to disassemble women's collectivity.

Conclusion

Dystopian fiction offers a view of social progress that is contradictory to standard ideals. Poststructuralist feminist analysis reveals that these contradictions are as much fact as fiction. By working back from a fictional future, awareness of what is happening today can be put into a perspective that calls for action to eliminate the juxtapositions of body in opposition to mind and nature in opposition to culture that imply female inferiority.

The universal fears of a monstrous situation (Rabkin, 1983) that encompass dystopias are, in essence, universal realities that must be continually acknowledged and challenged. Only through recognition can binary oppositions be reclaimed, allowing for an appreciation of body in union with mind and nature in union with culture. The examination of extreme fictional distortions of leisure allows similar forces operating in contemporary society to be challenged.

Societal inferiorization of women leads to a denial of personal leisure spaces. In line with the purpose of feminist leisure research, this analysis can contribute to social change by revealing how fictional horrors parallel an unfortunate truth of compromised physical and cognitive leisure spaces. Consistent exposure of themes of disempowerment operating in society can further the agenda of ensuring personal leisure spaces for all women.

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