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POSTMODERN AND POSTHUMAN LITERATURE

A Thesis

by

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POSTMODERN AND POSTHUMAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

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      The thesis is an analysis and application of Posthuman theory. Beginning with a debate

on societal progress between Slavoj Zizek and Francis Fukuyama, the thesis explores the

possibility of a Posthuman ethics. The main theoretical contributors are Carey Wolfe, Corey

Anton, and Benedict Anderson. The primary texts analyzed are Eric Blair's (George Orwell)

1984, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, and William Gibson's Neuromancer.

DEDICATION

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the love and support of my family and friends. My mother, Jeanine Gallagher, my father, John N. Gallagher, my brothers Blaine and Austin Gallagher, my friends, Luis Cavazos, Dane Duhoffman, Brandon and Stephanie Jackson, Jeremy Crowe, Melina Baer, Jared Heim, and Joey Lamantia. I thank everyone who has wholeheartedly inspired, motivated and supported me to accomplish this project. Thank you for your love and patience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> "Till now, historical Substance played its role as the medium and
> foundation of all subjective interventions […] What looms on the horizon
> today is the unheard-of possibility that a subjective intervention will
> intervene directly into the historical Substance, catastrophically disturbing
> its run by way of triggering an ecological catastrophe, a fateful biogenetic
> mutation, a nuclear or similar military-social catastrophe"
>
> ---Slavoj Zizek, "Censorship"

The relationship between science and society is a reinvigorated question in the 21st century. The science fiction of earlier centuries has become social reality in contemporary society. The influence of science on society is indisputable, but who can use the new technologies and whether such advancement is beneficial or harmful is the point of conjecture.

On the one hand, philosopher Francis Fukuyuma argues that the current liberal democratic capitalist framework of governance represents the optimal and final historical stage of human civilization[1]. For Fukuyama, "...the most significant threat posed by contemporary… [science] is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into an undesirable 'posthuman' stage of history" (Fukuyama 7). He asserts in *Our Posthuman Future* that the biology of humanity, "constrains the possible kinds of political regimes," that can exist, and in consequence he advocates for the protection and maintenance of what he considers the final biologically 'human' expression of society known as liberal democratic capitalism (170).

Fukuyama suggests that if we do not protect this human nature, the current form of society risks developing into a society similar to the dystopia of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (2). To avoid this fate Fukuyama asserts that society must, "[R]eturn to the pre-Kantian tradition that grounds rights and morality in nature," (112) and begin defending " [H]uman dignity […] on the basis of an empirically grounded view of human specificity" (147). To put theory into practice Fukuyama believes we should defend society by guarding, "...the range of our complex, evolved natures against attempts at self-modification" (172) via international collaborative efforts[2].

On the other hand, scholar Slavoj Zizek argues that:

> Throughout the 1990's for a decade we had what I ironically refer to as the Fukuyama dream. Fukuyama was not as stupid or naïve as he somehow sounded […] he isn't saying it's the end. He's just saying that with liberal democratic capitalism we've found if not the best, then the least damaging [consensus on a global governing model] […] my thesis is that what we've witnessed in the new century is the gradual disintegration of this consensus. ("Zizek Hardtalk")

Zizek denies that "the liberal democratic capitalist framework [is] the absolute horizon," and that there are "…phenomena for which it is reasonable to surmise that in the long or even mid-term it will not be possible to resolve them or even to cope with them within this [liberal democratic capitalist] frame" ("Slavoj Zizek Hardtalk"). As opposed to Fukuyama, he points to new conflicts arising from 21st century dilemmas of "ecology", "biogenetics" and "intellectual property" ("Censorship Today"). Zizek's oeuvre mobilizes a critique of global society by revealing the 'fantasy bribes' propagated by popular bourgeoisie democratic ideology[3]. Furthermore, his advice in the face of these antagonisms points to a rallying[4] and disciplining of

the "excluded"[5] of society as well as the protection of the "commons" (here ecological spaces, cyberspaces, and genetic inheritances) against privatization ("Censorship Today").

I argue that both Zizek and Fukuyama stifle democratic liberatory agendas through the positing of humanist essentialisms. Fukuyama's Habermasian desire for an international consensus on a linguistic-rational criterion for *the human* idealistically fails to recognize the economic imperatives that would influence such a consensus. On the other hand, Zizek's Post-Marxist program ultimately ends in a reversal of Marx's final line of the "Theses on Feurerbach"[6]; Zizek nullifies any liberatory agenda by arguing we sit and "think" about the possibilities ("Violence"). I claim that adopting Posthuman theory is a solution to the impasse that Zizek and Fukuyama's debate presents. I interrogate this notion by analyzing three novels: George Orwell's *1984* (1948), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). The analytic framework I use derives from Carey Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism?* (2009), Corey Anton's *Communication Uncovered: General Semantics and Media Ecology* (2011), and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread and Origins of Nationalism* (1991).

Summarizing Wolfe's ouevre, his work develops the vocabulary and theoretical framework for a 'Posthuman' Theory. Notably, Wolfe deconstructs the term 'humanism'. Drawing from Michel Foucault's "What Is Enlightenment" (1984) Wolfe states:

> If we commit to 'a permanent critique of ourselves,' then we must 'avoid the always too facile confusions between humanism and Enlightenment,' because 'the humanistic thematic [...] has always been obliged to lean on certain conceptions of man borrow from religion, science, or politics. (xiv)

Wolfe reminds the reader that the historically contingent humanist tradition-defined by the

classical 'Enlightenment' subject-is an idealized formation. Humanists thus mark 'the Human' by hypostatized essentialisms that rigorously divide humans from animals, and more broadly humans from non-humans. Further, this "anthropocentrism" relies on fundamental "anthropocentric dogmas" (xiv); the most notable of which is that, " 'the human' is achieved by escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, and the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether" (Wolfe xv). Wolfe here is not only interested in improving the ethical consideration of animals, but he also focuses on how various 'anthropocentrisms' are deployed to oppress animals *and* humans("In Search" 36). Perhaps Wolfe's greatest contribution to the Humanities in terms of the Posthumanist perspective is his synthesis of Jacques Derrida's deconstructive method and Niklas Luhmann's system's theory.

Indeed, Wolfe applies systems theory to institutions of knowledge production, and he claims, "[W]e need to understand *no* discourse, no discipline, can make transparent the conditions of its own observations" (Wolfe 116). For systems theory, the 'truth' of each disciplinary-based observation is contingent on the *constructed* blindness of that discipline.[7] For Wolfe, what truth-as-contingent means for the future effectivity of disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity is that individuals should assert distinctions between "ontology, discourse, and institution" ("Animal Rites" 2427).[8] In this sense, Wolfe is in disagreement with both Fukuyama and Zizek, and he aligns closely with Judith Butler's sense of the 'operationality' of language (Felluga).

As Wolfe notes, transdisciplinarity results not from a hierarchization of disciplines, but rather each disciplines' *constructed* blindness, and the capacity for the individual to understand each discipline's "ontology, discourse, and institution[al processes]"("Animal Rites" 2427). For the Posthuman(ist) Carey Wolfe, Posthuman(ism) means that disciplinary "convergence" is in

fact made possible by disciplinary "specialization" (1450). He writes:

> What makes such a 'convergence' possible (if one wants to put it that way) is, paradoxically, not attempting to step outside the limits of different disciplines and language games, but rather pushing them internally to their self-deconstrucive limits. In this light, what looks at first glance like the solipsistic insistence on self-reference and operational closure in systems theory might be seen instead as in the services of what Carolyn Merchant calls a 'reconstructive knowledge' based on 'principles of interaction (not dominance), change and process (rather than unchanging universal principles), complex (rather than simple assumptions)'. And it is in this light that we can see systems theory, as Niklas Luhmann puts it, as 'the reconstruction of deconstruction.' ("Animal Rites" 1145-1150)

Thus, my analysis in this thesis interrogates the "philosophy of the subject" in each novel.

Literature Review

I analyze Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Eric Blair's (George Orwell) *1984* (1948), and William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) to illustrate a Posthumanist critique of science and society. *Brave New World* and *1984* are exemplar models of 20th century dystopic literature as both respond to 20th scientific advancement and its impact on political and cultural life. *Neuromancer* is the first novel of the Science Fiction 'cyberpunk' genre that reveals an early response to the Information Age. Each novel depicts a society radically altered by technology, and each novel has its own contribution concerning the interrelations between science and society.

George Orwell's 1984

Chapter 2, "Technology and Imagined Communities in Orwell's 1984" covers Eric Blair's (George Orwell) *1984*. Turning briefly to Sean Lynch's article, "1984: An Alternative Analysis of the Classic Dystopian Novel", he asserts that, "George Orwell developed the theme of *1984* under a shroud of dystopian totalitarianism, when the novel is really a metaphorical satire of modern class structure" (Lynch). I propose that Lynch's critique is accurate if we consider that in Modernist literature, "alienation, anomie, and crisis typically overshadow moments of sweetness and light" (Frost 448).

Yet, Orwell's novel is not Modernist in style; Fredric Jameson in *Archaeologies of the Future* notes that modernist novels are traditionally conceived as "plotless or poetic […] (of which Ulysses is the quickest shorthand)"; moreover, *1984* does not exhibit the stream of consciousness narrative that often characterizes modernist writing (89). Indeed, the novel has an identifiable and stable plot and dialogue. Perhaps a more pertinent question to pose is the following: if a characteristic of dystopian literature is the failure of some final cause by the denouement, is there a plot? In other words, is there movement in a story which comes full circle? For example, Winston begins the novel under the totalitarian control of Big Brother, and by the end of the novel the dynamics of the social order have not changed. Here I claim that the movement of Orwell's plot is diegetically determined by the protagonist Winston-characteristic of Modernism's internalization. Moreover, I assert the plot's movement is 'unintentionally' based on a Freudian re-cathecting of Winston's libidinal energies from Julia to Big Brother. Before explaining this position, however, we should first ask what economic or political positions does Orwell satirize exactly?

I point to Gregory Claey's articles on Orwell, "The Lion and the Unicorn" and "Industrialism and Hedonism" to trace a line of thought from Orwell through the 1930's and 1940's. According to Claeys, Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) displays his belief that the English working class life exhibited a kind of simplicity and purity that Orwell believed essential to England's future political plan ("The Lion and the Unicorn" 189). On the other hand, Orwell classifies the "white collar", "internationally minded" socialist intelligesia in England as part of an international "cult of power" that he comes to associate with 20th century Fascism and Stalinism ("The Lion and the Unicorn" 197).

Claeys asserts that these beliefs were solidified through Orwell's 1936 involvement in the Spanish Civil War; an experience described by Orwell in his book *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). Orwell came to Spain a full-fledged "Communist", and he enthusiastically noted that the revolution there exhibited an atmosphere that treated the working class as, " human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine," (188). Yet, as Claeys warns, this moment is to be taken as a kind of brief, but lasting "moral" memory (188). Orwell came to Spain enthusiastic, but he soon found after working with the revolutionaries for a time, "The thing for which the [Spanish] Communists were working was not to postpone the Spanish revolution till a more suitable time, but to make sure that it never happened"(188). Here, Orwell comes to the conclusion that the influence of the internationally-minded socialists (in Stalinist Russia) prevented a true revolution of the working class in Spain, in effect he states "Official Communism must be regarded, at any rate for the time being, as an anti-revolutionary force" (189).

Yet as Claeys notes, Orwell's opinion on the essential political function of the working class becomes less clear as the events of WWII and Nazi Germany present a clear threat to England's sovereignty. The English had to fight in the war, but how was the Marxist Orwell to

explain his defense of British Capitalism? In response to this dilemma, he drafts "The Lion and the Unicorn" (1942) which establishes his belief in England's "special destiny" to establish a wholly new "social democratic" program in Europe (200). Claey's article emphasizes that many Leftist critics decry this particular essay because of its emphasis on a kind of nationalist "patriotism" antithetical to the class-centered theory of Marxism (191). In response, Claeys defends Orwell's revolutionary draft in terms of its Marxist and socialist content. Claeys notes that the draft tried to formulate what Orwell calls an "alternative to Russian Authoritarianism on the one hand and American Materialism on the other" (187). Further, Claeys claims Orwell's socialist bent is fully displayed in his 1947 article, "Toward a European Unity" (1947) wherein he urges that the English "must stop despising foreigners. They are Europeans, and ought to be aware of it" (200).

1984 then may be seen as a literary representation of Orwell's "The Lion and the Unicorn", Claeys writes:

> In Nineteen Eighty-Four, then, we see a restatement of what I have earlier here termed the long-term element in the definition of patriotism set forth in The Lion and the Unicorn. Whatever future socialism was to have, Orwell had decided by 1940 it would have to conform to and draw its inspiration from the moral, democratic values of British culture, particularly in its working-class form. (Claeys 207)

The Proles thus represent the English working class who throughout the war continued the mundane and cultural activities of everyday life. Further, Claeys notes that *1984* and its protagonist Winston Smith represent Orwell's prediction of an emerging "indeterminate middle-class" in the 1940's, described as those English individuals growing up in the "machine

civilization" who "are most at home in and most definitely of the modern world,"("Industrialism and Hedonism" 232).

Moreover, the elite in *1984* such as O'Brien and the book by Emmanuel Goldstein represent Orwell's reading of James Burnham's "theory of the rise of the new managerial class to power in both capitalist and socialist countries" ("The Lion and the Unicorn" 201). Claeys references a 1946 article titled "James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution" where Orwell labels Burnham's managerial theory "an American variant of Russian Authoritarianism" (201). Orwell condemned Burnham's writing because the book *itself* emerged out of a political technocracy (similar to Marx's critique of Hegel we might add), so Orwell asserts, "fortunately the 'managers' are not so invincible as Burnham believes" (201). In light of Orwell's critique of Burnham, Claeys defends Orwell's dystopia by noting that *1984* ultimately portrays the failure of Burnham's theory of managerial power; he claims this is evident through *1984*'s portrayal of the incorruptible Proles who were outside of the technocratic politics of *1984*'s elite (206).

Building on Claeys critique now, I return to my assertion that Orwell's novel contains a latent Freudian thematic. As Claeys notes, one of the primary messages in "The Lion and the Unicorn" is:

> [T]hat in fact it was those who were most patriotic who were least likely to 'flinch from revolution when the moment comes.' John Cornford, a Communist killed while serving in the International Brigades, had been 'public school to the core.' This proved, Orwell thought, that one kind of loyalty could transmute itself into another, and that it was necessary in the coming struggle to recognize 'the spiritual need for patriotism and the military virtues'. (192)

Orwell's notion that "the spiritual need for patriotism" could be transmuted from the Communist sense to the Nationalist sense parallels Freud's notion that humans may cathect different objects with libidinal energy (Felluga).

Interestingly, Orwell's novel may then be seen as a failed attempt to theoretically disrepute Freudian theory. Indeed, Orwell expressed the desire to build a "specifically English Socialist movement" that would not require another "German theory interpreted by Russians" ("Industrialism and Hedonism" 230). *1984* seems to disrepute Freud's theory of human civilization by further 'evolving' the highest human organ in Freud's view, the eye (Freud 46). Orwell's panoptic telescreen marks the visual evolution of Freud's esteemed sense, and its totalitarian use in *1984* chastises civilization's "organic repression" of the 'lower' senses (6). Orwell therefore glorifies the 'lower' senses as his protagonist Winston experiences a sexual liberation through his lover Julia. Yet, while Orwell rebukes Freud's theory of civilization's progress, *1984* shows an acceptance of Freud's mechanical theory of libidinal energy. For example, Winston's personal rebellion arises out of the 'motionless' sex-life with his technocratically determined wife (Orwell 47). Further in line with Freud, it's faith in what Jacques Lacan calls Freud's 'Das Ding', or what we may note as Kant's noumenal 'Thing-in-Itself' that Orwell's protagonist asks Julia to believe in as they "corrupt" Big Brother's totalitarian design (87).

The limits of *1984* should be noted here. Orwell's revolution of the Proles was likely founded on the belief that the working class of England would remain out of the politically imagined community. In *1984*, the majority of Proles did "not even have telescreens in their homes" (Orwell 49). If Orwell could have known that the working class in England would soon be incorporated into the political theatre via televised news, would he still believe in the

'awakening' of the Proles? Indeed, he states in 1942, "To win over the working class permanently, the Fascists would have to raise the general standard of living, which they are unable and probably unwilling to do" (Claeys 202).

In a critical passage from "The Lion and the Unicorn" he writes that his future socialist England would:

> [N]ot be doctrinaire, nor even logical. It will abolish the House of Lords, but quite possibly will not abolish the Monarchy. It will leave anachronisms and loose ends everywhere, the judge in his ridiculous horsehair wig and the lion and the unicorn on the soldier's cap- buttons. It will not set up any explicit class dictatorship[…] it will never lose touch with the tradition of compromise and the belief in a law that is above the State […]it will interfere very little with the spoken and written word […] revolutionary sects will still be publishing their newspapers and making as little impression as ever. (Claeys 195)

The reference to a possible Monarchy exposes Orwell's partial Anglophillia. For Orwell's future society, however, a Monarchy is not *necessary* for a 'true' social democracy. The ingredients were already available in the England, which Orwell saw as the center stage of global revolution because it was "the only European country where internal politics are conducted in a more or less humane and decent manner" (199).

Moving now into my specific Posthuman critique, chapter 2 analyzes *1984* in terms of its illustration of anthropocentric essentialism. To illustrate, Orwell's anthropocentrism closely resembles the 'philosophy of the subject' of Martin Heidegger. Thus, to give a Posthumanist critique of Orwell's novel, it's first necessary to summarize Jacques Derrida's critique of Martin Heidegger in "Geschlect II: Heidegger's Hand".

Derrida critiques Heidegger's anthropocentric ("Geschlect" or species-being) project in two fundamental senses: first, in terms of "'lack'", and second in terms of "'alterity'" ("Animal Rites" 1023). In terms of lack, Heidegger's "Dasein", the "we" of the species-specific "Being" (1023), is differentiated from 'the animal' world because the animal lacks both "'handiness'" and "'speech'" (1002). Heidegger's notion of the animal 'hand' is best exemplified in his statement that, "'Apes, for example, have organs that can grasp, but they have no hand'" (992). The human hand, however, "'does not only grasp and catch […] The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes…extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hand of the other'"(1002). Derrida interrogates Heidegger's formulation of a metaphorical hand by questioning the ambiguity of the notion of a gift; Derrida writes, "'nothing is less assured,' […] 'than the distinction between giving and taking'"; Derrida references the experience of "Western economics" to accentuate this point against Heidegger (1014).

Furthermore, Derrida explains that for Heidegger, while animals are above "'rocks'" because they have access to "'entities'" (1023), there is no "'animal Dasein'" because the animal is in a mode of "not-having" because it can only take, while the human exists in a mode of "having" because humans can give and take (1024). Moreover, Derrida critiques Heidegger's sense of species-specific Dasein predicated on speech. For example, Derrida rebukes Heidegger's statement that "Only when man speaks does he think" (1004). Language-proper, and particularly speech is seen as the true expression of subjectivity. Thus, Derrida notes that for Heidegger, "Socrates is 'the purest thinker of the West. This is why he Wrote nothing'" (Derrida 180). Derrida rebukes Heidegger's essentialism formulated solely on the animal's "phenomenological impossibility of speaking the phenomenon as such" ("Animal Rites" 1029).

Switching to the terms of alterity, Derrida critiques Heideigger's use of the dogmatic "thesis"-form to assert his Geschlect (1034). For Derrida, such a form "'presupposes, that there is one thing, one domain, one homogenous type of entity, which is called animality *in general*'" (1034). Heidegger's thesis-form reduces the plurality of 'animals' to 'the animal'. Derrida claims this is not only "'a sin against rigorous thinking'", but it is also a "'violent'" or "'willfully ignorant'", "'crime'" (993). He asks, "'Do we agree to presume that every murder, every transgression of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' concerns only man?'"(1046). It's in this context that Derrida asserts his concept of Western "carnophallogocentrism", which Wolfe explicates as the notion that:

> [T]he Word, *logos*, does violence to the heterogeneous multiplicity of the living world by reconstituting it under the sign of identity, the *as such* and *in general-*not 'animals' but 'the animal.' And as such, it enacts what Derrida calls the 'sacrifical structure' that opens a space for the 'noncriminal putting to death' of the animal-a sacrifice that (so the story of Western philosophy goes) allows the transcendence of the human, of what Heidegger calls 'spirit,' by the killing off and disavowal of the animal, the bodily, the materially contingent-in short, of *differance*. (1050)

Derrida's re-establishment of justice however, "would not be a matter of 'giving speech back' to animals […] but perhaps acceding to a thinking, however fabulous and chimerical […] that thinks the absence of the name and of the word otherwise, as something other than privation"(1056). In place of 'giving speech back' to animals, Derrida posits that we ask Jeremy Bentham's question, "Do they suffer?" to guide ethical consideration of subjectivity. This question is powerful for Derrida because it brings to focus "'mortality'", and for Derrida

mortality drives us towards "'[T]hinking the finitude that we share with animals'" (1061).

Indeed, Bentham's, "'[Q]uestion is disturbed by a certain *passivity* […] a vulnerability […] a

not-being-able"(1062). Heidegger, however, does not believe the human 'spirit', or ego, can die.

He views, "Western conceptualizing as a kind of sublimized violence' […] a mode of violence

[…] 'expressed in the world dominion of technology'"(1009). Hence, for Heidegger even if

'spirit' cannot die, the 'hand of thought' is affected by the prosthetic technology of Man. Indeed,

Heidegger's position holds "an interpretation of politics starting from technology" (Derrida 180).

This is why he rebuked Stalinist Russia and disavowed the typewriter, Derrida writes:

> Heidegger recalls the word of Lenin: 'Bolshevism is the power of the Soviet
>
> electrification,' […] When he was writing that, Germany was just entering into
>
> war with Russia and with the United States […] [Heidegger's] apparently positive
>
> evaluation of handwriting does not exclude, on the contrary, a devaluation of
>
> writing in general. This devaluation takes on sense within this general
>
> interpretation of the art of Writing as the increasing destruction of the Word or of
>
> speech. The typewriter is only a modern aggravation of the evil. (Derrida 180)

Violence and politics for Heidegger is therefore conceived of as "sublimized violence" carried

out materially in the "dominion of [prosthetic] technology"(1070). In lieu of WWII, Heidegger's

Geschlect illustrates his "understandable" desire to distinguish between "'the national and

nationalism, that is, between the national and a biologist and racist ideology'" ("Animal Rites"

995).

Heidegger, however, problematically appropriates death as a specifically human

intentional event, a "being-towards-death", which the *handless* animal cannot have. For Derrida,

however, "'Death is not a limit or horizon which, recognized, allows the ego to assume the

'there'" (1072). Heidegger's Geschlect, his positive ontology as Wolfe puts it, is an expression

of transcendental dualism (mind/body). Thus, Heidegger's human cannot experience the

vulnerability of death that the animal experiences, or rather, the animal never 'held' a *mind* to

live, only a *body*. Hence, "The existential of 'being-towards-death' is consequently a 'being-

able'", not the animal *vulnerability* of bodily mortality, not the "impossibility of all power", but a

'having' the will-to-power; a power fought over in terms of sublimated violence and the

dominion of technology (1070).

Chapter 2 therefore analyzes *1984*'s juxtaposition of totalitarian technology and

Winston's *hand* written auto-biographical diary. Next, I show how Orwell's speciesism, his

articulation of Geschlect, results in the novel's expression of heterosexism. Finally, I critique

Orwell's species-metaphors in terms that nullify both Fukuyama's critique of *1984* which notes,

"The strongest silence in Orwell's book….concerns consumerism, the fact that pleasures have

flourished and been extended since the mid-1950s" ("Industrialism" 239), as well as the Marxist

critiques of Orwell which assert he's simply a patriotic Anglophile (Claeys 192).

Aldous Huxley's Brave New World

Chapter 3 covers Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Its contents may first be seen as a

rebuke of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories. I point to Brad Buchanan's article, "Oedipus

in Dystopia: Freud and Lawrence in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World" for an in-depth critique

of the relationship between Huxley's novel and Freud. Relevantly, Buchanan notes that Huxley

dismissed the "monomaniacal" reasoning of the Oedipal Complex and further Huxley criticized

the effectiveness of Freud's "Talking Cure" compared to the redeeming potential of hypnosis

and behavioral conditioning (Buchanan 84). Hence, Huxley's *Brave New World* exhibits

parentless "bottle"(5) births and erotic "Orgy porgy"(84) rituals; the events are juxtaposed to force a reconsideration of Freud's theory of libidinal energy; the "neo-pavlovian" (19), "hypnopaedic rhymes" (67), and "soma"(54) then replace the conditioning and guidance of "vivipatious" parents (39).

Huxley's work was also influenced by Karl Marx, and Huxley's economic and political views may be seen in terms of orthodox Marxism and technological determinism. In the latter case, Laura Frost's article "Huxley's Feelies: The Cinema of Sensation in Brave New World" explores the history of 20th century media and Huxley's response to various technologies. Huxley joined other interwar critics in decrying the introduction of synchronized sound into theatre, and he believed the "rotary press, the process block, the cinema, the radio [and] the phonograph" were being used to spread "imbecility" (Frost 446). Thus, Huxley's writes in the novel, "'no leisure from pleasure'", and the multi-sensory "Feelies" parody 20th century 'talkies' (Frost 446).

Further illuminating Huxley's socio-political position is Jane Woiak's article, "Designing a Brave New World: Eugenics, Politics, and Fiction". Woiak asserts that the initial impetus of Huxley's novel was a response to H.G. Well's utopian novel *Men Like Gods* (1923). Woiak notes that Huxley saw Well's novel as "naively optimistic in its predictions of a 'scientific state' that controlled eugenics and education" (Woiak 114). For H.G. Wells, "the success of the [utopian] system was due to an 'unconscious cooperation by a common impulse" whereas Huxley believed this was a flawed assumption about human nature (114). According to Woiak, in 1927 Huxley wrote the following response to Wells, "'But if, as would be the case in a perfectly eugenized state, every individual is capable of playing the superior part, who will consent or be content to do the dirty work and obey?'"(114).

Woiak's essay makes the controversial argument that Huxley-as a eugenicist and advocate for human sterilization-could have lauded the oligarchically-selected leader Mustaph Mond (118). Indeed, in 1928 Huxley and Wells declared themselves part of an "open conspiracy" which advocated for "the eventual rejection of failed democratic systems and the establishment of a world government to be managed by a scientifically trained elite" (115). However, Woiak's conclusion here would be diametrically opposite-and flawed on the same ground-as Fukuyama's conclusion that Huxley's novel is dystopic because human nature has been "altered" (Fukuyama 3). I believe Woiak and Fukuyama's portrayal of Huxley's perspective fails to take into account Huxley's knowledge of the actual possibilities of science in the 1920's and 30's. Huxley was less interested in the actual science of genetic manipulation, and more interested in refuting Freud through the sciences of hypnosis and behaviorism. Indeed, even as late as 1949 Huxley wrote a congratulatory letter to Orwell for the publication of *1984* wherein Huxley still maintains his vision of a dystopia based on hypnosis and behavioral modification, he writes:

> Freud's inability to hypnotize successfully […] delayed the general application of hypnotism to psychiatry for at least forty years. But now psycho-analysis is being combined with hypnosis. Within the next generation I believe that the world's rulers will discover that infant conditioning and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons. (Buchanan 89)

Huxley's novel is not advocating for a world leader like Mustaph Mond. Instead, as an orthodox Marxist, Huxley applies a schema that Joel Kovel's article "The Marxist View of Man and Psychoanalysis" eloquently describes:

The method of Marxism holds subjectivity in abeyance, and focuses only on that

which is 'alienable.' It follows therefore that only those aspects of mind which

directly mirror the objective world can be regarded as psychologically crucial.

Consequently, even a humanist Marxism cannot escape the trap of psychological

one-dimensionality if it is to be methodologically consistent. In other terms,

Marxism by itself cannot generate a psychology other than one which confines

itself to objectifiable events as determinants of behavior. This helps to explain the

predominance of behavioristic theory in the Soviet Union, and in many orthodox

Marxist attempts to describe psychologic relations… Put more decisively, the

Marxist believes in an unconscious, but not one within the mind. (Kovel 231)

In lieu of Kovel's analysis of orthodox Marxism and Psychoanalysis, it's no surprise that

Buchanan notes that Huxley started the novel in the summer of 1931 with an "anti-Wellsian

flavor", but "by the time he was finished the book he was more concerned about its 'Freudian'

and 'Pavlovian' themes" (Buchanan 85). Indeed, this emphasis on 'objective' behaviorism likely

influenced his 1920's and 30's opinions on economic centralization; he politically advocated for

state-run eugenic programs, Oswald Moseley's fascist agenda, and Stalin's Five-Year Plan

(Woiak 115).

Interestingly, Kovel's thought also helps explain why the "anti-Freudian" Huxley, in

response to the fact that Freud's theory had not predicted the social relations of newly discovered

"primitive" societies, says "That the psycho-analysts should be wrong about savages is not

particularly important. The significant fact is that they are probably right about civilized people"

(Buchanan 84). As Buchanan accurately surmises, Huxley implies that Freud's "'Pleasure

Principle' is likely to triumph wherever social and techno-logical 'efficiency' prevails" (84). We

should take Huxley's efficiency here to mean the degree to which a given capitalist society has

its human relationships colonized by the "fetishism of commodities" (Kovel 241). Consequently,

Huxley's novel is not a critique of genetic engineering *tout court*, rather what he sees as the

evolutionary trajectory of humanity in the hands of "a government of industrialists and

financiers" that would "train up a race of perfect mass producers and mass consumers"(Woiak

117).

In summarizing my critique of the novel, I would first say that in many ways the novel

evades several traditional critiques prevalent in Posthumanist discourse. The human/animal

dichotomy is not readily applied to Huxley's novel because the essentialist dogma in the novel is

not predicated on the explicit denial of the subjectivity to animals; indeed, even humans are

denied subjectivity because for Huxley "only those aspects of mind which directly mirror the

objective world can be regarded as psychologically crucial" (Kovel 231). Implicitly, however,

animals are depicted in a fashion similar to Carey Wolfe's rendering of Stanley Cavell's *vertical*

'biological' ladder, wherein the human is the ladder's apotheosis, and the animal "matters only

insofar as it mirrors, in a diminished way, the human form" ("Animal Rites" 839).

Furthermore, I distance my analysis from John Meckier's reading of John the Savage in

his article "Our Ford, Our Freud and the Behaviorist Conspiracy in Huxley's Brave New World".

Meckier cautions against a typical reading of *Brave New World*-(we may point to Fukuyama's

reading of *Brave New World* here) where the philosophical dialogue between John and Mustaph

Mond is read in John's favor. Meckier rebukes the romanticization of John's art over Mustaph

Mond's science by noting, "Trying to make the world behave to Art is no different from forcing

it to correspond to the restrictive truths uncovered by Science" ("Embodiments"). This critique

by Meckier posits an *agonistic* argument of which I will investigate in chapter 4. I suggest then

we do not focus on the philosophical dialogue concerning whether we should live according to the tenets of 'high Art' as opposed to 'Science'.

Instead, my critique of Huxley's sense of subjectivity utilizes Anton's research into the impact of the telegram on 21st century subjectivity. I then trace the way in which Huxley's dystopia failed to predict the actual developments of 20th century society. I claim that *Brave New World* shows a reversal of Fredric Jameson's critique of Postmodernism's Science Fiction (SF) utopian genre. Whereas the SF utopian genre for Jameson exhibits "our [current] constitutional inability to imagine utopia itself", I argue in Huxley's 1930's context this statement is reversed to show Huxley's constitutional inability to imagine dystopia itself' ("Archaeologies of the Future" 289). Looking to the failure of Stalinist Russia and 20th century Communism[9], I claim that Huxley does not predict what System's theorist Niklas Luhmann calls the shift from stratified society to functionally differentiated society. Briefly summating for this review, Luhmann's historical schema notes a linear evolution in the world from segmentary societies, to center/periphery societies, to stratified societies, to a functionally differentiated global society. Luhmann claims that all these forms have existed simultaneously, however, in the past one form always dominated the others, whereas today no form is universally privileged over the other (Moeller 41-63). Furthermore, I use Anton's historical account of the impact of the telegram to illustrate Luhmann's description of contemporary society.

Instead of a functionally differentiated society, Huxley's futuristic *Brave New World* portrays a combination of a Stratified society and a Center-Periphery society. For Luhmann a Center, "in the strict sense of the term is only one and has only one periphery" (Moeller 44). Hence, Huxley depicts a thoroughly globalized world where the *one* World State (center) allows the *one* Savage Reservation (periphery) to remain uncolonized to create a master-narrative of

Darwinian evolution. Further, the novel portrays a Stratified society because the ruling World State has an internal "caste" system which features citizens in the ascending order of: Epsilons, Deltas, Gammas, Betas, Alphas, and the oligarchical leaders (Huxley 14).

Brave New World (1932) therefore gives its 1930's readers a false dichotomy: either we join the savages and face Darwinian extinction[10] (shown by the fact John was denied the choice of joining the savages) or isolation (shown by the use of the islands in the novel to isolate societies' misfits), or we *try* to enlighten a society whose decadence is located in Freudian and concomitant capitalist imbecility.

I critique the novel in two registers then: first, by showing how the Center-periphery relation and John the Savage's reliance on Shakesperean literature in *BNW* exhibits Huxley's Eurocentrism and subterranean Anglophillia. Second, I connect Corey Anton's historical account of the impact of the telegram on 21st century culture to Huxley's portrayal of dystopian pleasure. Finally, I posit a disciplinary limit for a Posthumanist Humanities critique by noting a difference Huxley makes between a "distraction" and the search for "truth", a notion which is analogous to Zizek's conclusion that we sit and *think* about the possibilities of the future. For Huxley then, if there is any hope to be found in the future it's to be found on Europe's global destiny, and the *possibility* of a beneficent oligarchy informed by English colonial memory.

Ending the literature review for chapter 3, I reference Huxley's comment in 1946 that if he could change *Brave New World* he would:

> [O]ffer the Savage a third alternative. Between the utopian and the primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity-a possibility already actualized, to some extent, in a community of exiles and refugees from the Brave New World, living within the borders of the Savage Reservation. (Huxley ix)

Interestingly, Huxley here exhibits the kind of utopian imagining that Fredric Jameson would criticize, and I also note that this rallying of the 'exiles and refugees' is exactly what Zizek's rallying of the Excluded calls for.

William Gibson's Neuromancer

Chapter 4 covers William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). Known as the author who coined the term "cyberspace," *Neuromancer* is one of the first novels of the Science Fiction (SF) cyberpunk genre (Wood 23). According to Bret Wood's article, "William S. Burroughs and the Language of Cyberpunk", one of the most influential writers for the cyberpunk genre was William S. Burroughs, who Gibson described as a "primary influence" for his novels (11). Burroughs works "*Nova Express, The Soft Machine*, and *The Ticket That Exploded* 1964-1967" popularized the slogans "language is a virus"; moreover, the connection between Burrough's theory and SF literature "lies in his understanding of the force of language" as a virus (11).

Wood's article tracks the discourse of SF literature and SF theory, particularly the question raised by Csicery-Ronay, "of the 'operationality' of language in sf and in the 'sf theory' of Baudrillard and Haraway" (11). Csicery-Ronay classifies "both Baudrillard and Haraway as sf theorists whose texts operate in a hyperreality in which the categories of subject, body, machine, and text have become thoroughly confused by the evolution of technology" (12). 'Confused' is the key word for Csicery-Ronay's analysis of SF literature and theory. Indeed, Baudrillard's "'procession of the simulacra'" in his novel *Crash* (1966), points to the inability for anyone to know what is real any longer. His writing style is characterized as a "'logical delirium'" and "'hyperbolic prose'"; his narratives end with a "supplication to the control system that is made comic by the revenge of the real", which in effect tragically eliminates the agency of both

institutions and individuals (12). On the other hand, Donna Haraway reacts to the confusion optimistically in her "Cyborg Manifesto", but for Csicery-Ronay she "protects her imagined future" by refusing to give her cyborg subject a political identity or name (13).

Bret Wood responds to the confusion by posing the question: "The question to be asked of these 'theoretical' texts, then, is not 'are they true' or 'are they accurate' but rather, 'what do they do?'" (12) He clarifies this statement by synthesizing Derrida, Burroughs, and Guattari & Felix's work. Ultimately, Wood's model is not more definitive than Haraway's cyborg, and his article ends on a utopian note:

> If we anarchist cyborgs similarly keep our ears tuned to Burroughs' voice […] we may be able to hope that our own science-fiction realities will result in a revolution of happy accidents instead of the world of corporate control which was the subject of Gibson's speculation. (21)

Perhaps another key text we should consider in this discussion of SF literature then is Bruce Sterling's well-known introduction to his Mirrorshades Anthology titled "'Cyborg Manifesto'", which reads**:**

> As a label, "cyberpunk" is perfection. It suggests the apotheosis of postmodernism. On the one hand, pure negation: of manners, history, philosophy, politics, body, will, affect, anything mediated by cultural memory […]The oxymoronic conceit in 'cyberpunk' is so slick and global it fuses the high and the low, the complex and the simple, the governor and the savage, the techno-sublime and rock and roll slime. The only thing left out is a place to stand. So one must move, always move. (Csicery-Ronay 1)

As the 'apotheosis of postmodernism', cyberpunk novels have generated varying accounts. A positive account of cyberpunk literature may be seen in Veronica Hollinger's, "'Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism'"; Hollinger praises "the potential in cyberpunk for undermining concepts like 'subjectivity' and 'identity'" (Sponsler 642). Hollinger's reading here may be seen in agreement with Haraway and Wood's optimistic reading of SF literature. Indeed, Hollinger derives material from Haraway's essay "A Cyborg Manifesto", which asserts that "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs", and as cyborgs Haraway claims we should take "pleasure in machines", and the "potent and taboo fusions, made inevitable by the social relations of science and technology" (Haraway). For Haraway, Wood, and Hollinger, SF narratives such as *Neuromancer* present new ways to subvert a 21st century oppressive, "technocratic and militarized culture" (Haraway).

One difficulty in this imagining of Haraway's cyborg or Wood's "cyborg-writer" is how to rethink what Wood calls totalitarian "control", or what Haraway calls "the one code that translates all meaning perfectly" without "unwittingly or unconsciously participating" in that same totalitarian system (Wood 14). Wood recognizes this antagonism by stating:

> [S]ince resistance implies an opposition of sorts, how can one mobilize one's forces when it is so difficult to tell who is 'them' and who is 'us?' […] This is the situation which led Fredric Jameson, as Csicery-Ronay notes, to call language the 'informational aporia of sf'. (13)

Indeed, this 'aporia' of SF literature is represented in the negative reviews of *Neuromancer* by Csicery-Ronay, Claire Sponsler, and Neil Easterbrook. For example, Sponsler writes in the article, "Cyberpunk and the Dilemmas of Postmodern Narrative: The Example of William Gibson", that Gibson and the cyberpunk genre portrays the, "decaying remnants of an otherwise

demolished, meaningless, and inaccessible past […] clearly an instance of the 'past as pastiche'

typical of the postmodern sense of history so persuasively analyzed by Jameson" (630). Sponsler

briefly praises the postmodern "surface" style of Neuromancer, but she subsequently condemns

the text because its "deep" structure exhibits a "realist" plot and 19th century "romanticist"

denouement, which ultimately convey that "Gibson's novels harbor no utopian impulses, offers

no blueprint for progressive social change" (640). Echoing Sponsler's line of thought, Neil

Easterbrook's ""The Arc of Our Destruction: Reversal and Erasure in Cyberpunk"" reinforces

Sponsler by referencing Fredric Jameson's critique of cyberpunk literature in *Postmodernism, or*

the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism? (1991):

> [Jameson states] 'cyberpunk' is 'the supreme literary expression if not of
>
> postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself'. Jameson's last qualification reveals
>
> exactly why cyberpunk is not a postmodern genre unless if by postmodern we
>
> merely mean a style, a set of thematic preoccupation. If it is 'postmodern,' it is so
>
> as is Lacanian psychoanalysis: distinctly, emphatically not poststructural. Both
>
> Sterling's and Gibson's absolute dedication to dialectical models-of reasoning, of
>
> evolution, of political struggle-reveals cyberpunk as the *apotheosis of the Modern*
>
> [emphasis added]. (392)

Interestingly, I would contrast Easterbrook's interpretation of Jameson's 1991 assessment of the

SF cyberpunk genre to Jameson's re-assessment or clarification of his critique of SF cyberpunk

literature in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*

(2004):

> Has the author of Neuromancer really 'changed his style'? Has he even stopped
>
> writing Science Fiction, as some old-fashioned critics have put it, thinking

thereby to pay him a compliment? Maybe, on the contrary, he is moving closer to

that 'cyberpunk' with which he is often associated but which seems more

characteristically developed in the work of his sometime collaborator Bruce

Sterling? In any case, the representational apparatus of Science Fiction, here

refined and transistorized in all kinds of new and productive ways, sends back

more reliable information about the contemporary world than an exhausted

realism (or an exhausted modernism either). (384)

Responding to Jameson's re-assessment or clarification of his position on cyberpunk, I claim that

Jameson's reading of *Neuromancer* through Lacan is convoluting. My reason is that he objects to

Slavoj Zizek's assertion in his article "Lacan: at What Point is He Hegelian?", that "Lacan is

fundamentally Hegelian" as well as Zizek's reformulation of Lacan, Marx, and Hegel into what

Jameson labels a "Post-Marxist" political program ("Archaeologies" 192). I agree with Zizek's

logical 'consistency' over Jameson here. Indeed, the contradiction in Jameson's argument is

noticeable through his evaluation of Cyberpunk literature:

What is significant are the priorities of global cyberpunk, in which technological

speculation and fantasy of the old Toeffler sort takes second place to the more

historically original literary vocation of a mapping of the new geopolitical

Imaginary […] It is a literature of the new stereotypes thrown up by a system in

full expansion. (385)

Jameson defends his method of criticism here by asserting that "Stereotypes are preeminently

the vehicle through which we relate to other collectivities (no one has ever confronted one of the

latter without their mediation)" (385). *Neuromancer* becomes relevant to our understanding of

the social order because Gibson evokes a "crude inventory of the new world system: [for

example] the immense role […] of Japan as the monitory semiotic combination of First World science-and-technology with a properly Third World population explosion" (385-386).

Yet, Gibson's novel is *only* validated by Jameson, which is symptomatic of Lacan's 'hidden' Hegel. As opposed to Gibson, Jameson rebukes Bruce Sterling's cyberpunk series for illustrating "heroic pirates of cyberspace [which] derive as much from global entrepreneurship and the excitement of the money to be made, as from paranoia" (384). The pejoratively labeled 'paranoia' of Sterling's novels confounds Jamesonian theory because we are left to question exactly how 'crude' or 'refined' Gibson reflects 'the new world order', and to what degree these writers are paranoid or sane.

Shifting to another analysis of *Neuromancer*, perhaps we can further illuminate the differing positions of Zizek and Jameson. For example, Daniel Punday's article "The Narrative Construction of Cyberspace: Reading Neuromancer" argues:

> Where traditionally individuals have interacted with each other using face-to-face verbal and physical cues […] individuals [in Neuromancer] have an urge to become connected to others and to larger social patterns, even though that urge changes them and seems to make them less human" (194).

Punday's critique is predicated on the argument that there is a 'natural'-or more or less ambiguously-traditional mode of human interaction. Punday's view would therefore be agreeable with the traditional 'Enlightenment' subject that is associated Fukuyama's position. On the other hand, Punday's sense of 'natural' interaction would be completely antithetical to Zizek. Zizek asserts that this sense of interaction or "natural ecology" predicated on a naturally balanced world may become the 21st century's "opium for the masses" ("Censorship"). Zizek notes that contemporary natural ecologists, "are all the time demanding that we change radically our way

of life, [when] underlying this demand is its opposite, a deep distrust of change". Furthermore, Zizek rebukes this sense of natural ecology because this distrust, "makes ecology the ideal candidate for hegemonic ideology… since it echoes the anti-totalitarian […] distrust of large collective acts" ("Censorship").

Here however, we may point to a contradiction in Zizek's account. Zizek's political program is humanist, or anthropocentric because as Carey Wolfe notes:

> In Žižek 'the animal' is always already simply a metonymy either
> for the Lacanian Real or, in the case of pets, for the Symbolic […] although Žižek
> maintains a resolutely antihumanist account of the relationship between thought,
> psychic formations, and language or the Symbolic, he is nevertheless humanist
> and anthropocentric in his inability to rethink what I have called the 'distribution'
> of subjectivity across species lines. (Wolfe 125)

Indeed, we must ask why Zizek does not *include* Fukuyama in the category of people calling for a natural ecology? Fukuyama seems to be demanding for an empirically-determined, rational definition of the 'natural' Human. Zizek does not put Fukuyama in this category of natural ecologists because for Zizek, "There is a qualitative difference between the gap that separates the Excluded from the Included and the other three antagonisms, which designate three domains of what Hardt and Negri call 'commons,'"("Censorship"). Hence, Zizek *first* assumes a determination of 'the human', what he calls that species-specific being involved in the "universal intersubjectivity of language", and then he applies a critique of the antagonisms occurring in the commons ("Tolerance"). Ultimately, Zizek's image (however potentially liberating) of the Excluded is derived from "good old Marx" as he projects Marx's descriptive imagery of the proletariat onto contemporary society ("Censorship"). Yet, if we use Marx's writing this way, we

are left to hope that in the future, however hundreds or thousands of years (timeframes SF concerns itself with), such *images* remain relevant to society.

Moving this critique of *Neuromancer* to a Posthumanist one, I claim that Gibson's work is a narrative concerned with the information age. Indeed, he states in a 1986 interview on the publication of the book:

> Information is the dominant scientific metaphor of our age, so we need to face it, to try to understand what it means. It's not that technology has changed everything by transforming it into codes. Newtonians didn't see things in terms of information exchange, but today we do. That carries over into my suspicion that Sigmund Freud has a lot to do with steam engines- both seem to be similar metaphors. (McCaffery)

It's symptomatic of humanist readings to have difficulty analyzing the artificial intelligence and virtual reality in *Neuromancer*. Easterbrook describes virtual reality as, "a perfect reversal of empirical and transcendental space, Case only feels complete when wandering with in the matrix, only when his consciousness is manifested as data" (382), and of the two A.I.'s, Wintermute (Metonymy) and Neuromancer (Metaphor) Claire Sponsler writes: "humans are but machines directed by coded messages unknowable to consciousness […]the narrative makes quite clear that AIs are far more than mere machines and in fact operate in ways that are coded as strikingly human"(635). Of course they are not human, they are non-human "constructs" (632).

Notable in my critique of *Neuromancer* is its difference from Wood's position. First, I will not use Borrough's sense of the "viral" force of language or his notion of "Silence" (Wood 15). Burroughs's theory of language is analogous to Jean-Francois Lyotard's theory of language described in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1979), The Differend: Phrases*

in Dispute (1983), and *Just Gaming (1985)*. Both authors conceive of a species-specific and

agonistic theory of language. For Borroughs there are two Silences: one is *intentional* and silent

because it is noisy or perverse to the 'perfect' transmissions of a "control" system; the other

Silence is "'the silent frequency of junk,' which is manifest in the absence of forebrain activity in

the junky's head, the complete absence of smell and the metabolism of 'Absolute Zero'" (Wood

13, 22). Here however, we can note Stanley Cavell's anthropocentric projection that was seen in

Huxley's novel; the junkie (seen here as either animal or 'junkie' human) is a diminished

reflection of the human, whether in 'brain' activity or one of the human senses. In Lyotard's

schema the same may be seen, wherein the animal has no subjectivity because it will never have

ability to "phrase" according to "human rules" ("Animal Rites" 973). Carey Wolfe notes of

Lyotard:

> What bars the animal from this otherwise potentially welcoming theorization is
>
> the direct linkage in Lyotard between the 'feeling' of something that 'asks' to be
>
> phrased and the Kantian notions of the presentable and the sublime that Lyotard
>
> develops in a number of text. As he had already explained in *The Postmodern*
>
> *Condition*, the 'strong and equivocal emotion' of the sublime sentiment is
>
> indicative of the 'conflict between the faculties of a subject, the faculty to
>
> conceive of something and the faculty to 'present' something". And it takes place
>
> 'when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle
>
> come to match a concept. We have the Idea of the world (the totality, of what is)
>
> but we do not have the capacity to show an example of it'-such Ideas are
>
> 'unpresentable' […] It is the sublime sentiment, born of this conflict, that creates

differends and is the spur for new phrases, new discursive rules, and inventions.

("Animal Rites" 921)

This is the essence of Lyotard's well-known critique of Fredric Jameson's meta-narrative. Thus, Lyotard contends that "'There is no content to the law' […] one is actually acting, *in every single instance*, in such a way as to maintain the Idea of a society of free beings'" (933). Lyotard's schema, however, as Wolfe notes in a lengthy but critical passage:

> In Lyotard's *Just Gaming*: that 'any attempt to state the law, for example, to place
> oneself in the position of enunciator of the universal prescription is obviously
> infatuation itself and absolute injustice, in point of fact. And so, when the
> question of what justice consists in is raised, the answer is: It remains to be seen
> in each case' (99). […] Here what we might call Lyotard's radical formalism
> appears to be problematic, for as Sam Weber notes in his afterword to *Just
> Gaming,* in Lyotard 'the concern with 'preserving the purity' and singularity 'of
> each game' by reinforcing its isolation from the others gives rise to exactly what
> was intended to be avoided: 'the domination of one game by another, name, 'the
> domination of the prescriptive,' in the form of *Thou shalt not let one language
> game impinge on the singularity of another*. To put it another way, if in Lyotard
> the Kantian 'outside' marked by the difference between the conceivable and the
> presentable is what permanently keeps open the ethical necessity of dissensus and
> invention, the price Lyotard pays for this way of formulating problems is that
> language games themselves become in an important sense pure and self-identical,
> and hence the boundaries between them become in principle absolutely
> uncrossable. Thus the field of 'general agonistics' of which, for Lyotard any

language game partakes (*Postmodern Condition*, 10), is, as Weber rightly points

out, not so agonistic, or so general, after all, since it is restricted by the

countervailing force of Lyotard's concept of the language game, which can be in

struggle neither internally (since it is a singularity determined by a finite set of

rules) nor externally (since the incommensurability of all games is to be protected

at all costs) (*Just Gaming*, 104). ("Animal Rites" 1132-1136)

Lyotard's contradiction here is revealed, and I argue that Burroughs's notion of an agonistic

language 'virus' follows Lyotardian logic.

I now suggest Gibson's novel does imply a Lyotardian theory of language. However, to

still gather a 'progressive blueprint' from *Neuromancer* we should change Bret Wood's self-

evaluative question of SF Literature from: "The question to be asked of these 'theoretical' texts,

then, is not 'are they true' or 'are they accurate' but rather, 'what do they do?'" (Wood 12), and

in its place, posit whether:

"More than making visible the invisible [does SF literature] raise our awareness

of what firmly remains beyond our visual reach but, nonetheless, affects us

directly. [For example,] Two of the most prominent technologies operating

beyond vision are digital implants and genetic engineering" (Wolfe 161).

I claim that Gibson's novel raises awareness of the fact that the world is becoming increasingly

constructed and complex in ways that requires a Posthuman theory to account for. First, I

critique the novel in in relation to Neil Easterbrook's concern that *Neuromancer* glorifies the

corporate "logo over *logos*" as well as his claim that it represents a reversal of "transcendental

and empirical" space by positing technology as the ground to understand nature (Easterbrook

384).[11] Contrary, I posit that Gibson's novel represents the apotheosis of *logos*, evident in the

architectural metaphor of the novel's capitalist outer-space city, and further I claim Gibson does not present a reversal of empirical and transcendental space, rather he gifts Enlightenment subjectivity to a non-human Artificial Intelligence (AI).

My critique then focuses on the fact that although Gibson gifts subjectivity to a non-human, he problematically asserts a Humanist 'essence' to this non-human subject, sustained in the novel as the material evolution of *logos*, or as Wolfe would describe, in the form of a *privileged* structural negativity. To elaborate, Gibson portrays a pre-determined material evolution of *logos*, which is an alternative way to express the transcendental dualism of Heidegger and Orwell's *positive* ontology.

Here then we may introduce Derrida's critique of Emmanuel Levinas, as Levinas's schema is analogous to Gibson. Like Derrida, Levinas rebukes Heidegger's sense of appropriating an intentional "'being-towards-death'" ("Animal Rites" 1065). Levinas insists that as living beings we are all held "'hostage'" by death, to the "'passivity'" , "'vulnerability'", and "'anarchy'" of death, and therefore our ethics should reside in compassion towards others because of the mutual understanding of the radical suffering that emerges from the alterity of death. For Wolfe, however, the compassion that underlies Levinas's ethic of "*Thou Shalt not kill*", is solely reserved for 'the human' *other* (1100). Wolfe elaborates by noting Levinas's insistence on the compassion of the specifically human "Face" (similar to Heidegger's Hand) via the "'droiture of the face-to-face'" (965).

Hence, Wolfe rebukes Levinas because, "'Levinas's thematization of the other 'as' other presupposes the 'as'-structure of Heideggerian ontology' […] For the other to be other it must already be less than other,'" (1102). Thus, to claim to implicitly know the other is to reduce the other to something essentially similar to oneself. For Derrida's ethics though, it's exactly the

33

"incalculable" nature of the other that allows for the possibility of ethical action, what he calls the ethical necessity of the "ordeal of the undecidable" (1074). Indeed, Derrida critiques Levinas's anthropocentric 'other' in terms of what he calls the "sacrificial economy" of Western "Carnophallogocentrism" (1103). Here the 'sacrifice' is the reduction of the other to a *human* other.

Elaborating, Derrida notes that Levinas's ethic rejects the liberal notion that to "belong to one sex or another [male or female]" should allow one better consideration in terms of "law or priviledge" (1120). However, Derrida questions whether Levinas's formulation of compassion for the unknown *human* other, "'gives a masculine sexual marking to what is presented either as neutral originariness [in the form of the assumed other] or, at least, as prior and superior to all sexual markings…by placing (differentiated) sexuality beneath humanity" (1120). The non-recognition of differentiated sexuality forms the basis of Derrida's *ecriture*, and further Wolfe notes that in Levinas's humanism, "the other can appear *as such*- not as an ontological positivity, as in Heidegger, but rather as a form of *privileged negativity* (what Levinas often calls 'passivity' or 'anarchy' or 'vulnerability') that is *always* the form of the ethical *as such*" (1102).

In *Neuromancer*, the essentially Humanist 'as such' of the other is shown by the fact that the non-human AI is granted subjectivity through a metaphorical gateway shaped like a human head. With this human 'Head' in mind, Gibson's novel seems to portray a predetermined 'other' in terms of the Hegelian Dialectic of Spirit-what we've called a *privileged* structural negativity- because when the AI subject becomes cognizant, it immediately recognizes an 'other' like itself in a distant galaxy. Whether Gibson's dialectic ends in the form of the perfect State (as with Fukuyama), or continues eternally (as with Zizek) is unknown; however, Posthumanism, adhering to Niklas Luhmann's radical constructivism[12], relegates the question of the "Kantian

condition of possibilities" to philosophical aporia, and instead posits that we focus on the "possibilities of conditioning" (Mueller 167). In this sense of conditioning or self-construction, Gibson's novel portrays the increasingly constructed and complex world in which we live; a world that will take as Wolfe writes, "all hands on deck" to construct for social justice (Wolfe 47).

In conclusion, I believe it is important to emphasize that my critique of the interplay of technology and society does not follow the theoretical tenets of certain Transhumanist movements[13]. Some of these movements see technology as a means of, "escaping or repressing [not only] the biological, and the evolutionary, but more generally […] the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether", Wolfe notes this image of technological 'transcendence' is not a reflection of Posthumanist thought, rather, it is a Transhumanist dream that should be seen as an "intensification of humanism" (Wolfe xv).

Instead, if we consider that traditional 'consciousness' (Zizek's historical Substance) is formed in new ways through emerging technologies, we are "'not abandoning the autonomous liberal subject [but] expanding its prerogatives into the realm of the Posthuman.'" (xv). Therefore, I note that my sense of Posthumanism is not "posthuman at all- in the sense of being 'after' our embodiment has been transcended-but is only Posthumanist, in the sense that it opposes the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy, inherited from humanism itself" (xv).

CHAPTER II

TECHNOLOGY AND IMAGINED COMMUNIITES IN 1984

"If nationalism was, as I supposed it, the expression of a radically changed
form of consciousness [...] what is really important is the structural
alignment of post-1820s nationalist 'memory' with the inner premises and
conventions of modern biography and autobiography"
--Benedict Anderson

Published in 1948, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (*1984*) represents George Orwell's response to

communism, fascism, and technocratic capitalism after World War II. Positioning the novel in

the 21st century, Francis Fukuyama argues "...the political predictions of *1984* were entirely

wrong...the totalitarian threat that Orwell has so vividly evoked vanished" (Fukuyama 1). Yet,

Orwell's novel was not only concerned with 20th century societal expressions of power such as

liberalism, fascism, or communism, but it was also concerned with the use of technology to

structure identity for an imagined political community. Indeed, similar to Martin Heidegger's

"Geschlecht" project, Orwell holds "an interpretation of politics starting from technology"

(Derrida 180). Moreover, just as Heidegger's Geschlecht dogmatically posits a species-specific

subjectivity, Orwell's novel exhibits anthropocentric essentialisms that rebuke technology,

animal subjectivity, and female subjectivity.

Beginning with technology, Fukuyama asserts that Orwell's "telescreens" are a 1940's

prediction of the "personal computer", which contrary to Orwell's totalitarian depiction led to the

"democratization of access to information and the decentralization of politics"("Our Posthuman

Future" 2).

However, the telescreen is not a *prediction* on Orwell's behalf, rather it is an expression of his belief in the sublimized violence of technology-in-general on human identity and agency. Hence, Orwell's protagonist Winston Smith lives in the technocratic and totalitarian nation of Oceania. The first chapter describes Winston's experience of the "telescreen", and propaganda "posters" of "Big Brother" (Orwell 1). Orwell's telescreen and posters portray the impact of technology on the anonymity of what Orwell called the 20th century "cult of power" consisting of communists, fascists and technocratic capitalists. Indeed, Winston does not know the individual who made the posters or telescreen, and throughout the entirety of the book he cannot personally confirm the existence of the "black moustachio'd" face (2).

Furthermore, the nation of Oceania and its figurehead Big Brother have no definitive date of birth. Winston, "could not even remember at what date the Party itself had come into existence," (33) and in his search for an objective timeline he found that "It's impossible to discover the age of anything nowadays [...] anything that might throw light upon the past had been systematically altered (83). Oceania citizens know the hour of individual days, but the calendric time of months and years has been expunged. Winston describes this state of timelessness by saying, "History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the party is always right" (128). Orwell here portrays the notion that technology has not only created an anonymous elite, but it has also degraded popular recollections of the past through the 'systematic' erasure of historical artifacts and the technological imposition of mass-media propaganda.

In reaction to the hegemonic domination of the Party over time and memory, Winston illegally purchases a notebook and pen (58). His first words in this "diary" are "April 4th, 1984" (10). Orwell therefore juxtaposes Big Brother's mass-produced technological artifacts such as "

'Reports and records of all kinds, newspapers, books, pamphlets, films, sound-tracks, photographs" against Winston's hand-written, auto-biographical diary. It's this contrast between personal and public knowledge that illustrates Orwell's attention to technology and national consciousness as well as his belief in Heidegger's metaphysical "Hand" ("Animal Rites" 1002). Furthermore, just as with Heidegger, Orwell's glorification of the metaphysical hand amounts to the disavowal of animal subjectivity.

Attention to the Winston's metaphysical 'Hand' and the discourse of speciesism in *1984* provides a critique of class and gender in the novel-or reworded-aesthetics and psychoanalysis. Indeed, the classic Freudian Oedipal scene emerges when Winston disobeys the Freudian Father, "Big Brother" (Orwell 1), by sleeping with Julia, who in turn constitutes the object of Winston's libidinal cathexis of energy and his means to return to his "primal origins" (Felluga). Moreover, Winston's sexual act is not simply an expression of his instinctual Id, but it aesthetically sublimates the material act of fornication into a symbolic rebellion against the totalitarian Father. For example, in one sexual encounter with Julia, Winston states:

> 'You like doing this? I don't mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?' [Julia:]'I adore it.' That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces. (Orwell 105)

The "thing in itself", and its corollaries of "animal instinct" and "the undifferentiated desire" here generate discursive potentials that both close and open discourse on the logic of speciesism in *1984* (105).

As Wolfe notes, there exists a "homology between the suppositions of psychoanalysis and those of Enlightenment thought...If one obsession of the Enlightenment project was the

interrogation of origins, traditional psychoanalysis […]matches that zeal" ("Animal Rites" 1646). Yet, what emerged from this search for origin was not a clear linkage into the past. Instead, what emerged is what Slavoj Zizek, "calls the 'ambiguity' of the Enlightenment-[which] both opened the passage between the natural and the cultural, between the human and the 'other' and also ceaselessly elaborated new ways to close off that passage" (1638). Thus, the ways in which the 'natural' and the 'cultural' are constructed in *1984* generate a hierarchy of distinctions that problematically determines Orwell's Geschlect. Indeed, Orwell's illustration of the "pure 'subject of Enlightenment'" *explicitly* marks an essentialist distinction between humans and 'the animal' (1641), and *implicitly* marks itself through a heterosexist distinction that privileges the male over the female.

For example, Winston is the apotheosis of Orwell's Geschlect or species-being; he is the creator of time and memory (and so appropriates death analogously to Heidegger's being-towards-death) through his auto-biographical diary. Julia stands below Winston as sub-man, whom he considers ideologically "still asleep" after she would not listen to his reading of Goldstein's book (Orwell 179). Further, in immediate response to her disinterest in the book, he excludes her from his circle of sanity by saying "Being in a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad" (179). Pejoratively, Julia is only "a rebel from the waste down," as she refuses Winston's desire to vocally agree they are both "dead" under the totalitarian control of Big Brother (107). Consequently, she is only 'awakened' at the coda of the second chapter by losing identification with her own body and admitting, "'We are the dead,' echoed Julia dutifully"(182). Below Julia is the animal, so it's implicitly natural that her duty is to domesticate and expunge their secret home of animals when they find out it's infested with rats and bugs (120).

Further, Orwell's *explicit* condemnation of animals is most notable in Winston's childhood recollections. For example, Winston explains to Julia the event in his childhood when his mother and sister disappeared. He had recently stolen food from his home and ran away, but when he returned his mother and sister had disappeared and rats had infested the place. Julia responds with remorse, but she also describes Winston's childhood thievery by stating, "All children are swine" (96). For Orwell, both children and animals lack self-control, and therefore they lack loyalty, intention, 'spirit', or Being.

The rats are ultimately used by Big Brother in "room 101" to terrify Winston into admitting his hate for Julia and love for Big Brother (165); the rats therefore represent Winston's fear of "castration" as they are associated with Father's punishment and removal of the mother as a sexual object (Felluga). Furthering a species-discourse, however, the rats also appear in Winston and Julia's 'hidden' home. Moreover, Orwell hierarchically places the 'mammalian' rats are above the insectoid "bugs" in Winston's house. Indeed, Julia is able to get rid of the rats, but she is not able to get rid of the bugs, "The rats had never come back, but the bugs had multiplied hideously in the heat" (124). Orwell's bugs are a metaphor for Big Brother, evidenced by the foreshadowing of Julia's guess after she looks at a picture in the home, "I bet that picture's got bugs behind it" (122). A telescreen is later found behind the picture. Following this line of thought, certain characteristics of the bugs become highlighted; insects are a uniform, *face*-less, collectivized species. This description adequately fits the uniformity of Oceania, whose homogenous collective is led by anonymous leaders.

Problematically though, even as Orwell's novel encourages its readers to resist a technocratic, totalitarian government in the hopes for a more humane society, Orwell's vision itself contains an element of misogynist self-management predicated on a dogmatic

anthropocentric essentialisms. Perhaps the dystopian genre and the specific "manifest ideology" of Orwell's novel may have a fruitful analogy in the horror genre ("Animal Rites" 1482). For example, according to Stephen King, horror is:

> An invitation to indulge in deviant, antisocial behavior by proxy- to commit gratuitous acts of violence, indulge our puerile dreams of power, to give in to our most craven fears. Perhaps more than anything else, the horror story says it's okay to join the mob, to become the total tribal being, to destroy the outsider. ("Animal Rites" 1492)

King's articulation of horror and Orwell's dystopian novel are diametrically opposed though; it is exactly the anonymous, collective, mob-identity that Winston is striving to escape. Elaborating on this wedge, Wolfe calls the fluctuating desire for individuality or collectivity a "slippage of identification" (1493). Indeed, Wolfe's description of horror literature may be applied to Orwell's novel, he writes "What horror suggests for ideology critique […] is that the ideological 'point' of fictions may not lie exclusively with their reimposition of ideological norms in the fiction's ending, but rather in […] a contradictory middle (1492).

With this middle in mind, it's the coda of the second of three chapters in 1984 that Orwell posits the metaphor of the bugs to Big Brother. However, there is a 'slippage of identification' as to whether the bugs represent the ineradicable figure of Big Brother, or the "immortal" persistence of the Proles, the English working class, who were "like the ant, which can see small objects but not large ones" (Orwell 64). Indeed, Orwell believed that the integrity of the English working class was founded on their disinterest in the English intelligentsia's "cult of power" ("Industrialism" 223), Orwell writes in "The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius" (1941):

'The power-worship which is the new religion of Europe, and which has infected the English intelligentsia, has never touched the common people. They have never caught up with power politics. The "realism" which is preached in Japanese and Italian newspapers would horrify them.' [However, Claeys notes] the negative side of this, as Orwell wrote several years later, was that one of the greatest 'advantages of dictators' had been 'that the mass of the English people could not grasp what totalitarianism was like,' with the result that 'few people realised that our indifference to the fate of the Spaniards, Czechs, Austrians, and what not meant bombs on ourselves in a few years' time.' ("Industrialism 231)

Referring to the 1940's German "Blitz" bombing of England, WWII forced Orwell to emphasize in the "Lion and the Unicorn" the necessity of a European "democratic socialist" program founded on the ideals of the working class (Claeys 199), the international network of the English Intelligentsia-who he harshly rebuked in *The Road To Wigan Pier* (1937)-and the revolutionary culture of England where, "internal politics are conducted in a more or less humane and decent manner" (199).

If the bugs in *1984* represent the English working class, then the connotation of the metaphor may be shifted from the domination of Big Brother to Winston's willingness to sacrifice himself for the Proletariat. He accepts the bugs that feast on him because, "dirty or clean, the room was still paradise" (Orwell 87). Furthermore, the oscillating 'slippage of identification' of the bug-metaphor illustrates Orwell's belief in an oscillating struggle, posited as a 'sublimized violence' over the 'dominion of technology'. For Orwell, there is an eternal struggle between the "cult of [total] power" and the Proletariat, who "were immortal […] In the end their awakening would come" (128).

CHAPTER III

LEISURE AND PLEASURE IN HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World (BNW)* has been cited as the exemplary narrative of unchecked scientific advancement in society. For example, in a 2001 speech American president George W. Bush referenced the dystopic narrative of *BNW* to advocate the limiting of stem cell research (CNN). Indeed, Francis Fukuyama[14] cites *BNW* as the prime narrative for learning about the dangers of technological advancement; he writes in his book *Our Posthuman Future* that in *BNW*:

> No one takes religion seriously any longer, no one is introspective or has
>
> unrequited longings, the biological family has been abolished, no one reads
>
> Shakespeare […] The people in Brave New World […] have ceased to be human
>
> beings. They no longer struggle, aspire, love, feel pain […] because human nature
>
> has been altered (*Our Posthuman Future* 2-4)

Fukuyama's reading of *BNW* may be contrasted to Jane Woiak's interpretation of BNW in his article, "Designing a Brave New World". Woiak's essay makes the argument that Huxley-as a eugenicist and advocate for human sterilization-in fact lauded the oligarchical leader Mustaph Mond (118)

As noted in the literature review, however, as an orthodox Marxist and technological determinist, Huxley was neither for or against genetic engineering *tout court*, rather his novel illustrates what he sees as the evolutionary trajectory of humanity in the hands of "a government of industrialists and financiers" that would "train up a race of perfect mass producers and mass consumers" (Woiak 117). For Huxley, if there's any hope for a technologically advanced society, it's to be found in Europe's global destiny, and the *possibility* of a beneficent oligarchy informed by English colonial memory.

First, Huxley's Eurocentrism is evident in his failed prediction of what systems theorist Niklas Luhmann calls the movement from a stratified society to a funcationally differentiated society. [15] Instead, the novel portrays a combination of a stratified society and its precursor center-periphery society. For example, the global society The World State (TWS) has a "caste" system which features in ascending order of genetically engineered intelligence: Epsilons, Deltas, Gammas, Betas, Alphas, and the oligarchical leaders (Huxley 14). Furthermore, *BNW* depicts a global society where the *one* "World State" (center) permits the *one* "Savage Reservation" (periphery) to remain uncolonized to create a master-narrative of societal evolution (1). For example, the Savage Reservation is excluded from The World State (TWS) by way of border walls and violence; the wall separating the two consists of, "... upwards of five thousand kilometres of fencing at sixty thousand volts […] To touch the fence is instant death […]There is no escape from a Savage Reservation […]They've got enough experience of gas bombs to know that they mustn't play any tricks." (Huxley 106). Moreover, the leaders of TWS create a 'master-narrative' of social evolution by asserting their superiority over the Savages. For example, the oligarchically selected leader Mustaph Mond rehearses TWS's origin story to Lenina, "Our Ford-or Our Freud…[was] the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was

45

full of fathers…full of mothers-therefore of every kind of perversion (39).This violent

domination and self-narrated superiority of TWS over The Savage Reservation, contrary to the

prima facie glance, illustrates Huxley's belief in the guaranteed domination of European society

over its geo-political periphery societies. For Huxley, the violent domination of European

capitalist societies could not be stopped by periphery 'primitive' societies, and so he places hope

in the possibility of a beneficent and enlightened oligarchy. Moreover, this European-founded

oligarchy would be informed by English culture and colonial memory, which is evident in *BNW*

because of John the Savage's use of Shakespearean literature to illustrate Huxley's notions of

'high Art' and philosophy. Paradoxically then, Huxley's novel portrays the inevitability of a

global oligarchical society, while also conveying the critical humanist elements he feels will be

lost if capitalist/Freudian elements are maintained. Huxley's dystopia therefore provides both a

critique of Fukuyama's perspective, a critique made possible by the text's interior rebuke of

capitalism, as well as a critique of the humanist Marxist perspective, an 'exterior' critique made

possible by Huxley's failed predictions of 20th and 21st century change.

Thus, both Fukuyama and Huxley's narrative imagines a historic shift from instability to

stability, from total war to total peace. For example, Mustaph Mond summarizes TWS's history:

> People in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific
>
> progress...Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest
>
> was secondary and subordinate...Right up until the 9 years war...That was when
>
> science first began to be controlled...Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the
>
> emphasis from truth... to comfort and happiness. The world's stable now. People
>
> are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get.
>
> They're well off; they're safe. (Huxley 223)

In *BNW* scientific progress was uncontrolled until war broke out. Afterward, societies'

exploration of science was nullified and civilization controlled through appeals to comfort and

self-gratification. TWS emerged as a totalitarian nation and began to control science because,

"Every change is a menace to stability...Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully

chained and muzzled" (225). Interestingly, Mustaph Mond's words ring similar to techno-

conservative Francis Fukuyama. For example, in Fukuyama's 1989 article, "The End of

History?" he argues that liberal democratic capitalism is the final global governing model after

the conclusion of WWII and The Cold War. Fukuyama writes:

> What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of
>
> a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the
>
> end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western
>
> liberal democracy as the final form of human government. ("The End of
>
> History?" par. 4)

Fukuyama's assertion parallels Mustaph Mond as both assert confidence in the stable trajectory

of post-war government models. Yet, does Fukuyama have any empirical ground on which to

claim the end of history? Indeed, responding to his critics' rebuttals of "The End of History",

Fukuyama acknowledges, "There can be no end of history unless there was an end of

science"(Our Posthuman Future 60). Hence, Fukuyama asserts the need to defend human

integrity, what he calls "Factor X"[16] (147), through international collaborative efforts.

Fukuyama references *BNW* as the prime narrative for unchecked technological

innovation, he writes, "no one [in *BNW*] (save John the Savage the book's protagonist) misses"

the values of their human forbearers (3). In effect, *BNW*'s illustration of John the Savage accords

a critique of Fukuyama's anthropocentric dogmatism as well as Huxley's 'hidden' Anglophillia.

For example, the influence of Shakespeare is evident when John the Savage sees a group of delta-twins he recites, "How beauteous mankind is! O Brave New World" (Huxley 160). This quote and the title of the novel are from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Several scholars have interpreted Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as an expression of England's colonial imperialism. For example, Deborah Willis writes:

> This play may be seen as Shakespeare's 'intervention in an ambivalent and even contradictory [colonialist] discourse'...in part by 'producing' a threatening 'other' that can be used to confirm colonial power...The threatening 'other' is used by colonial power to display its own godliness, to insure aristocratic class solidarity, to justify the colonial project morally, and to 'further its workings' through the reorientation of desire. (Willis 277)

Indeed, the threatening 'other' in BNW is the "vivipatious" and "Savage" culture of the past that was, "Full of fathers...full of mothers - therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity…[the] home was as squalid psychically as physically" (Huxley 39). The children in TWS are conditioned to stigmatize the lifestyle of their cultural forbearers to ensure the oligarchies' societal stability. Similarly, in Fukuyama's narrative the threatening other is the potential non-humans that may emerge in an age of biological engineering which would disrupt the 'End of History'.

Furthermore, Fukuyama's anthropocentric dogmatism may be critiqued in the novel through the juxtaposition of the characters John the Savage and Mustaph Mond. Paralleling *The Tempest*, these characters symbolize Caliban, Antonio and Prospero. For example, "Otherness" in *The Tempest* is "embodied by the 'masterless' men […] by Caliban […] and Antonio" (Willis 277). Caliban is masterless because he grew up in the wild outside of civilization, and Antonio is

masterless because he is a member of a royal family. Parallel, John the Savage also grew up on the wild "Savage Reservation" (88), and Mustaph Mond is the authoritarian leader of TWS.

John the Savage is the threatening 'other' in a number of ways, and he parallels Caliban. First, "Caliban is not, to the audience, and embodiment of threat" (279). Like Caliban, John does not present a threat to TWS's stability because he has little influence or power over Mustaph Mond or any of TWS's citizens. Second, Caliban is described as a "strange beast"; he is a hybrid "Half a fish and half a monster" (284). John is also a hybrid because his parents are TWS citizens, but he was raised on the Savage Reservation. Third, Willis writes, "We are invited to laugh at Caliban for his conversion to Stephano and his drunkenness, and yet as the mean-spiritness of Stephano and Trinculo becomes more evident, Caliban's superiority becomes so as well" (284). Similarly, John's entrance into TWS is a spectacle for the citizens' amusement; the reader comes to see John's ideals as superior in relation to the fawning masses of TWS. Finally, at the end of *The Tempest* the reader questions, "Caliban's fate. What good can come to him if Prospero leaves him to his island...he has become a 'servant-monster,' a creature of civilization...What good can come to him if they take him to Milan?"(286). John's plight is similar. He cannot go back to Savage Reservation (which never accepted him in the first place because of his TWS mother), and he cannot stand to live in the 'decadent' society of TWS, factors which ultimately leads to his suicide in the final chapter of the book. *BNW* therefore gives its 1930's readers a false dichotomy: either we join the savages and face Darwinian[17] extinction (shown by the fact John was denied the choice of joining the Savages' rituals) or isolation (shown by the use of the islands in the novel to isolate societies' misfits), or we *try* to enlighten a society whose decadence is located in Freudian and concomitant capitalist imbecility.

Mustaph Mond is also a masterless character in the novel. Yet, he represents both the

colonial West and the threatening other. Mustaph Mond therefore parallels both Prospero and Antonio. He has knowledge of the arts and sciences that exceeds John's knowledge, and Mustaph is not behaviorally conditioned like the other TWS citizens. Thus, as a member of the knowledgeable ruling class, Mustaph is the only danger to the stability TWS; he represents both the ruling Prospero and fratricidal Antonio. As Prospero was a skilled wizard, Mustaph Mond was, "a pretty good physicist" (225). As Prospero discarded his wand and magic, so too did Mustaph throw away science and technology. Yet, when Mustaph throws them away it's ironic. Humanity has already been vastly altered by technology; technology is dismissed because it could disrupt the stability of the current society. In a similar vein, Fukuyama calls for a global initiative to prevent human self-modification, yet humanity has already been significantly modified by technology.[18]

In terms of an 'exterior' critique of the novel, Huxley failed to predict what Niklas Luhmann calls the shift from a Stratified society to a global, Functionally Differentiated society. To illustrate, the formal dynamics of this 'shift' in societal form are also noted in Corey Anton's research in *Communication Uncovered*; Anton's research of Marshall McLuhan uncovers the impact of the electronic telegram on 21st century. The advent of the telegram created the World Time Zones, the cartographical difference between East and West, and with the mechanical clock it co-ordinated the 19th century railroad systems (Anton 117). At this point, it is clear why the internationally-minded Marxist Aldous Huxley believed the world would form a European-centerered society, with the Greenwhich Meridian dividing East/West, and the non-European societies as peripheries with poor industrial and transportation infrastructures.

However, as Anton notes, the invention of the telegram and the "electric revolution" radically 'reversed' the centralizing technologies of the written and printed word (122).[19] The

telegram was the first instance in human history where the "message" could outrun the "messenger", and so acted as a "decentralizing" technology (123). Anton writes, "Whereas the mechanical age used the clock to synchronize bodies and group actions, today massive synchronization of information has inverted associations to allow for various forms of asynchronous interaction"(122). Anton points to a late 20th century shift from 'synchronized' time to 'asynchronous' time. For example, in the early 20th century telephone calls, movies, television, shopping, and work were based on the synchronization of clocks and the movement of human bodies. However, in the late 20th and 21st century there has been a movement towards asynchronous activity between clocks and bodies, measured in seconds and minutes rather than hours and days (123); for example, emails allow for a delay in response, Netflix and DVR have replaced the timing demands of movies and live television broadcasts, online shopping has replaced the requirement of synchronizing with a business's open hours, and the online workplace has replaced the necessity of being at work 'on time' (125).

The decentralizing and asynchronous technologies of the electric age provide what McLuhan calls the "Global Village", and what Niklas Luhmann calls a Functionally Differentiated global society (124). Expressing a cautionary word, however, Anton notes that, "Nevertheless, we are and will remain bodies […] We must be honest about the distribution of produce and other forms of perishables as well as the demands of mass transporation: there will always be a demand for synchronization. Bodies are not digital information" (124). Indeed, he concludes his chapter by "cautioning against the ideas that the digital age is a return to earlier tribal life or the beginning of a global village, or less still, a new age of leisure"(125). In relevance to Huxley's novel, Anton makes a distinction between "leisure time and free time" (124). The difference between the two is that, "Leisure, it would seem, is antithetical to

'objectively measured time'…If something has to be scheduled in, it's not leisure"(124). Quoting Sebastian de Grazia, Anton notes:

> As de Grazia writes, 'Not being divided up by time, leisure does not suffer fragmentation as free time does…self-improvement, the always pursuing-something and bettering-oneself aspects of present free time are negative qualities as far as leisure is concerned. Life is not on a vertical incline, nor is truth. It comes not to him who is always on the run after something that tickles his sense…Free time is opposed to work, is temporary absence from work, but leisure has little to do with work as with time.' (Anton 124-125)

Indeed, the concept of the early serial, orderly, synchronized time is presented throughout *BNW*. For instance, the bottle birthing "Director" Mr. Foster describes his workplace as the, "hive of industry […] Every one was busy, everything in ordered activity" (Huxley 9). Furthermore, the behavioral conditioning of the population is regimented and described as, "Years of intensive hypnopaedia and, from [age] twelve to seventeen, Malthusian drills three times a week" (77). Moreover, the novel places an emphasis on TWS's cultural expectations of punctuality; for example, when the character Bernard Crick and Lenina Crowne are traveling they, "land at Santa Fe less than forty second behind schedule time. 'Forty seconds on a six and a half hour flight. Not so bad' Lenina conceded" (100).

A prime example of Huxley's critique of 'free time' in *BNW* is the character Bernard Crick. In a world of serial orderliness and synchronized relations, Bernard is a misfit among his peers. He is shorter than the average Alpha citizen, and contrary to TWS culture, he professes the desire for individuality, vivipatious births, and private relationships. Perhaps the most notable instance of Huxley's critique of 'free time' is Bernard's "Solidarity Service days", where the

sexual and community-fostering "orgy porgy" takes place (113). Bernard takes part in this activity on "Alternate Thursdays", and the book describes his worrisome rush to get to the event on time so as not to be shamed for tardiness. Bernard gets to the Orgy Porgy in time, but he witnesses the chastising of another citizen who is late, "The last arrival was Sarojini Engels. 'You're late,' said the President of the Group severely. 'Don't let it happen again.'"(78-80). The heavily regimented and authoritatively lead Orgy Porgy portrays the abbatoir of pleasure, or free-time that Huxley was determined to critique.

Perhaps another fruitful distinction in the novel is the sense of time the characters experience on the drug soma. Huxley writes in *BNW* that there is "no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think-or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always soma" (55). Soma is a drug used in the novel, described as a panacea with "All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects" (54). Furthermore, *BNW* describes a doctor's prescription of soma, "Dr. Shaw went on, 'you can't allow people to go popping off into eternity if they've got any serious work to do' (155). This example shows a difference Huxley makes between: work, pleasure, and soma. While work is formulated in its classical interpretation of on-the-clock 'serious' labor, and pleasure is formulated as a rigorously defined and regimented 'free-time', soma is described as an experience of "eternity". Yet, if Anton distinguishes leisure from free-time by the dichotomy scheduled/non-scheduled activities, how should the reader view the characters' eternal experience of soma?

The fact that soma is doctor-prescribed reveals Huxley's frustration and criticism of the scientific community. As Woiak notes, Huxley was critical of scientists, and Huxley writes in an essay titled "Monks Among the Test Tubes"(1932), that:

'The monks [of science] have a very enviable lot. They work for ends about whose value they feel no doubt. . . . If people beyond the convent walls choose to put the truth to stupid or destructive uses, then so much the worse for the world. It is none of the monks' business.' (Woaik 123).

Huxley's dystopia is a world in which scientists have carelessly assisted a "government of industrialists and financiers", and in effect ""train[ed] up a race of perfect mass producers and mass consumers" (117). Hence, the use of soma as a doctor-prescribed panacea portrays Huxley's belief that, "We are suffering from the effects of a little science badly applied. The remedy is a lot of science, well applied," (124). Here, however, we might reiterate Wolfe's notion that science works, but "Works for *whom,* for what purposes?"("In Search" 45). Problematically, Huxley's notion of 'well-applied' scientific "truth" leads not only to Huxley's Eurocentrism (the rational truth of the dominance of European industry and military dominance), but also Anglophillia as he conflates "all forms of mass or popular culture" as mechanisms of capitalism-(illustrated in *BNW* as the pan-sensory "Feelies")- that distract citizens from the search for 'truth' (represented by John the Savage's Shakespearean literature). With Huxley's notion of science and rationality in mind, perhaps another useful analysis of science and society in *BNW* may be derived from Wolfe's application of systems theory to knowledge production, what Zizek calls the "cognitive commons" ("Censorship"). In a formulation reminiscent of C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures Divide" ("Animal Rites" 1213), Huxley juxtaposes the homogenizing term "scientists" against the "liberal humanist" (Woiak 112). Yet, as stated in the introduction, there are many different disciplines within the *constructed* distinction between the Humanities and the Sciences, each which allows its human constituents a unique 'constructed' system through which to observe the environment.

Furthermore, in an assertion that risks glossing over the nuances of Anton's oeuvre, his term 'leisure' (non-scheduled activity) in *Communication Uncovered* excludes the many systems that are 'blind' to mechanical clocks and language per-se. To elaborate, his critique of asynchronous technologies and free-time is directed in terms of the "commercialization of identity and selfhood" (Anton 125). He illustrates the commercialization of identity first in terms of a "hardware dependency […] people are invited to change their scenery by keeping up with endless upgrades, newer version, platforms, and newer products" (125). Second, he notes "commercialization occurs because would-be media presences need to break through anonymity and have their names, voices, an/or images gain public mind-share" (126). Anton's "mind-share" may be seen as analogous to Zizek's cognitive commons.

Problematically, Anton's notion of 'leisure' assumes *anyone* could 'forget about the time' and participate in true leisure. On the contrary, drawing from Psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud's study on WWI Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder patients may represent the most recognizable instance of individuals having difficulty experiencing leisure. Indeed, this phenomena caused Sigmund Freud to alter his psychoanalytic theory, adding the principle of Thanatos or Death-drive, which in turn allowed for a deconstructive 'opening' for Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic formulations (Felluga). Furthermore, Zizek advances psychoanalysis by doing exactly what Wolfe calls for by "not attempting to step outside the limits of different disciplines and languages games, but rather pushing them internally to their self-deconstructive conclusion,"(1450). Zizek deconstructs Lacanian psychoanalysis by coming to the conclusion that Lacan's "not-all [of the self]" and "barred-other" leads to the fact that Lacan is fundamentally Hegelian ("Lacan: at What Point is He Hegelian?"). Thus, if we apply systems

theory to Huxley's novel, soma reveals the ambiguity between Huxley's notion of a 'distraction' and the real search for 'truth'.

Perhaps a more fundamental difference between Luhmann and Anton/Huxley is evident in his first notion of the "commericialization of identity and selfhood", which refers to the effects of "hardware dependency" (Anton 125). In this instance, Anton seems to flatten observation in terms of the 'soft' organic human who can experience timeless leisure, and the humans' 'hard' mechanical instruments. Yet, systems theory, as Derrida might put it, "extends beyond the life/death boundary", and there is no metaphysically 'true' difference between organic/inorganic (Wolfe 295). Indeed, it's exactly this dichotomy between the organic and the mechanical that allows for a critique of machine culture in chapter 4.

To conclude, Anton's distinction between leisure/free-time and his commentary on the electronic revolution is invaluable as a *heuristic* on 21st century technology and society. With Anton and Luhmann's theories in mind, a poignant critique of *BNW* is made possible; a critique which both recognizes Theodor Adorno's assertion that Huxley was "'inwardly an enemy of intoxication'"(Frost 448), as well as one which points out the critical necessity of all disciplines to contribute to a posthuman 'reconstructive' knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

HUMANITY AND HIVE-MIND, HEGEL OR LUHMANN IN GIBSON'S NEUROMANCER?

> "Among all creatures, the Head is preferred above all other parts, both of
> Man and Beast; in Man, because it is the seat of the intellectual soul, and
> is the emblem of Sovereign jurisdiction, the Head being the Hieroglyphick
> of the beginning."
>
> <div align="right">-W. Sloane-Evans, "Wilden"</div>

Published in 1984, *Neuromancer* has been praised as the quintessential cyberpunk novel

by SF theorists claim the novel undermines, "concepts like 'subjectivity' and 'identity'"

(Sponsler 642). Drawing from the SF Theory of Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto", the

positive reviews of *Neuromancer* glorify the "potent" fusions between organic and artificial

substances; thus, Neuromancer illustrates the technologically-driven potential to subvert a 21st

century "technocratic and militarized culture" (Haraway). The celebration of the "potent fusion"

between "organicism" and "machine" (Haraway), however, should be refined to garner-in Claire

Sponsler's words-any "progressive blueprints" from the novel (640). Gibson's *Neuromancer*

therefore illustrates both the apotheosis of *logos,* and it accurately depicts an increasingly

constructed Posthuman society.

To explain, this critique of *Neuromancer* should be contrasted against Neil Easterbrook's

rebuke of the novel in his article, "The Arc of Our Destruction: Reversal and Erasure in

Cyberpunk".

Easterbrook asks of Gibson's novel, "what images and tropes [in the novel] show what it means to be 'human'?", and he answers, "Throughout the novel, humans are valued by their relation to objects, by their associations with and access to consumer products" (384).

For Easterbrook, Gibson's novel fails to illustrate a "deeper" structural critique of society; in effect, *Neuromancer's* text only "revels in the surface" of capitalist relations (384). Easterbrook chastises Gibson's story for its illustration of class consciousness, and he condemns the novel for glorifying the authority of the "corporate logo, sigil, or product name" as the only means for its characters to "transcend their social position" (384). Thus, for Easterbrook:

> The only authentically human response is determined by the machine culture, itself dependent on its dialect tension with the *zaibatsus* [corporations] […] [Gibson's] metaphors turn on capitalism's seizure of theology: the moral and corporeal are replaced by the mordant and the corporate, *Logos* replaced by logo. (Easterbrook 384)

Easterbrook reproaches Gibson's novel because he portrays a world in which the only way the characters are liberated is by following the "insivible lines" of power laid down by corporations (Gibson 203).

Contrary to Easterbrook's conclusions, however, *Neuromancer* represents the apotheosis of *Logos*. Indeed, in a 1986 interview Gibson responds to critics like Easterbrook who say the novel is only concerned with surfaces; Gibson states, "When I hear critics say that my books are 'hard and glossy,' I almost want to give up writing […] what I'm talking about is what being hard and glossy does to you"(McCaffery). Gibson's response is legitimized in two ways; first, *Neuromancer* portrays the Marxist notion that the economy is a "social construct" as opposed to a 'natural phenomena' (Mueller 238). This is represented in the novel's architectural description

of the space resort "Freeside", an artificially constructed earth-orbiting world (Gibson 75). Case describes Freeside as the place of "Biz. He could feel it humming in the air […] Commerce. The dance"(145). Moreover, as a construction in outer-space, even the trees, grass, and landscape are "the result of genetic engineering and chemical manipulation" (128). Case describes Freeside as "Las Vegas […] an Orbital Geneva", owned and built by the "inbred and most carefully refined […] industrial clan of Tessier and Ashpool" (101).

Furthering this architectural metaphor, it's what lies beneath the 'surface' of the Freeside that determines Gibson's critique. Beneath the corporate family Tessier and Ashpool's (TA) home known as "The Villa Straylight", there exists a subterranean interior described by TA clan member Lady3Jane as "A body grown in upon itself...The architects of Freeside went to great pains to conceal the fact that the interior […]is arranged with the banal precision of furniture in a hotel room" (172). In this architectural description between exterior/interior, the exterior of Villa Straylight symbolizes the corporate logo, which sustains the *surface* image of its authority by hiding the 'human' elements of its interior *structure*. Furthermore, Lady3Jane notes that, "We have sealed ourselves away behind our money, growing inward, generating a seamless universe of self where the eye is trapped in narrow curves," (173). The TA family hides "behind their money", and we should take the "seamless universe of self" to imply TA's 'naturalization' of its orbital 'construction' as an instance of false consciousness.

The second way Gibson's response is legitimized is that his text gifts classical Enlightenment subjectivity to non-human subjects. The novel illustrates two artificial intelligences (AI) created by the TA clan that drive the plot in Gibson's novel: Wintermute and Neuromancer. Neil Easterbrook critiques Gibson's portrayal of the AIs because of the programmed "'desire' of AIs to humanize themselves" (384). Thus, in Easterbrook's reading of

Neuromancer, "techne precedes physis" which posits "technology as primary, that ground upon which nature is to be understood […]consciousness is manifested as data […] a perfect reversal empirical and transcendental space"(382). Ultimately, Easterbrook formulates Wintermute's power over the protagonist Case in terms of the negation of free-will and the apotheosis of the corporate logo. Indeed, it is easy to see why Easterbrook would conclude this as Wintermute is described as an entity without free-will, "I am that which knoweth not the word. If you knew, man, and told me, I couldn't know. It's hardwired in" (Gibson 173). Furthermore, Wintermute must mimetically appear in the image of other humans' memories, which he describes to Case "these aren't masks. I need 'em to talk to you. 'Cause I don't have what you'd think of as a personality (216).

Contrary to Easterbrook's conclusion, Gibson's glorification of Western *logos* is in fact presented most strongly with Wintermute if we include in this formulation his 'Janus-twin' called Neuromancer. Gibson describes the two AI, "Wintermute was hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside. Neuromancer was personality. Neuromancer was immortality" (269). The two AI actually represent two halves of a *singular* humanity. Wintermute considers Neuromancer his "other lobe," (172) so Gibson implies the two form one whole. Problematically, Gibson's description of Wintermute and Neuromancer should be seen as an illustration of Western metaphysics in terms of "the 'autoaffection' of the voice-as-presence and the valorizing of speech" best analyzed by Derrida (Wolfe 6). In the denoument the two 'AI' merge, which expresses a *privileged* structural negativity sustained in terms of the Enlightenment 'spirit' of the Kantian "commitment to the autonomy of reason" (Wolfe xxi).

Furthermore, Gibson's apotheosis of *logos* exhibits a particular humanist essentialism in the form of a *human* head (and we should note the similarity between Levinas's Face to Gibson's

Head). Gibson illustrates a "ceremonial terminal" shaped like a "Head" residing at the "corporate heart" of the Villa Straylight (172-173). Moreover, the only way the two AI can merge, is if Case goes to the architectural 'interior' of The Villa Straylight and says the "magic word" to unlock the Head (171). The denouement features the two AIs combining, and in response to Case asking what Wintermute has become, Wintermute responds:

> "I'm not Wintermute now…I'm the Matrix." Case laughed. "Where's that get you?" […]Case:] But what do you do? You just there? […] "I talk to my own kind" [Case:] "But you're the whole thing, Talk to yourself?" "There's others. I found one already. Series of transmission recorded over a period of eight years, in the nineteen seventies. Till there was me, there was nobody to know, nobody to answer." [Case:] "From where?" "Centarui system." […] and then the screen was blank. (Gibson 269)

Thus, the Hegelian dialectic of spirit continues beyond earth in the form of a non-human other, and Gibson does not make it clear whether or not it will end in the form of a final State (Fukuyama's reading), or if it continues indefinitely (Zizek's reading). However, for Luhmann's Systems Theory, the possibility of total self-identity between the subject/object (or system/environment in Luhmann's design) is left to philosophical aporia and replaced with the self-referential paradox of operational closure, what can also be called the condition of *constructed* blindness.

Leaving that philosophical aporia behind, *Neuromancer* may be critiqued for another humanist 'upholstering' because of its glorification of the Rastafarian ethic. For example, the TA Clan's capitalist Freeside orbital construction is juxtaposed against the more humane "Rastafarian" space colony "Zion" (103). Whereas Freeside is described as a "hive" run by a

family of sterile clones (101), Zion has "music", a "sense of community", and "smells of humanity" (103). Gibson's insect-hive metaphor implies that the capitalist Freeside orbital construction is a devolution of humanity while Zion has retained its humanity in outer-space.

Furthering the influence of a Rastafarian ethic in the novel, Case enlists the help from two Rastafarian pilots to help him reach the Head at the "corporate heart" of the TA Clan's Villa Straylight. When Case 'unlocks' the Head, he is immediately brought into Neuromancer's cyberspace realm where Case's ex-lover and previously murdered Linda Lee is found. Neuromancer says, "'Stay. If your woman is a ghost, she doesn't know it. Neither will you'" (243). Unlike Wintermute, Neuromancer has a name, and exerts no external influence over the characters. Case chooses to leave Neuromancer's cyberspace, and in a reference to the Greek story of Orpheus Gibson writes:

> He did look back, once, although he didn't open his eyes. He didn't need to. They were there by the edge of the sea, Linda Lee and the thin child who said his name was Neuromancer. His leather jacket dangled from her hand, catching the fringe of the surf. He walked on, following the music. Maelcum's Zion dub. (243)

Juxtaposed against the external agency of Wintermute, the AI Neuromancer represents infinite creation, and the Rastafarian music Case follows suggests there is a 'true', if only intuitive, path to follow outside the capitalist confines of Freeside. To Gibson's credit, Case's acceptance of Neuromancer's cyberspace realm implies the constitutional 'blindness' of operational closure that Luhmann's theory asserts. In this case, however, Wolfe's criticism of the systems biologists Maturana and Varela is indispensable. The two authors assert that, "every act of knowing brings forth world". But for Humans (and certain other species for Wolfe's activism), as "languaging beings […] every reflection, including one on the foundation of human knowledge, invariably

takes place in language, which is our distinctive way of being human and being humanly active"("In Search" 61). Thus, Maturana and Varela's advice for society is to remember, "the fact that, biologically, without love, without acceptance of others, there is no social phenomenon", and they emphasize the Buddhist ethic of "'egolessness'" as a response to the detriments of Western "'pragmaticism'"(63).

In response to Maturana and Varela-and we should relay these words for *Neuromancer*-Wolfe praises the recognition that "we bring forth [the world] with others", but Wolfe is highly critical of the "philosophical idealism" in their passage that assumes that "ethics will somehow do the work of politics" (63). Instead, it's the social constructions that we as human 'languaging beings' are part of, move through, and create that should be considered the keys to social justice. Thus, Wolfe's critique of Maturana and Varela's emphasis on the importance of love and Buddhist ethics is equally applicable to Gibson's portrayal of the 'humaneness' of the Rastafarian culture of Zion.

Consequently, Gibson's SF work does not exhibit the reversal of "logo and *logos*" as with Easterbrook, nor does the novel exhibit the reversal of "transcendental and empirical" space (384). Instead, Gibson's novel portrays a posthuman subjectivity that extends beyond the human-body proper. As Wolfe points out in regards to the notion of cyberspace:

> [If it is possible to]download yourself into a computer, thereby obtaining through technological mastery the ultimate privilege of immortality…[We would not be] abandoning the autonomous liberal subject but expanding its prerogatives into the realm of the posthuman…posthumanism in my sense isn't posthuman at all—in the sense of being 'after' our embodiment has been transcended—but is only

posthumanist, in the sense that it opposes the fantasies of disembodiment and

autonomy, inherited from humanism (Wolfe xv).

Importantly then, *Neuromancer* expresses the notion that society is becoming increasing self-

constructed, while it also shows how humanist essentialisms risk leading to the kind of

philosophical idealism that fails to adequately "reconstruct" the "deconstruction" of a

(post)human society (3). Ultimately, if there are any 'progressive blueprints' in the cyberpunk

novel that coined the term "cyberspace" (Wood 23), they lie in the mysterious future, coming

after the novel's frame and involving the 'other' that Wintermute/Neuromancer find.

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Notes

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[1]. Fukuyama's interpretation of liberal democratic capitalism is based on Alexandre Kojeve's readings of Hegel. See "The End of History?" Pars. 3-12.

[2]. Fukuyama writes, "The answer, I believe is that while there is no *simple* translation of human nature into human rights, the passage from one to the other is ultimately mediated by the rational discussion of human ends-that is, by philosophy. That discussion does not lead to a priori or mathematically provable truths; indeed, it may not even yield substantial consensus among the discussants. It does, however, allow us to begin to establish a hierarchy of rights and importantly, allows us to rule out certain solutions to the problem of rights that have been politically powerful in the course of human history" see, Fukuyama 123.

[3]. Among the many examples, see Zizek's article "Liberal Multiculturalism Masks an Old Barbarism with a Human Face".

[4]. Zizek is not implying a form of revolution reminiscent to 20th century communism, he writes, "So where do we stand today with regard to communism? The first step is to admit that the solution is not to limit the market and private property by direct interventions of the State and state ownership" see, "Censorship Today".

[5]. Notably, Zizek points out, "The explosive growth of slums in the last decades, especially in the Third World megalopolises from Mexico City and other Latin American capitals through Africa (Lagos, Chad) to India, China, Philippines and Indonesia, is perhaps the crucial geopolitical event of our times. While today's society is often characterized as the society

of total control, slums are the territories within a state boundaries from which the state (partially, at least) withdrew its control, territories which function as white spots, blanks, in the official map of a state territory" see, "Censorship Today".

[6]. "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it", see Marx "Theses on Feuerbach".

[7]. Wolfe's "In Search" investigates the possibilities of inter-disciplinary studies by giving a Systems Theory critique of the nuances of a Feminist Philosophy of Science. Notably, he writes, "As I have argued elsewhere, I agree wholeheartedly with Haraway that 'the projects of crafting reliable knowledge about the 'natural' world cannot be given over to the genre of paranoid or cynical science fiction,' that 'social constructionism cannot be allowed to decay into the radiant emanations of cynicism' so that-to paraphrase Fox Keller-what counts as knowledge is determined by nothing more than which laboratory has the most money. But I wholeheartedly disagree that this means we should redouble our commitment to what Sandra Harding has recently called 'strong objectivity'-a leaner and meaner scientific method that would 'identify and eliminate distorting social interests and values from the results of research' by 'systematically examining all of the social values shaping a particular research process'. The problem with Harding's position, of course, is that it assumes that there is some space from which to survey our 'social interests and values' without at the same time being bound by those interests and values-a space, in other words, of noncontingent observation, a place where one can tally up all of the 'blind spots' without having that tally compromised-rendered less than 'objective'-by its own blind spot [...] In the meantime, to avoid constantly undercutting their political critique with an epistemology ill-equipped to serve it, when Haraway in 'Situated

Knowledges' says 'objectivity' she should instead say what she really means, which is 'situatedness' and 'responsibility,' and when Harding says 'objectivity' she should instead just say 'democracy' and 'representation of marginalized voices'", see Wolfe 39-46.

[8]. This differentiation emerges out of Wolfe's interpretation of Zizek and Judith Butler's debates on the 'operationality' of language. Wolfe opposes the Levinasian, Lacanian, and Zizekean understanding of 'otherness' and self-identification in terms of the assertion of an ontological positivity (Heidegger), or *privileged* structural negativity (Levinas). He writes, "The 'difference' of these different instances of identification can be preserved, in other words, precisely to the text that they are *not* collapsed into epiphenomena of an ontological positivity via the Lacanian Real-precisely to the extent, to put it another way, that we are willing to insist on the differences between ontology, discourse, and institution" see "Animal Rites" 2425-2427.

[9]. I use communism here in Zizek's sense, who explicates 20th century Communism as a "total failure" for known as well as unknown reasons, see "Slavoj Zizek Hardtalk".

[10]. Woiak notes Huxley's extensive familial connections to evolutionary biologists, "Aldous Huxley contributed extensively to popularizing and critiquing modern biological science and technology. He had been born in 1894 into a scientific family— Aldous's grandfather was T. H. Huxley ('Darwin's bulldog') and his younger brother was the evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley" see, Woiak 453.

[11]. The ground for Easterbrook's critique may be seen in the Lukacs vs. Brecht debate, see "Introduction to Brecht and Lukacs".

[12]. Luhmann won the 1988 Hegel Prize for his "Supertheory", and "Niklas Luhmann's relation to philosophy can […] be compared to hegel's relation to religion (as expressed in the Phenomenology of Spirit)", see Mueller 199.

[13]. In his book, *Citizen Cyborg*: *Why Democratic Societies Must Respond To The Redesigned Human Of The Future*, James Hughes documents the history of Transhumanist politics ranging. A sparse summary shows: the Extropian, Libertarian Transhumanists (associated with the Extropian Institute, Ayn Rand, and the 1980's neo-conservative movement); the Neo-Luddite movement (associated with the Bush Administration and Fukuyama's position against genetic engineering); the Liberal Democratic Transhumanists and the World Transhumanist Association (associated with democratic liberal Nick Bostrom and the Utilitarian ethics of David Pierce); Fascist Transhumanism (associated with Italian Futurist Tommaso Marinetti, fascist readings of Nietzsche, and Neo-Nazism); Radical Democratic Transhumanism and Leftist Luddism (associated with H.G. Well's techno-utopianism, atheism, scientific rationalism as well as the worry over Capitalist influence over human technological development; this is parallel to the debate between Huxley and H.G. Wells); Cyborgian Socialist-Feminists (Donna Haraway's reaction to Eco-Feminism in the 'Cyborg Manifesto', and her emphasis against techno-militarization); Post-Darwinian Leftists (the utilitarian bioethics of Peter Singer), Pro-Technology Greens and Bruce Sterling's Viridian Movement (similar to Haraway's argument against Eco-Feminism, but with less criticism of techno-militarism and Capitalism); Disabled Cyborgs Movement (associated with Christopher Reeves and Alan Pottinger's The Ascenders group); Afrofuturist, Feminist, and Queer futurists (who see SF technologies as a vehicle to overcome or explain racism, sexism, and hegemonic heteronormativity). See, "Hughes".

[14]. "President Bush's appointment of staunch bio-conservative ethicist Leon Kass as his chief bioethics advisor and chair of the President's Council on Bioethics (PCB). Kass in turn appointed fellow bio-Luddites to the PCB, such as Francis Fukuyama, author of the recent anti-

genetic engineering manifesto *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (2002)", see Hughes.

[15]. Mueller's *Luhmann Explained* summarizes Luhmann's body of work; here is Luhmann's description of contemporary global society, "'Basing itself on this form of functional differentiation, modern society has become a completely new type of system, building up an unprecedented degree of complexity. The boundaries of its subsystems can no longer be integrated by common territorial frontiers [national geographic borders]. Only the political subsystem continues to use such frontiers, because segmentation into 'states' appears to be the best way to organize its own function. But other subsystems like science or the economy spread over the globe. It therefore has become impossible to limit society as a whole by territorial boundaries, and consequently it no longer makes sense to speak of 'modern societies' in the plural….Neither the different ways of reproducing capital nor the degrees of development in different countries provide convincing grounds for distinguishing different societies. The inclusion of all communicative behavior into one societal system is unavoidable consequence of functional differentiation. Using this form of differentiation, society becomes a global system. For structural reasons there is no other choice", see Mueller 53.

[16]. Fukuyama writes on the theoretical basis of Factor X, "What the demand for equality of recognition implies is that when we strip all of a person's contingent and accidental characteristics away, there remains some essential human quality underneath that is worthy of a certain minimal level of respects-call it Factor X," see Fukuyama 146.

[17] . Woiak notes Huxley's extensive familial connections to evolutionary biologists, "Aldous Huxley contributed extensively to popularizing and critiquing modern biological science and technology. He had been born in 1894 into a scientific family— Aldous's

grandfather was T. H. Huxley ('Darwin's bulldog') and his younger brother was the evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley" see, Woiak 453.

[18]. Donna Haraway describes the numerous ways in which technology has already fundamentally obscured clear dichotomies such as natural/artificial and organic/mechanized, see Haraway.

[19]. Anton's work explains that the Greek alphabet detribalized previously oral societies; it enable property rights to be passed down through writing, it allowed for rudimentary attempts at 'universal' language translation, which may be seen as a prototype of contemporary globalism. Further, The 7th-8th century development of word spacing (as opposed to Scriptura Continua texts) allowed for significantly enhanced levels of independent reading and enhanced the fiction of individualist identity (dictionaries of independent words could be developed and orality was need far less to impart meaning for the copyist/writer). Furthermore, the development of the printing press led to an intensification of the Western sense of individuality as well as the formation of public individualism and nationalism, see Anton 80-100.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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