

REIMAGINING SUBJECT-OTHER RELATIONS: EMBRACING THE OTHER

WITHOUT AND WITHIN

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## Abstract

This study analyses literary depictions of subject-other relations through representative post-World War II Western literature. Such relations have been negatively impacted by a “hermeneutics of suspicion,” a phrase coined by French Philosopher Paul Ricœur to refer to thinkers Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche who, he argued, were shaped by “suspicion[s] concerning the illusions of consciousness” (34). Contextualized within a larger body of theoretical work (Patrick O’Donnell, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Teresa Brennan, Joanna Zylinkska), the project explores both the symptoms as well as the “epidemic nature of contemporary paranoia” as represented in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, E.L. Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel*, and Dione Brand’s *Inventory* (O’Donnell vii). While the literary and generic structures, aesthetic approaches, and historical contexts for the texts chosen are varied, they each trace the “cultural epidemiology” of paranoia over the last seven decades, weighing the consequences of paranoia’s transformation into a prescription (O’Donnell vii-viii). In so doing, they highlight how paranoia has been normalized as a response “for us, as national, corporate, historical subjects in” time periods “beset by questions about their cohesion and continuance” (O’Donnell 16). Whether through satire, parody, or hyperbole, these texts confront readers with the consequences of the internalization of and complicity with said fear and paranoia as responses to an unknown other, highlighting the need for more ethical subject-other relations. Through their political, cultural, and historical “inventories,” these writers illustrate how the subject has been interpolated into a patriarchal system that keeps them locked into a cycle of fear and hatred that, if allowed to continue, will only lead to ongoing violence. Instead, this study imagines subject-other relations based on care, trust, and love. Such relations are life-

affirming – mindful of the fragile connections that hold humans together in kinship. By imagining such possibilities for a non-colonizing relation between self and other, this project explores imagined spaces that do not “will another empire,” but instead show how to take “history’s pulse / measured with another hand” (Brand 11).

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## Introduction

Background Context: Whence this fear of the other?

Before outlining my literary and theoretical framework for this dissertation project, I would like to take you back to my past as a child of Azorean immigrants. Like many others from the Azores (the majority of Portuguese immigrants to Canada from 1955-1974 came from the Azores Islands), my family fled their homeland, seeking an escape from the poverty as well as the terrible working and living conditions under the tyranny of dictator Antonio Oliveira Salazar. Though their stories of the homeland were always tinged with *saudade*, a difficult Portuguese term to translate but one which speaks to a sense of longing and nostalgia, my parents were resolutely pragmatic; hard work and frugality were their protection against poverty. There were few jobs and few freedoms where they had come from; in Canada, they could achieve a better future for themselves and their children. Yet, though better off in many ways than they had been in their homeland, they lived on the margins in a city that took no notice of them, part of a mass labour migration scheme by the Canadian government to fill unskilled labour gaps. Like most Azorean immigrants, my parents worked in manual jobs: my mother as a cleaning lady for wealthy homeowners in Rosedale and my father as a part-time painter in the construction industry. Both struggled with low wages and precarious jobs, often working double shifts while my brother and I were watched over by my maternal grandparents. They also struggled – my father, especially – to fight against the stereotypes that continue to face the Azorean community in Canada today. These stereotypes painted them as good workers so long as they only attempted to use their hands rather than their minds. My father never accepted the idea that Azoreans were being pigeonholed because of their ethnicity. Though he came here so his children could achieve

a level of education that he desired but was never within his reach, my father failed to recognize that he, and his children, were being actively relegated to the space of the other.

Studies have confirmed what I have always known; Portuguese immigrants have not been granted the same status as immigrants from other European nations. Stigmatized as uneducated working-class labourers, “the marginalized economic and education profile of the first generations of the Portuguese-Canadian community...gave rise to the negative image of this group, held by...Canadian society. The Portuguese community in Canada...showed evidence of facing severe systemic barriers to a full integration into Canadian society” (qtd. in Presley and Brown 2). Such stigma clung like a stench to second-generation Luso-Canadians as well. Like my father before me, I too would be marginalized as a “stupid pork-chop,” urged by my elementary school teachers to forget about university because, according to them, it was not for “people like me.” Despite my consistently high grades and insatiable desire to learn as much as possible from them (I had no other resources for learning), these teachers dismissed me—a few even openly mocking my desire to follow a path they felt was closed off to me. They had already written me off, planting seeds of self-doubt that would grow to haunt me throughout my life. Like so many other Azorean immigrants in Canada, I fell through the gaps, and as such, “Fac[ed] economic, social and cultural marginalization as [part of] a non-visible immigrant group” (Ari 9).

To make matters worse, my experiences were systemically erased because “Portuguese immigrants have been amalgamated under the white European category,” despite not having access to the privileges granted therein (Ari 9). One consequence of this amalgamation is that, historically, the experiences of Azorean immigrants in Canada have been largely overlooked by

academic and government bodies. More recently, however, several studies have sought out why the Portuguese community in Toronto continues to experience low levels of education and limited upward social mobility. The overarching conclusion from these studies is that “for the Portuguese their culture and low socio-economic positions give shade to their whiteness” (Ari i). It is precisely in this shade that I have grown up, a woman of European descent who has never been white enough to exist comfortably inside the margins. Unaware of the larger socio-economic forces which rendered me what scholars refer to as a “dark-white,” I blamed myself and my family rather than the system that actively worked to bar me from improving my situation (Ari i). It would not be until my work as a graduate student that I would come to fully understand the magnitude of the forces that I have been working so hard to defy my entire life.

As the first and, as yet, only individual in my large extended family<sup>1</sup> to complete a university degree, it has taken me a lifetime to understand that being othered was an important, if difficult, gift to accept. By inhabiting this shaded space, I have been granted the privilege of bearing witness to those on the margins, much like the characters in the texts I examine throughout this project. It is my curiosity about these marginal spaces that inspired me to apply to university against the advice of my teachers and advisors, even as my decision to pursue my education ostracized me within my Azorean community as well. As a young adult, I was preoccupied with and distressed by my isolation: I was an outsider in my community, neither fitting in with my extended family nor with the students in the academic classrooms that I had

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<sup>1</sup> My father was one of eight children. Six of his siblings also moved to Canada to flee the poverty and authoritarian government in Portugal.

worked so hard to gain entry into. I was, I concluded, an imposter in all areas of my life. Though I did not yet know it, this isolation would both inspire and drive me to pursue this project.<sup>2</sup>

It was in a first-year Humanities class with a remarkable professor, Dr. Elaine Newton, that the ideas for this project would begin to take root. Faced with a reading list of literary works that I had never been exposed to before, I began to see a disturbing pattern emerge on the pages of those texts: being an other did not ensure that you would be more empathic to those on the periphery. What I saw on those pages was eerily reflected in my own life. One of the many sources of conflict in my childhood home was a daily collision between my worldview and my father's – a man that, despite existing on the margins himself, chose defensively to see and treat other immigrants as lesser than. At the time, I, like so many in Canada, wrote my father off as an ignorant Azorean, sadly othering my father even as I also occupied the same shaded space. I have come to see, however, that his impulse to other others came from not only past traumas but also a deep-seated fear and insecurity about his own tenuous identity as a hyphenated Canadian. His struggle to embrace his new home was marred by the discrimination he faced each time he sought to better his family's situation. I have never met anyone who worked as hard as my father did, and yet his efforts were often overshadowed by the stereotypes of Azoreans as nothing more than manual labourers. He spent his life trying to prove himself worthy and capable of more than working in construction and, in so doing, became unconsciously complicit with the very system

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<sup>2</sup> By naming me Janet, after a figure (Janet Leigh) who represented the white space that he sought entry into, my father (perhaps, unconsciously) hoped to disguise my roots, to help me pass into a space that he was ultimately barred from. But, my name, "white" as it may be, only served as a reminder of my alienation, on the one hand, from my family who could not pronounce it, and, on the other hand, from a space that would not let me pass into it. Hoping as he did to shield me from what he had encountered, my name signifies my struggle to find a space where I could belong.

that marginalized him in the first place. In hindsight, I see now that his tireless drive to achieve upward social mobility and financial security for his family manifested itself as fear and suspicion of the others who occupied the same shaded spaces as he did. These others were perceived as threatening either because they would ostensibly displace him or impede his ability to succeed. Fear of the other would ensure that “we” remained vigilant against potential threats to displace “us,” “our” traditions,” “our” jobs, or any other perceived hard-earned rights that were seemingly at risk should “we” let our guards down.

With the benefit of distance, I have come to feel compassion and empathy for a man who was never quite white enough to enter the inner circles of Canadian society. Even when he finally attained a “desk job,” the constant pressure to prove himself would come at great personal cost, resulting in disdain for his Azorean heritage as well as a sense of alienation between himself and his siblings. Though he came to Canada to rise above the poverty facing his family, he would struggle to do so—eventually being downsized from the job that had been his proof that he could be more than a “stupid porkchop.” My father’s final year of life was one spent between mourning the death of my mother and worrying about his ability to support himself financially. When he lived in the Azores, he existed on the geographical periphery of Europe; having moved to Little Portugal in Toronto, he remained on the social periphery of Canada, existing in the shadows cast by the racialization of Portuguese-Canadians. In the end, he died as he lived for like many other immigrants in Canada, he continued to seek a space in the center, despite the high cost of entry and the complicity with the system that kept him on the margins.

On the one hand then, this project has afforded me the ability to both empathize with and gain insight into the propensity for subjects to react fearfully to the imagined threat of an other.

On the other hand, I am personally troubled and intellectually puzzled by the inability of one marginalized group to feel compassion for another similarly marginalized group without needing to master or identify with it in various ways. Instead of producing community, the margins are a space that replicates the othering occurring at the centre. As I reflect here, I see that I have spent my life imagining and theorizing possible spaces for inter-human relations based on empathy rather than fear; compassion rather than complacency; trust rather than paranoia.<sup>3</sup> As a result, two main questions haunt the pages of this dissertation project. First, what *does* it take for subjects to see that by obsessively fearing the other, they only serve to contribute to their own paranoid dis-ease? And, second, why are subjects complicit with institutional prescriptions to fear the other, especially since giving into this fear only serves to spread the very infection that is so often used against them? After all, we all occupy the shaded space of the other at some point in our lives – a space that is poisoned by our propensity to view each other through a paranoid lens.

Instead, if, like many novelists, filmmakers, artists, and scholars compellingly argue, the contemporary period is one dominated by paranoia, then we must re-think our approach to the other. Continuing our current ways will only serve to perpetuate a contagion that, while often veiled under the rhetoric of keeping us safe, threatens to destroy us all. Indeed, by continually obsessing over our imagined and paranoid fears of the other, we open the door to spiritual, psychological, and sometimes even physical torture in our own largely self-created echo

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this dissertation project, the term paranoia is used in general terms to refer to the sense of fear and distrust that a subject experiences in response to that which is unknown and outside of their control. My understanding is informed by Geoffrey Shullenberger's definition of paranoia as a term that "one [may] understand...quite broadly as a suspicion of being under the influence or compulsion of mechanisms beyond one's awareness" (61).

chambers. It is precisely this latter problem that sits at the heart of this project. As my reading of one of the primary texts in this dissertation, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, makes clear, there are serious consequences arising from our fearful, paranoid imaginings about the other as it materializes for a subject in the face of any O/other.<sup>4</sup> The chilling reality is that we are much like Winston Smith, the paranoid protagonist of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; we torture ourselves, constructing narratives and images which then become the very materials furnishing the various Room 101s that we inhabit throughout our lives.

Furthermore, it is troubling that we appear to be inured to and unaware of the consequences that emerge from our paranoid fears of the other – an important point which I examine, in my third, fourth and final chapters, through an analysis of E.L. Doctorow's Cold War novel, *The Book of Daniel*, as well as Dionne Brand's dystopic epic poem, *Inventory*. As each of these works compellingly argues, both individually and collectively, we continue to tell ourselves that paranoid narratives will protect us because they prepare us for potential attacks on our social, cultural, and economic well-being by an ostensibly threatening other. However, what we are actually doing is facilitating our own exploitation by various powerful and paranoid governmental, institutional and corporate (Big Br)others. Clearly, as paranoid subjects, we are so worried about what is looming on the horizon that we fail to see how sick and vulnerable this worry has made us in the present moment. We have yet to learn that resistance cannot happen within Room 101. On the contrary, as *The Book of Daniel* compellingly argues, reform from within is simply conformity with the very systems that bind us and place us under erasure.

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this project, I use lower case "other" to signify an individual body and upper case "Other" to refer to an institutional body.

I began this dissertation to understand the far too often illogical and complicit paranoid responses that we exhibit about those we perceive as different. Disturbed by the human propensity to wipe each other off the face of the earth (and to take the planet down with us), I have struggled to understand why we are so quick to assume that the other is out to get us and that no one can be trusted. My attempts to understand such self-destructive human behaviour have consistently informed my encounters with various imaginative and cultural texts, including the three primary texts I focus on in this project: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel* and *Inventory*. Each of these works seeks to understand not only the causes of our paranoia but also the ever-growing and disastrous consequences as well. By examining each of these works, I seek to understand more than the nature of a subject's dis-ease in the face of the other; underpinning my analysis is my search for a space *outside* of this dis-ease where meaningful resistance and human connection are possible—where subjects can step out of the shade and into the light.

Consequently, the aim of this dissertation is to explore possible approaches to the other outside of the patriarchal paranoid ones prescribed by various Western academic, political, social, and economic institutions. If, as the primary texts of this project compellingly argue, the worst aspects of human behaviour towards the other can be traced back to fear and paranoia, then it is our responsibility to find alternative ways to bridge the spaces between us all. This project then is a small window into my ongoing life's work to seek out imaginative spaces where we can learn to see (m)other-wise on both individual and collective levels, even, or especially, in the face of human crisis and traumatic experiences. And, to do so we must first become more self-aware, to think about how and what we think about each other.

Historical Context: Security, Paranoia, and the Border

As a result of inter- and intra-national social, political, and historical events such as World War II, the Cold War and 9/11 (three events that inform the focus of my literary and theoretical analysis), both personal and national borders have become sensitive sites. The impact of such sensitivity is qualitatively distinct depending on which side of the border one stands. This is particularly so since countries in the Western world struggle to share something ideological, whether notions of democracy, freedom, or security. Both discursively and materially, each nation constructs the border as that which simultaneously solidifies sovereignty and remains functionally permeable for national survival. The boundary function of the border is a doubly nuanced site that holds together a nation, part of the functional definition of which necessitates facilitated, continuous flow of human and economic capital, and yet which simultaneously keeps out “undesirables.” For example, a fundamental part of the definition of the Canada-US, as well as the continental or North American border, is this peculiar combination, which is not conceived of as dichotomous or a paradox, and yet which is never quite able to achieve a harmony of register. Permeability is a necessity, but it is also a risk, in the sense that it threatens to let in elements that could destabilize or even destroy sovereignty by undermining any sense of the quotidian—be it the stock market, the health of its citizens or the discursive and ideological rhetoric that holds the people together as a nation.

Historically speaking and in the wake of such acts as the Secure Fence Act (2006) in the U.S. – which continued to underpin former President Donald Trump’s expansion of the Mexico-United States barrier wall – it is clear that, like many Western nations, Americans worry about borderlines and border control. However, this worry appears in a more classically paranoid version in the American literary imagination, as evident in the works of writers like E.L.

Doctorow, Thomas Pynchon, and Don DeLillo. As these writers demonstrate throughout many of their texts, the ostensible issue is that there are others, aliens, virally external, that through a lack of vigilance, the nation will let in. Such a threat from these “foreign” others is one of the ostensible reasons used by institutions and individuals to justify their paranoia. Caught between the need for and the potential threat posed by these “undesirable” others, both individual and national subjects struggle to negotiate between desire and fear; between the potential for profit and the threat of penetration. In this context, not only is the border a site of conflict where the fear of undesired penetration by an other and the desire for profit collide, but - because of its very dichotomous nature - it is also a site that produces a great sense of anxiety, distortion, and dis-ease for the nation and its citizens. Consequently, the border is not only a physical site but also a rhetorical wall built up to ostensibly protect the national, and by extension, individual subject, or citizen.

However, while protection and security form a rhetorical foundation for the wall, such rhetoric simultaneously functions as a petri dish where paranoia can be planted, cultured, and ultimately, prescribed to the body politic. As daily headlines and government security measures continue to illustrate – for example, in response to the massacre of 49 people in Orlando, Florida on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 or in response to the current coronavirus pandemic – paranoia has become the preferred lens through which the West<sup>5</sup> chooses to see the world. The problem, as contemporary thinkers, writers and theorists convincingly argue, is that while it may be sold as a lens that helps us to stay safe, looking at the world and its peoples through a paranoid lens makes us blind to our complicit participation in what the Wachowski siblings depict in their famous science fiction

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to suggest that paranoia is exclusive to the West. The adoption of paranoid lenses dominates in many nations throughout the world.

film as the *matrix* – a construct of the world which appears reasonable but which is ultimately “built to keep us under control” and to consume us (43:47). Interestingly, in their 1999 film, the Wachowskis observe that most humans are ostensibly happy in the matrix.

Complicating my treatment of a paranoid lens is that relative to other periods in human history, we live in relatively safe and peaceful times.<sup>6</sup> There have been no World Wars since 1945. Given the latter point, it is not surprising that “The absolute number of war deaths has been declining since 1946” (Roser). While there is no question that regional and global wars continue to plague our world, the human death toll from war is steadily decreasing. Moreover, many of the tensions that marked the Cold War between the superpowers of the United States and the U.S.S.R. no longer infect us in the West. If anything, “the number of wars...has been decreasing since...the breakdown of the Soviet Union” (Roser).<sup>7</sup>

However, despite a plethora of data that strongly suggests that we live in safer times, there has not been a subsequent decrease in fear and paranoia. While “there are very good reasons why...paranoia should no longer have a hold over the collective imagination...Yet in the last decade it has come to seem that paranoia and conspiracy theories are everywhere” (Knight 811). Peter Knight, in his article “Everything is Connected: *Underworld’s* Secret History of Paranoia,” highlights the paranoid responses to such events as: “the Oklahoma bombing; the crash of T.W.A. flight 800” as well as themes of paranoia that infuse popular culture media such as “the runaway success of *The X-Files*” (811). As each of his examples illustrates, paranoid

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, these questions of safety need to be considered against questions of privilege. I think here, for example, of the safety measures granted to wealthier nations that are not granted to poorer nations in the context of COVID or global warming. Access to safety is not equitable.

<sup>7</sup> As I write this, Russia has invaded Ukraine and it is too soon to tell what the impact of this horrific act will have on global levels of “safety.”

responses to world events, most recently with regard to COVID-19, continue to thrive long after the end of the Cold War. While one might argue that Knight's examples are outdated, we only need to skim recent headlines to see that paranoia continues to be everywhere, so much so that in some respects, we, in the Western world, have accepted security and surveillance measures that make Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seem like a milder dystopic version of our world today. As the chief research officer of Finnish security firm, F-Secure Labs Mikko Hyppönen aptly states: "George Orwell was an optimist" (qtd. in Smith). Like many Western nations, America continues to relinquish many of the freedoms that are ostensibly at the heart of its perception of itself as a democratic and free nation, even as the trauma of 9/11 becomes more distant. Journalist Neil Tweedie, writing for the *Telegraph*, speaks to this in his article "Post 9/11 America has become the land of the fearful" when he states that while "Things have lightened a little since the early post 9/11 era when any foreigner was an object of suspicion" "[t]he Orwellian technology remains" (9 Sep 2011). Echoing my concerns regarding the ultimately harmful effects of paranoia for all, Tweedie also speaks to the dwindling rights of each citizen in the current landscape of fear. His wry though disturbing conclusion is that America is now the "Land of the Free-ish" (9 Sep 2011).

Significantly, Tweedie highlights in his article what I have been underscoring in this introduction: paranoia continues to be woven into the fabric of American rhetoric and popular culture as well as into foreign and public policies to the continuing detriment of the Western world. One only needs to visit the homepage of the Department of Homeland Security to see that America continues to view the world through a lens of paranoia so much so that it fails to see that "There is something sinister in the term Homeland Security" (Tweedie). Indeed, sustaining

levels of adequate paranoid preparedness is so important that it is a message which continues to be disseminated to all Americans. One salient example is in a commencement speech given by the Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh C. Johnson, in May of 2016 to graduates of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class. In his speech, he acknowledges that while the younger generation may not be “defined by...September 2001,” it must continue to be vigilant against various potential threats (“dhs.gov”). For example, as Johnson outlines: “We live with the prospect of terrorist-inspired attacks as well as terrorist-directed attacks. We live with the threat of home-grown violent extremism that could strike in a number of ways on a number of fronts. Cyber attacks and cyber attackers are becoming more sophisticated” (“dhs.gov”). His message is quite clear: “For today’s homeland security, we must be vigilant militarily...in counterterrorism...aviation security, maritime security, border security, port security and cyber security” (“dhs.org”). If Secretary Johnson’s commencement speech is any indication, fears about national and individual security continue to infect America’s consciousness.

But, I would also argue that paranoia is not solely contained within American borders; it infects much of the world. As feminist theorist Teresa Brennan famously puts it, the postmodern era is “an age of paranoia:” it is also, as my first chapter will outline, an age dominated by a politics of fear (20). Indeed, if we are to believe what we read in Western media, we live in a world that necessitates our protection against a slew of ostensibly nefarious foreign others, from Muslim terrorists to Mexican rapist migrants to Chinese viruses. As such, while we may live in a safer world in comparison to the world prior to World War II, the collective imagination, as seen in literature, film, and media, makes it clear that we are sick with fear of an alien other. Whether the threats are real or not is irrelevant. The fact is that the action of othering is, in part, a reaction

to the fact that *being* safer is not the same as *feeling* safer. The political scientist Walker Connor notes that for the nation, “it is not what is, but what people believe that has behavioural consequences” (75). These consequences have effects, and they can be observed not only in the choices we make but also in the cultural texts we produce. It is for this reason that the English discipline is just as clear a lens with which to examine paranoia as contexts like psychology or philosophy.

### Why English?

I live in a world that is increasingly ambivalent about the value of disciplines like English and the Humanities, and yet I have chosen to ground my project in the analysis of literary texts. While I, like literary critic N. Katherine Hayles, would like to believe that “the inclusion of literature” in an endeavour such as this one should “be more or less self-evident,” I also recognize “literature’s increasingly marginal position in mainstream culture” (*My Mother* 5). Unfortunately, this marginalization continues despite the growing body of evidence that this results in significant costs. From an increase in levels of distraction to a decrease in critical thinking skills and levels of empathy,<sup>8</sup> the consequences of literature’s relegation to the sidelines can be seen everywhere. The study of literature is under attack in a world that tends to measure the value of a discipline in terms of its ability to produce material success and capital; in such a

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on the decline of empathy (and increase in narcissism) as it relates to the consumption of the arts (i.e., literature, visual arts, etc.), see the work of Canadian social psychologist Sara H. Konrath, director of the Interdisciplinary Program on Empathy and Altruism Research at Indiana University. In one fascinating interview from the American Psychological Association’s biweekly podcast hosted by Kaitlin Luna, Konrath addresses the difficulty of pinpointing exactly what has contributed to the decline in empathy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, while also highlighting the importance of reading fiction to increase empathy. Also, see psychologist Raymond A. Mar’s (York University) work on the connection between levels of reading fiction and empathy. His work with both preschoolers and adults demonstrates that those who read less fiction, exhibit lower levels of empathy when compared to those that read fiction. For example, see “Stories and the Promotion of Social Cognition” (*Current Directions in Psychological Science* 2018) and “Evaluating whether stories can promote social cognition” (*Discourse Processes* 2018).

world, reading literature is perceived as a frivolous act. However, while literature may not provide a return on investment that can be measured in currency, it does provide a return that can be measured in the levels of an individual's empathy and self-awareness. As such, it provides insight that is particularly salient for the questions that I am attempting to answer in this dissertation.

As an object of mass consumption that both reflects and participates in the national symbolic and its discourses, literature continues to be an important indicator of the health and wellness of our society. Most importantly, however, is that literature offers a powerful vehicle for change, especially in terms of how individuals empathize with and relate to one another.<sup>9</sup> As one recent and significant study demonstrates, the act of reading fiction is powerful because it can change “*how*, not just what people think about others” (Kidd and Castano 377).<sup>10</sup> Reading can build bridges across the ostensible divides erected between “us” and “them.” As contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum compellingly argues, reading literature facilitates

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<sup>9</sup> For another excellent survey of the connection between empathy and reading literature see Ann Jurecic's article “Empathy and the Critic,” published in *College English* (2011).

<sup>10</sup> While Konrath's work (see footnote 8) suggests that art forms other than literature can also help an individual increase their capacity for empathy, there is a growing body of evidence spearheaded by cognitive scientists that underscores the positive impact of literary fiction specifically on levels of empathy and Emotional Intelligence. Such studies attempt to understand how reading fiction facilitates our ability to understand others (also known as the Theory of Mind). In addition to the fascinating work of Kidd and Castano cited in this chapter, refer also to the work of Keith Oatley who has completed extensive research throughout his career in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the University of Toronto. See especially his 2016 article published in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* entitled “Fiction: Simulation of Social Worlds.” As he notes there, “Fiction is the simulation of selves in interaction. People who read it improve their understanding of others. This effect is especially marked with literary fiction, which also enables people to change themselves” (618). Oatley's point here is common to many of the studies that explore the connection between empathy and literary fiction. One possible reason for the positive link identified between heightened levels of empathy and reading literary fiction rather than popular fiction is that the former contains more complex characterization and as such facilitates the ability for a reader to see and relate to the experiences of others in greater depth. So, the idea here is that novels such as *Jane Eyre* or *Anna Karenina* would have a greater positive impact on levels of empathy than plot-driven narratives commonly found in popular fiction (i.e., novels by writers like Danielle Steele or John Grisham).

our ability to develop “an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are distant from our own” (qtd. in Koopman and Hakemulder 81). In other words, literature allows subjects to explore themselves as well as encounter others through a non-threatening medium. In so doing, because “readers learn to put themselves in the place of people they could not have known that intimately in any other way, [they] thus deepen their understanding and compassion” (Koopman and Hakemulder 81).<sup>11</sup>

This is not to suggest that literary texts will not end up inculcating a threat to the imagination or perceptions of the reading subject. On the contrary, as I will discuss in my final chapter, I believe that the most productive texts are precisely the ones that shatter the reading subject on emotional and intellectual levels because reading “literary texts can lead to the sort of ‘self-examination’ that is crucial to ethical decision-making...[and] reflection on the self, in relation to others” (Koopman and Hakemulder 81). Imaginative texts not only have the potential to give us great insight into who we are and to shape who we might become, but they also facilitate the important act of imagining what other human beings experience.

On the one hand, then, I agree with Hayles, who cites the important function of literature as that which “creates imaginary worlds populated by creatures that we can (mis)take for ourselves” (*My Mother* 6). However, I would argue that literature has another vital function as well because it offers us one of the most powerful ways to *stop* (mis)taking others who are

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<sup>11</sup> I firmly believe that reading fiction can facilitate a bridge between individuals. However, I also believe that it is important to be mindful about the others that we encounter on the pages of the literary works we read. For example, while reading about another’s struggles can help us to empathize with and feel compassion, it is important to recognize that this does not mean that we can now know what it is to be an other. Dale Tracey addresses this important distinction in her excellent work, *With the Witnesses*, when she states that “Literature is about meeting new people, not being them” (4).

different from us as threats. It is this latter point that can, I argue, hold open a space for approaching the other outside of an ultimately self-destructive patriarchal and paranoid lens.

As a result, this dissertation project seeks to explore possibilities for understanding a subject's propensity to other others even when doing so leads to their own detriment. I have selected my primary texts (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *Inventory*) because using a literary lens, they speak to three historical moments dominated by paranoia and fear towards the other. These three periods are post-World War II, the Cold War, and post-9/11. I have chosen to limit my project to the analysis of three primary texts (one British, one American, and one Canadian) rather than attempt to provide a survey of texts depicting instances of cultural and/or *prescriptive paranoia* in the last 70+ years. As a contagion, paranoia has been with us for a long time, and such a survey would contain far more texts than one dissertation could address in any meaningful way. As such, this project does not attempt to provide an encyclopedic accounting of literary depictions of post-war paranoia (or pre-war paranoia, for that matter). Rather, like Brand's *Inventory*, my "catalogue" is necessarily limited by the generic conventions of the text that I am producing here. The texts I have chosen are touchstones; they provide an imaginative method of contact-tracing the transmission of prescriptive paranoia after World War II.

As a set of texts which exist in three important "paranoid" historical moments, my three literary works facilitate my desire to understand the privileging of paranoia and fear as the lens through which (far too) many subjects choose to view their encounters with others. While I agree with Brennan that the postmodern period can be broadly characterized as "the age of paranoia," these historical moments present particularly heightened levels of *prescriptive paranoia* – a

useful phrase that I have coined to characterize and understand the manifestations of the fear of the other as they are reflected in contemporary British, American, and Canadian literature, and film. As my primary texts demonstrate, prescriptive paranoia relates to a way of seeing the world that is not only prescribed by patriarchal institutions like the academy but also the nation-state as famously personified by Orwell's Big Brother figure. Significantly, each of my texts depict the importance of challenging and overturning prescriptive paranoia. The latter is an extension of what French philosopher Paul Ricœur identified as a *hermeneutics of suspicion* – a term that he used to broadly characterize the skeptical interpretative approach of three figures he identifies as “masters of suspicion,” namely Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche (more on this in Chapter One) (Ricœur 33). In this way, the hermeneutics of suspicion functions as a kind of precursor or primer. If the latter is like a social virus, then prescriptive paranoia is the wart-like eruption that follows. So, to understand the roots of the privileging of a paranoid slant towards the other which I have identified, it is productive to begin with an analysis of the hermeneutics of suspicion. The latter provides context for and informs the textual and feminist analysis of prescriptive paranoia in Chapters Two and Three of this project.

Though Ricœur used this term to apply to multiple theoreticians, for the purposes of this project, I will be focusing on his characterization of Freudian psychoanalysis as a suspicious interpretative approach to the human psyche. Broadly speaking, psychoanalysis is based on the idea that interpretation is at the heart of understanding human subjects who cannot be taken at face value, so much so that Freud “See[s] the psyche as a text” that must be deciphered (Tambling 4). While many aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis have been discredited to some extent, it would be wrong to summarily dismiss the impact that his ideas have had on our

understanding of human behaviour. Though he was a product of Victorian and Modern eras, his work continues to inform our approach to the unknown other; as Ricœur notes, “Freud belongs to our time just as much” as he does to those eras (37).

Thus, to understand the “transformation of modernist to postmodernist paranoia,” from hermeneutics of suspicion to prescriptive paranoia, my project will begin by considering the impact of Freudian interpretative approaches on our understanding of the human psyche (Rosenfeld 360). Understanding this impact is especially important considering what critics John Farrell, Geoffrey Shullenberger, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (to name just a few) have identified as “[t]he affinity of Freudian psychoanalysis with paranoia” (Shullenberger 61). My purpose is not to suggest that Freud is solely or personally responsible for the paranoid approach to the other which I consider in this project; such an approach cannot be pinned on any one individual. Yet, having said this, it is important to consider how the privileging of a paranoid slant within Freud’s influential theories has impacted subject-other relations.

In particular, a historical analysis of the discipline as founded in Freud’s body of work is necessary for understanding how the paranoid impulse has not only been privileged in Western society but also how it has shaped subject-other relations in damaging ways. As a set of theories and approaches aimed at treating mental and emotional dis-ease, Freud’s model of psychoanalysis takes as its general hypothesis that the internal landscape of the other is not just inscrutable but may also be presented in a false light. Freud theorizes in “The Unconscious,” that “the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to be” (*SE XIV* 171). Using the metaphor of a “psychical topography,” Freud posits that there are different “regions in the mental apparatus,” mapping the psyche into “two...psychical systems,” the unconscious and the

conscious (*SE XIV* 175 and 173). Subjects are, in such a model, in a state of dis-ease, largely unaware of that which they repress in their unconscious. In other words, the other cannot be trusted to be who they appear to be. For therapy to be successful in this framework, the therapist must “begin with suspicion concerning the” ostensible “illusions of” the subject’s consciousness before he can explain or decipher it (Ricoeur 34). For Freud then, “psycho-analysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object” (Freud *SE XIV* 171). In general terms then, what psychoanalysis aspires to do is to offer an approach that might facilitate “the correction of internal perception,” with the hope “that internal objects are less unknowable than the external world” (Freud *SE XIV* 171). This impetus to “correct” or see through the illusory other as it is presented to the subject leads to a worrying normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion. By building on Ricoeur’s work then, my first chapter explores the paranoid slant which permeates much of Freud’s (earlier) works.<sup>12</sup> In so doing, this chapter offers context for the subsequent examination of Orwell’s, Doctorow’s, and Brand’s compelling critiques of said normalization. Not only do my primary texts “repudiate[e]...the pretention of psychoanalysis to constitute a privileged interpretive metalanguage,” they also provide salient “objection[s to]...psychoanalytic reductionism” (Shullenberger 60). As such, these texts demonstrate how the normalization of a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion establishes fertile conditions for paranoia to mutate into a far more sinister contagion – a prescriptive paranoia that is used by (Big Br)Others to elicit fear of the other for the purpose of social control. As the important theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick

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<sup>12</sup> Given the limits of space, I do not claim to offer a comprehensive analysis of all of Freud’s body of work. Freud was a prolific writer who, like many of us, adapted his theories and approaches throughout his career. For the most part, my dissertation is concerned with the normalization of a suspicious approach to the other found in some of his earlier works. Even as many of his ideas about the psyche changed, the normalization of his interpretative (i.e., suspicious) approach to the other continues to impact subject-other relations.

tellingly notes, “after Freud, paranoia has...become less a diagnosis than a prescription” (125). To approach the other through a lens other than paranoia is all too often perceived as naïve and risky. In such a worldview, rather than a problem, paranoia is framed as a defence mechanism. Citizens are advised to be suspicious and fearful and to isolate themselves because this ultimately makes them easier to control—a theme central to Orwell’s Oceania or Doctorow’s Cold War America. The normalization of “paranoia...as a response to a[ny] threat to identity” enables socially sanctioned defense mechanisms that are deployed by governments, interest groups, and ordinary persons to demonize groups or persons they perceive as threatening (Rosenfeld 340).

My first chapter thus provides a theoretical framework for this project by tracing the metastasis of paranoia that has infected the Western subject on psychological, cultural as well as imaginative, and emotional levels. To understand how paranoia is both critiqued as well as how it functions in my primary texts, I begin with Freud’s work on paranoia (specifically his case study on Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber) and then move to contemporary critics such as Patrick O’Donnell, Timothy Melley, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. In so doing, the chapter traces the transformation of paranoia from a Victorian/Modernist descriptive disease to a Postmodernist prescriptive one. While mass cultural paranoia is certainly not limited to recent history, for the purposes of this study (as mentioned earlier) I focus on the period immediately following World War II through the period that saw 9/11. I show not only how contemporary national and individual subjects have internalized a Freudian paranoid slant but also what the nature and consequences of this slant have been. By approaching others through a hermeneutics of suspicion, Freud establishes a model of interhuman relations that privileges an approach to the other based on skepticism and distrust.

Consequently, Freud's Schreber case study has become not so much a diagnosis of pathological paranoia as it has a model, or prescription for a paranoid approach to the other. At times, eerily reflecting the paranoid tone of Schreber's diary entries, the case study offers Freud's observations on one individual – observations which have been generalized and with world-historical impacts. As my examination of contemporary understandings of cultural paranoia demonstrates, while widely accepted today as a stance of preparedness, the privileging of such paranoid approaches to others has had far-reaching consequences, including propagating divisive inter-human relations which have served to engender a vicious cycle of fear, terrorism, and war. In response, my first chapter argues that it is important to challenge prescriptive paranoia, especially given that “‘paranoid’ interpretations are often complex and self-defeating attempts to preserve a familiar concept of subjectivity” (Melley 23). Exploring the impetus that drives subjects to protect such familiar concepts regardless of the cost, sits at the core of my first chapter and the dissertation as a whole.

Building on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter One, Chapter Two presents my detailed analysis of my first primary text, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell's seminal text lays the groundwork for some of the key tropes and figures that I will be drawing on in my theorizations and analysis of totalitarian paranoia, including the highly symbolic figures of Big Brother, Room 101, *newspeak*, and *doublethink*. In many respects, Orwell's text is “ground zero” for Western literary portrayals of paranoia. More broadly, it also informs contemporary understandings of cultural paranoia in general, often being invoked in various forms of media, from film to news headlines to government reports. Thus, it provides a helpful lexicon for exploring the shifting nature of paranoia in the postmodern Western world: indeed, Orwell's text

is arguably one of the most important because it provides a salient warning about the dire consequences of a society that normalizes prescriptive paranoia. As its devastating conclusion depicts, to give into prescriptive paranoia is to facilitate the destruction of ourselves as well as to eradicate any possibility of meaningful connections between subjects and others.

If *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides the groundwork for the newly emerging cultural paranoia that marked the Cold War globally after World War II, then E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* further builds on this by tracing and situating the Cold War in America specifically. A retelling of the 1951 trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, which is narrated from the perspective of one of their sons, the text parallels the McCarthy years and the "Red Scare" with the rise of the New Left in the 1960s. In linking the two historical moments, the novel ultimately concludes that resistance to prescriptive paranoia cannot come from within paternal institutions, whether political or academic. Indeed, the dominant paranoid rhetorical modes internalized and prescribed by such institutions inculcate an act of othering that is ultimately self-destructive. In retelling the story through the eyes of a grieving son, the novel ultimately privileges a maternal approach to the other; resistance against the destructive effects arising from prescriptive paranoia is grounded in the familial rather than political space. In so doing, the text argues for the possibility of a (m)other approach to the other. Such an approach is grounded in a refusal to replicate the marginalization of the other, which happens all too often at both the center as well as the margins of society.

By the end of Chapter Three on Doctorow's novel, it becomes exceedingly clear that ideas about interhuman relations need to be reimagined. However, to do so, we must first shatter any notions we may have about our own subjectivity in the face of the other. In response, in my

fourth and fifth chapters, I turn to Dionne Brand's powerful epic poem, *Inventory* – a text that expands Doctorow's nuclear family to imagine a wider-reaching human one.<sup>13</sup> An unapologetic and damning critique of the Western world's response to the tragic events of 9/11, Brand's poem challenges readers to consider the consequences of the human failure to act ethically in the face of this tragedy. Detailing both state-led and individual acts of hatred against the foreign other, the speaker confronts the reader with an inventory of the consequences that have come from the complacent acceptance of a politics of fear in the “war on terror.” The brutal reality is, the text argues, that humanity has acted in ways that have only served to replicate the hatred and violence which occurred on September 11, 2001. Complicity with prescriptive paranoia about the other is one that must be shattered—a project which this bleak text undertakes. Through its disturbing inventory of death and destruction— a catalogue for which each reader is held accountable—the text produces an encounter with the sublime that contains the possibility for a shattering of subject-other relations based on fear and paranoia. In so doing, the text imagines a more ethical and humane world rising from the ashes of the twin towers. Through the text's figure of cousinhood, we are called upon to build a new human family—one which asks us to embrace the other and, in so doing, embrace our selves.

## Conclusion

Overall, then, the main purpose driving this dissertation project is to confront how prescriptive paranoia continues to fuel an ultimately destructive and self-replicating system of behaviour. It is especially dangerous because many subjects have internalized it as is repeatedly

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<sup>13</sup> My decision to split my analysis of Brand's *Inventory* into two chapters is predominantly a pragmatic one, made with a view to providing an easier to follow reading of what is a complex text.

evidenced in social, cultural, and political arenas.<sup>14</sup> Instead, rather than accept the transmission of such dis-ease, we must learn how to counter the politics of fear. And, to do so, we can begin by embracing the other as ourselves.

So, while I began this introduction with a personal narrative about my father, it is with a narrative about my mother that I wish to conclude. My father's experiences have served to warn me about the consequences of following what I identify in Chapter One as the *Way of the Father*. Such a way is built on a sense of fear, conformity and emotional anesthesia that is ultimately destructive. But, while my father succumbed to this Way, I had the privilege of being witness to a life-affirming alternative. By modelling an approach to the other based on honouring the self, empathy, and love, my mother showed me a radical and powerful space that can effectively resist the Way of the Father.

To honour her wisdom, I have identified this space as the *Path of the (M)other*, a path that, like Orwell, Doctorow and Brand's texts all suggest, can help us to move past the wake of destruction that we experience under the Way of the Father. Not only did she teach me to hold the other within, but she also taught me a language that would allow me to tell my story even as I walked in the valley of the watchful Father.

Like my father, my mother faced the same marginalization because of her Azorean ethnicity. She would also face further challenges because of her sex; this from both her strict Catholic family as well as the challenges facing women growing up in the 1960s in general. Forced to drop out of high school not too long after arriving in Canada to work to help her

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<sup>14</sup> For example, as I write this, conspiracy theories are circulating in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

family, she would spend her life in the shadows of her new homeland, her father and then, once married, my father. Yet, despite her relegation to the margins, she behaved like no one else I have ever met, modelling for me an empathic and compassionate approach to the other that is so desperately needed in our world. For each confrontation with sexism, racism, and classism that I saw her face, I was also granted the privilege to witness her quiet but unwavering refusal to replicate the act of othering. I have discovered in writing this dissertation project that I have been gifted with the tools all along to bridge the imagined divide between me and the other. However, it took the imaginative work of three writers to grant me the insight and courage to look to my own story for some answers. As Orwell, Doctorow and Brand have taught me, my story does not have to stay in the shade, for it too houses the necessary seeds of resistance. Just as my own story has reflected to me, these writers show us all that to bridge the divide between us and them, we must approach the stranger as the mother does the newborn: with curiosity, acceptance, compassion, and love. In so doing, we can give birth to a new community of strangers who are all part of a connected family—cousins who can work together to save ourselves, each other, and our planet.

## Chapter One: The Way of Father Freud: From Hermeneutics of Suspicion to Cultural Contagion

### Introduction to Paranoia

Created by the founder of modern medicine, Hippocrates, by combining “the Greek para (beside, changed) and nous (reason, mind),” on a basic level, the term paranoia has been traditionally defined in clinical terms as a disease characterized by an individual’s attempts to reconcile the conflict between internal fears and external realities through delusional narratives (Niederland 34). However, while “the word faithful to its etymology” may have once been used exclusively in a clinical setting to “designate...a mental disorder,” this usage has undergone many changes (Bersani “Pynchon” 99). Though, on the one hand, “The word paranoia has had an extraordinarily complex medical, psychiatric, and psychoanalytic history,” on the other, it also has had an extraordinarily complex cultural, social, and political history as well (Bersani “Pynchon” 99). No longer the exclusive domain of psychoanalysis, paranoia does not just refer to symptoms manifested as a result of individual pathology; it also refers to those manifested as a result of “cultural pathology” (O’Donnell vii). Identifying, as it does, symptoms of fear and suspicion manifested on social and political levels, this so-called “cultural paranoia” functions as “a *compensatory* fiction that binds individual subjects to identificatory collective bodies such as those of the nation, class, gender...and the ‘human’” (O’Donnell 16; emphasis added). However, though an ostensibly effective method of self-soothing in times of uncertainty, cultural paranoia has also led subjects to be both bound by and complicit with a patriarchal system of meaning-making that offers a (false) sense of security in the face of (manufactured) fear.

Contextualized within a larger body of theoretical work focusing on the rise of cultural paranoia since the Second World War (Patrick O'Donnell, Timothy Melley, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Teresa Brennan), my project explores both the symptoms as well as the "the epidemic nature of contemporary paranoia" as represented in three literary texts: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, and Dione Brand's *Inventory* (O'Donnell vii).<sup>15</sup> As representations of contemporary Western culture over the last 70+ years, my primary texts offer important insight because "cultural paranoia exists in a historical condition that imaginative work can help us to understand" (O'Donnell vii-viii). Set during three moments of historical crisis (post World War II, the Cold War, post 9/11), Orwell, Doctorow and Brand not only trace the "cultural epidemiology" of paranoia over the last seven decades, but they also weigh the consequences of paranoia's transformation into a prescription, a mode of protection used and abused by Western nation-states in the face of so-called threatening and unknown others (O'Donnell vii-viii). In so doing, they highlight how paranoia has been normalized as a response "for us, as national, corporate, historical subjects in" time periods "beset by questions about their cohesion and continuance" (O'Donnell 16). Whether through satire, parody, or hyperbole, all three texts confront readers with the consequences of the internalization of and complicity with said fear and paranoia as responses to an unknown other. Through their political, cultural, and historical "inventories," these writers remind us of the price we have paid for our paranoia, warning us that nothing will change unless we do.

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<sup>15</sup> For reasons of scope, this project will not address all manifestations of paranoia in contemporary Western literature. Given that I, like Patrick O'Donnell, believe that as a symptom paranoia is here to stay (even though it continues to hurt us), the three works I have chosen (one British, one American, one Canadian and ranging in time over the last 70+ years) provide touchpoints which demonstrate not only the pervasiveness of cultural paranoia but also the transnational nature of such symptoms.

One only needs to glance at the headlines over the last few years to see that COVID-19 is not the only contagion humanity is dealing with. Given that there is no vaccine to inoculate us against fear and paranoia, we must instead turn to other ways of disrupting the transmission of this dis-ease. Tracing and investigating potential sources of this “broad-based cultural pathology” offers some insight into where this propensity for approaching the other from a paranoid lens comes from (Rosenfeld 340). One productive place to begin such contact-tracing, so to speak, is to consider the rise of fear and paranoia in the wake of World War II when the “modernist desire for certainty continues, but as a form of paranoia” (Nicol “Reading” 47).<sup>16</sup> The transformation of such desire has led distinguished feminist theorist Teresa Brennan to identify the postmodern period as the “age of paranoia” (Brennan 20). Of course, paranoia is not exclusive to the postmodern age. Indeed, “postmodernism can be seen as continuous...with a longer hermeneutic tradition of critique and suspicion” (Fisher 107).

Such a tradition is, according to French philosopher Paul Ricœur, what informs and underpins the writings of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche – three figures

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<sup>16</sup> Though postmodernism is a contentious term that academics continue to disagree on, it is beyond the scope of this project to enter this debate here. I do not claim to offer a comprehensive discussion about postmodernism. For such debates see Fredric Jameson’s “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” Linda Hutcheon’s *The Poetics of Postmodernism* or Ihab Hassan’s *The Postmodern Turn*. Rather, following scholar T.V. Reed, I am using the term as a heuristic, as a way of identifying (like Melley and O’Donnell) the postwar fear and fragmentation emerging in response to such events as the Red Scare, nuclear threats, terrorism threats etc. as they are depicted in Western postmodernist literature. So, like Melley and O’Donnell, I am interested in critiquing literary portrayals of postmodern/postwar paranoia as manifestations of mass “cultural paranoia.” To that end, I will not be addressing any breaks (if they exist) between modernism and postmodernism. Rather, like Fisher and Nicol, I wish to explore cultural paranoia as part of a strain of suspicion that has roots going back to late Victorian/early Modernism. Such suspicion is foregrounded in approaches to knowledge seeking by Freud, Marx and Nietzsche (the so-called “masters of suspicion”); as such, this project seeks to understand how their approaches have impacted the (post)modern age (Ricœur 33). Here, I follow Ihab Hassan’s suggestion that even if we identify a break between modernism and postmodernism, “the ideas of institutions of the past [do not] cease to shape the present.” Thus, “the powerful cultural assumptions generated by...Freud...still pervade the Western mind...those assumptions may have been reconceived...In this perspective postmodernism may appear as a significant revision, if not an original *épistémé*, of twentieth-century Western societies” (Hassan). From this perspective then, prescriptive paranoia is but a revision of *the* hermeneutics of suspicion.

who he argues constitute a “school of suspicion” (Ricœur 32). Coining the phrase hermeneutics of suspicion to denote a common element in the approach of all three thinkers, Ricœur argues that “they share a commitment to unmasking the lies and illusions of consciousness” (qtd. in Felski “Critique”). In such a framework, the pursuit of knowledge begins from a place of distrust; the ultimate goal of such an approach is to uncover the “dark truths” which are ostensibly hidden from us. Freud’s work is particularly fruitful grounds for examining the transition from a hermeneutics of suspicion to a broader social and cultural paranoia. This movement is critical to our understanding of how paranoia shifts from diagnosis to dominant narrative. In particular, his case study of Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber provides a tragic model – not because of its actual content, but because this one example ends up modelling a subject-other relation that ends up infecting the world.

The problem is that this so-called hermeneutics of suspicion has metastasized into more pervasive systems of control and regulation. “Ricœur’s phrase” then, has opened a door into “a larger history of suspicious reading” of the world around us (Felski “Critique”). As the warnings underpinning my primary texts show, “the hermeneutics of suspicion” has moved beyond the “brainchild of a few exceptional thinkers;” it “has become a widespread practice of interpretation embedded in more mundane, diffuse and variegated forms of life” (Felski “Critique”). In other words, the hermeneutics of suspicion has mutated, growing into a cultural pathogen that is highly transmissible and difficult to detect. No longer isolated to the quasi-scientific approach of three distrustful men, it infects the subject’s approach to the unknown other so much so that approaching any other from a place of trust has come to be viewed as naïve and foolish.

But, normalized though it may be, to approach the world around us through a hermeneutics of suspicion, rooted as it is in distrust and fear, has had and continues to have significant societal and political consequences. One of the most insidious of these consequences is that the “methodological centrality of suspicion to current critical practice has involved a concomitant privileging of the concept of paranoia” (Sedgwick 125). When coupled with the use and abuse of fear by those in power, the privileging of such paranoia leads to a profound state of collective dis-ease. In response, a large part of this project (and that of my three primary texts) is focused on considering the implications of “paranoia as a political factor” as well as a social and cultural one (O’Donnell viii). An approach actively utilized by various nation-states as a mechanism of social control, I have termed this privileging of paranoia, prescriptive paranoia.

A practice that continues to govern our collective and social world today, prescriptive paranoia, promotes and cultures an us/them mentality which, though marketed as a method of defence and protection from an unknown other, does anything but. By promoting paranoia as the “prepared” response to ostensible threats facing the subject or nation, the state normalizes an approach to the other based on distrust. But, the chasm between self and other produced by prescriptive paranoia has actually made many subjects vulnerable to being used by a system that cares nothing for their well-being. Instead, it promotes “Reductive thinking [which] divides the intellectual world into self and other, and sets them in hostility to each other” (Farrell 37). Like the citizens of Oceania in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, many subjects have given themselves over to hate rituals, and in so doing, have become willing participants in a patriarchal system that promotes fear as a way of maintaining institutional power. Prescriptive paranoia is several orders

of magnitude more serious than the hermeneutics of suspicion, an approach to the other that carries with it a faster transmission rate.

The works of Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand offer valuable insight into the mechanisms of prescriptive paranoia in one of two ways; either they parody and “historicize the symptoms of paranoia,” and/or they imagine possible alternatives to approaching the other through the lens of prescriptive paranoia (O’Donnell x). In so doing, these works offer a view of what has damaged subject-other relations as well as “a view of history that is other than paranoid” (O’Donnell x). Understanding the historical context and imagining other possibilities to prescriptive paranoia is where opportunities for change are located; we can “begin to engage in transformations of this condition by perceiving the elements of its construction and the assumptions that inform it” (O’Donnell xi). The hope is that by doing so, readers might hear the call to action at the heart of this project (and Orwell’s, Doctorow’s, and Brand’s works). That is to say, it is important to consider alternative approaches to acquiring knowledge about the self and others that are not rooted in fear and paranoia. And, to do so, it will be necessary to challenge and unpack “The masculinization of paranoia *in its equation with knowledge*” (Ngai; emphasis in original). Paranoia as a cultural defence mechanism has emerged from a constellation of linguistic, social, and political patriarchal structures constituting what I term the Way of the Father. A system cultured by the active dissemination of prescriptive paranoia, the Way of the Father works to support these power structures via three mechanisms of control: fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia. Taken together, these three Ways of the Father work to produce a wasteland, an Oceania where subjects support the very systems that exploit and mistreat them.

So, there are other ways to be in the world, other ways to make meaning (besides paranoia), that do not replicate the disastrous results of following the Way of the Father. As Orwell's, Doctorow's, and Brand's Post-War texts illustrate, resisting the act of complicit conformity with the Way of the Father *is* possible if subjects choose to embrace the other through trust and love. Moreover, not only is it possible, as all three writers warn, but it is essential to navigating the many uncertainties facing humanity if we are to avoid destroying ourselves and the planet. So, while paranoia has metastasized into a widespread cultural pathology, we can and must work to challenge and resist the normalization and dissemination of prescriptive paranoia as an approach to the other. While it may offer ways of revealing that which remains hidden, prescriptive "paranoia tends to suggest a specifically masculine point of view" that must be removed from its current pedestal (Ngai 4).

To understand how these mechanisms of fear and suspicion work, this chapter traces an epidemiology of paranoia, beginning with "psychoanalytic definitions of the condition [which] indicate [that it] is essentially a crisis in interpretation" (Nicol "Reading" 45).<sup>17</sup> Such a crisis of interpretation arises because the other<sup>18</sup> cannot (it is assumed) be trusted to be what they appear to be. In response, the "distinguishing characteristic of...Freud...is the general hypothesis" that one must adopt a position of "suspicion concerning the illusions of consciousness and then

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<sup>17</sup> Though I focus on the impact of psychoanalysis on the emergence of fear and prescriptive paranoia in post-modern subject-other relations, I also recognize that there is a large body of work which has also "located the connection between paranoia and postmodernism" as a "question of postindustrial persecution," especially in relation to capitalism (Nicol "Reading" 45). I will not be addressing this area in detail since it is outside the scope of this chapter. See, for example, Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Stephen Frosh's *Identity Crisis: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and the Self* and Jerry Aline Flieger's "Postmodern Perspective: The Paranoia Eye."

proceed to employ a stratagem of deciphering” as a way to reveal that which is being hidden (Ricoeur 27).

#### Ground Zero for Prescriptive Paranoia: Defining the Hermeneutic

Traditionally associated with fields such as religious studies and philosophy, hermeneutical or interpretative approaches are not as commonly found in contemporary literary and cultural studies. Often assumed to be an outdated textual approach where “the text is envisaged as possessing qualities of interiority, concealment, penetrability, and depth,” the art of deep interpretation has been pitted against contemporary forms of poststructuralist critique (Felski “Critique”). Scholar Rita Felski notes that with “the ascent of poststructuralism,” there was “a turn away from hermeneutics to deconstruction and genealogy – leading to a focus on surface rather than depth, on structure rather than meaning, on analysis rather than interpretation” (Felski). However, while it may be true that as an approach to textual analysis, such modes of interpretation may no longer be the star of the academic literary show, the “claim that contemporary criticism has moved ‘beyond’ hermeneutics should be treated with a grain of salt” (Felski “Critique”). Though there are certainly many differences between poststructuralist and hermeneutical approaches to understanding, what has remained common to both is the adoption of viewing the other (text, subject, nation etc.) through a lens of suspicion.

The post-modern tendency towards post-structural critiques has its origin nearly two centuries earlier, as scientists increasingly questioned if biblical paradigms adequately explained the world around them. In the wake of major advances in natural science in the late nineteenth century, many thinkers challenged formerly established truths such as those relating to creation and the existence of God. Of course, this questioning extended to the nascent social sciences as

well; there, the “preachers” of this “school of suspicion” were Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, who are, as Felski put it, “the architects of a distinctively modern style of interpretation that circumvents obvious or self-evident meanings in order to draw out less visible and less flattering truths” (Felski “Critique”). So, not only does the pursuit of knowledge begin from a place of suspicion, but its objective is also to ostensibly reveal these “truths” in order to neutralize the potential threat that they may pose to social and cultural norms. This is where Ricœur’s identification of a hermeneutics of suspicion<sup>19</sup> underpinning modern thought offers salient insight into the privileged position awarded to paranoid modes of knowledge-seeking both within and without the academy.<sup>20</sup> “[F]rom a Ricœur-inflected point of view,” there is a continuum between earlier hermeneutical or interpretative approaches to meaning-making and post-structural approaches (Felski). Such a continuum shows a “shared investment” in a “particular ethos” characterized by “a stance of knowingness, guardedness, suspicion and vigilance” (Felski “Critique”). In other words, modern conceptions of knowledge as fundamentally paranoid are by no means a new phenomenon, linked as they are to hermeneutical traditions still reflected in Western culture.

Of the three figures Ricœur associated with the hermeneutics of suspicion, the one who has arguably most shaped modern subject-other relations is Sigmund Freud – the Austrian neurologist who founded psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century. Given that Freud was an

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<sup>19</sup> Given the limited scope of this project, I do not pretend to make any claims about the completeness of this account of the hermeneutics of suspicion. For a far more comprehensive understanding of how this hermeneutics evolves in relation to other hermeneutical traditions see Paul Ricœur’s *Freud and Philosophy* (1970).

<sup>20</sup> Ricœur identifies the tradition of suspicious interpretation as a distinctly modern approach to understanding that originates with thinkers like Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche. However, while it is outside the bounds of this chapter, it is important that to note that variations of suspicious interpretation also predate the rationalism and empiricism which characterises the modern thought emerging in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Felski’s article “Suspicious Minds,” offers a fascinating account of earlier “strains” of suspicious interpretation to medieval heresy trials.

influential figure whose ideas “dominated explanations of how the human mind works...[f]or the first half of the 1900s” (Solms 84), it is not surprising that the assumptions normalized by his psychoanalytic approaches have been internalized, continuing to produce a number of rippling effects. A set of theories and therapies aimed at diagnosing and addressing various psychological disorders, psychoanalysis is based on the core assumption that all individuals exist to some extent in a state of dis-ease, resulting from the repression of feelings, desires, and thoughts in the unconscious part of the mind.

Because the contents of the unconscious were presumed to be too painful or socially taboo for the individual to access on their own, Freud envisioned the need for a therapeutic approach that would facilitate this process. Such an approach was rooted in two assumptions. First, the therapist would need to employ various techniques (i.e. hypnosis, dream analysis, talking) to “uncover” the hidden contents of the other’s unconscious. And second, since the contents would materialize in seemingly random ways, the therapist would need to decipher them, rendering the inaccessible, accessible. For Freud then, “Psychoanalysis...aligns itself with the...understanding of hermeneutics” as a vehicle for healing because it is a tool “of demystification” for the therapist, a means by which he could render the abnormal into the ‘normal’ (Ricœur 27).

Since “beginning with” Freud, “understanding is hermeneutics,” the role of the therapist is thus two-pronged (Ricœur 33). First, he must work to reveal hidden deviations lurking behind the surface of the other. Then, once revealed, he can translate any deviations into more socially acceptable forms. By applying a narrative structure that would rationalize and order the unruly contents of the unconscious, Freud could help the other find relief from their dis-ease. So, for

Freud, “meaning is no longer to spell out the consciousness of meaning,” a thing that cannot be done anyway since everything is hidden; rather, meaning emerges only when the therapist “decipher(s) its expressions” (Ricœur 33). Through interpretation, the therapist could make meaning from the seemingly nonsensical material emerging from the depths of the other’s unconscious during therapy, connecting the dots in such a way that “logical” explanations emerged. No longer haunted by a sense of dis-ease, the other could apparently rest easy as their deviant desires were translated into orderly narratives by an “objective” therapist.

As an approach based on the principle that “interpretation is concerned with...any set of signs that may be taken as text to decipher,” Ricœur argues that “Freud’s suspicious lens proves to be appealing for the modern imagination” (26). Whether deciphering “a dream, or neurotic symptom, as well as ritual, myth, work of art, or a belief,” many modern thinkers have viewed the art of suspicious interpretation as a flexible one, offering the ability to graft meaning onto any number of random signs (Ricœur 26). The hermeneutics of suspicion is thus an alluring lens to adopt, especially in the face of uncertainty. It is a paradigm where all others are not to be trusted and have hidden self-serving goals, and it offers the ostensibly neutral or detached therapist a way to assuage a subject’s fears about their ostensible deviations. As Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan<sup>21</sup> argues, Freud has “the genius of the linguist who sees the same sign appear several times in a text, [and] begins from the idea that this must mean something, and manages to stand all the signs right side up again” (*Seminar* III 10). For Lacan, as for Freud, Freud’s translation of Schreber’s paranoid narratives into “normal” ones comes from his skilled interpretation. The psychoanalyst is thus the translator; in his hands, the deviations manifested in

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<sup>21</sup> Jacques Lacan famously argued in the 1950s for the necessity of returning to Freud, spending his career revisiting, and lecturing on his work.

the narratives of the other are transformed into that which is socially acceptable. To put this another way, that which is deviant is “corrected,” metaphorically vaporized in the (Orwellian) memory holes of the Father. When the other is found to stray too far from conformity (inevitable given that we all hide deviant desires in our unconscious), pathology and control are established, leading to the marginalization of this subject. Thus, the need for the therapist to intervene and facilitate the conversion of the deviant narratives of the other is legitimated; the Orwellian *minority of one* is converted into a conformist. So, qualified as he may be to correctly interpret the hidden deviations lurking beneath the surface of the psyche or text, he does this through a normative (i.e., masculinized) lens, assuming his own experience and desires are the standards against which orthodoxy should be measured.

Such conversion has wide-reaching consequences given the transmission of Freud’s subject-other model beyond the clinical setting. Since “psychoanalysis is a hermeneutics” that “not by accident but by intention” professes to both interpret and normalize the motivations of any individual, it concomitantly “aims at giving an interpretation of culture in its entirety” as well (Ricoeur 66). From this perspective, psychoanalysis becomes a tool of collective conversion – a means through which deviation from patriarchal norms can be exposed and subsequently neutralized by Big Brothers. To succeed in rooting out the cause of an other’s dis-ease, the therapist follows three prime directives: trust no one, convert everyone, and remain detached. When these three directives move beyond the walls of Freud’s clinic to the world at large, the hermeneutics of suspicion mutates into a variant of concern. This variant, prescriptive paranoia, is no longer just a tool for diagnosis and interpretation but also a dangerous political tool used for eliciting control. So, as part of the exploration taking place in this chapter, it is important to

outline how Freud's principles of suspicion, orthodoxy, and detachment work in his psychoanalytical framework. Doing so will provide important context for the mutation of said principles into three of the characteristics fueling prescriptive paranoia: fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia. Taken together, these characteristics comprise the Way of the Father.

To explore how Freud's therapeutic application of the hermeneutics of suspicion metastasized into a mechanism for exposing and normalizing deviation, I turn to one of his most prominent case studies. Published in 1911, "Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" documents Freud's interpretation of the autobiographical work of Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber (1842-1911). Schreber was a German judge who struggled with mental illness, famously publishing his experiences in 1903 in a memoir entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, or *Memoirs of a Nerve Patient*. For many, Freud's "The Schreber case (and Schreber's own account of his illness...) is the point of origin of all studies of paranoia in psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature" (Pratt 15). However, Freud's case analysis is more than just a point of origin for studies on paranoia. Modeling a subject-other approach<sup>22</sup> that has a wide-reaching cultural and political impact, his case analysis also demonstrates how the principles of suspicion, orthodoxy, and detachment are catalyzed in a Freudian psychoanalytical framework. In so doing, "Freud's infamous analysis of Daniel Schreber" is not just a document "in which paranoia is theorized as an expression of male homosexuality," it is also "a model for psychoanalytical theorizing itself" (Ngai 4-5). As a representation of Freud's

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<sup>22</sup> This approach is parodied in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as I will discuss in my next chapter.

larger body of work, this case study provides an example of how the hermeneutics of suspicion shapes the lens through which he views the dis-eased other.

Psychoanalysis, as “embodied by Freud” in this case study, is “a strategy where ‘*Guile is met by double guile*’” (Goldstein 282 and Ricœur 34). Moreover, because Freud’s analysis here is not of a patient but a published text, it also offers a model for a mode of suspicious reading that continues to be privileged in (post-modern) academic studies. So, in the case of Freud’s interpretation of Schreber’s memoirs, not only is his approach as therapist apparent, so too is his approach as so-called literary critic. But, regardless of the object being interpreted, what underpins Freud’s assumptions is that to know a thing, one must first reveal that which is hidden. For example, Freud does not look to the external world to find the root cause for the symptoms, which Schreber describes in his memoirs. Recall that as one of the so-called “masters of suspicion,” Freud’s approach is based on “the decision to look upon the whole of consciousness primarily as ‘false consciousness’” (Ricœur 33). From this perspective, “attempts to locate the persecutory motives in the external world must be viewed with great suspicion” (Melley 24). Instead, Freud looks to the unconscious part of Schreber’s psyche as the location for the secret and taboo desires ostensibly causing Schreber’s dis-ease. In other words, for Freud, “the ‘interior’ of the individual is the privileged site where the *real* meaning and ‘motive’ for apparently persecutory events reside” (Melley 24). While under *normal* circumstances it is difficult to gain access to the unconscious, Freud provides a rationale for his ability to do so. He argues that paranoia manifests in such a way as to make the *truth* accessible to the therapist because paranoiacs “possess the peculiarity of betraying (in a distorted form, it is true) precisely those things which other neurotics keep hidden as a secret” (Freud *SE XII* 9). Paranoia then

works via the mechanism of projection where the symptoms (i.e., fear of persecution, of being watched and other delusional narratives) are outward manifestations of inner turmoil.

So, because paranoiacs project their internal fears outwards, only Freud (the psychoanalyst) has access to the *truth*. And, because these projections are presumed to be distorted, he must use interpretation to decipher their meaning.<sup>23</sup> While Schreber's memoirs "presses the key" into his hands, it is Freud who must open the door to uncover meaning (*SE XII* 35). Since Schreber's symptoms are read as outward manifestations of internal conflict (i.e., they are the keys to a secret world within), the therapist's role is to unlock, decipher, and interpret the symptoms. Such a therapy model aims to make right that which the paranoiac has distorted. In so doing, the therapist can transform unorthodox symptoms into orthodox narratives, rationalizing and ordering the other's experiences. Not only does the therapist have the ability to see through the veil of the other's distortions because he is a detached observer, once the hidden is revealed, but he can also ostensibly normalize it; for, in "follow[ing] our usual psycho-analytic technique....what we are looking for [is], namely, a translation of the paranoiac mode of expression into the normal one" (Freud *SE XII* 35). In effect, Freud's so-called hermeneutical approach to human dis-ease is one where the modus operandi of interpretation is to order human experience.

Freud's conversion of Schreber's memoirs into "normal" expressions is based on certain assumptions that he makes about the structure of the human psyche as well as the development of human sexuality which he outlines in his seminal work entitled, *Three Essays on the Theory of*

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<sup>23</sup> Perhaps in anticipation of objections to his analysis of a "patient" that he never meets, Freud spends a lot of time justifying how he can provide an interpretation of Schreber's disease.

*Sexuality* (1905),<sup>24</sup> henceforth *Three Essays*. Published between Freud's work on female hysteria in the late 1800s and his work on paranoia in the early 1900s, Freud postulates that repressed sexual desire is a significant root cause of the pathological symptoms affecting all his patients, including those linked with paranoia. As he states early in the Schreber case study, "the roots of every nervous and mental disorder are chiefly to be found in the patient's sexual life" (Freud "Psycho-Analytic Notes" 30). Freud's analysis aims to locate some earlier trauma that ostensibly impedes the subject's progression to the proper stage of development. Identifying five stages in total of psychosexual development, Freud theorizes in *Three Essays* that avoiding pathology requires that a subject progress through each stage without being fixated on any one stage. Progress is defined by a subject's ability to behave according to the social norms assigned to each stage. For example, a child who is unable to let go of their thumb-sucking after the second year of life remains stuck in what Freud identifies as the first stage of human development, the oral stage. Like the regressed thumb sucker, Freud's analysis, and diagnosis of Schreber's paranoia are grounded in the conclusion that dis-ease emerges because of Schreber's struggle to negotiate between his sexual instincts and the demands of a heteronormative society, between the pleasure principle and the reality principle.<sup>25</sup> In other words, Schreber's dis-ease is indicative of his fixation and regression to an earlier stage of psychosexual development.

According to Freud, Schreber's illness emerges because he fails on several fronts. First, he does not conform to the apparent progression necessary to become a fully functioning adult as

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<sup>24</sup> A thorough review of Freud's theory of human sexuality is beyond the scope of this chapter. To review Freud's fascinating theoretical leaps with regards to the development of the human psyche, refer to his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (*SE VII* 1905). For my purposes here, I will only examine Freud's Schreber case insofar as it provides a helpful example for how Freud's hermeneutical approach functions.

<sup>25</sup> See Freud's work *Civilization and Its Discontents* for his in-depth explanation of the internal conflict between (deviant) desires held by individuals and the demands for conformity by social structures (1929).

delineated by Freud's theory of human sexuality. Second, he fails to repress his deviant desires (i.e. narcissistic regression) and, finally, he fails to sublimate them in socially acceptable ways. Taken together, then, one central idea emerges for Freud: Schreber's symptoms of paranoia are methods of self-soothing. On the one hand, they are manifestations of Schreber's attempts to conform to the heteronormative demands of his society and, on the other, of an underlying longing for his father.<sup>26</sup> So, because Schreber's ego is unable to negotiate between his "deviant" desires and so-called "normal" desires, the result is the emergence of symptoms that "represent a substitute for [the deviant] impulses" (Freud *SE VII* 164). The symptoms or "illness offers him a way to escape. It does not solve his conflict but seeks to evade it by transforming his libidinal impulses into symptoms" (Freud *SE VII* 164). So, Schreber's symptoms work to make sense of the dis-ease arising from his deviant desires. For example, since "what lies at the core of the conflict in case of paranoia among males is a homosexual wishful phantasy of *loving a man*," the paranoiac's projections work to normalize this deviation (Freud *SE XII* 62). In doing so, the paranoiac can convert his homosexual wishful fantasy into a narrative of persecution. By asserting that: "I do not *love* him – I hate him, because he persecutes me," Schreber can evade deviating from normative behaviours (Freud *SE XII* 63).

While many individuals find a balance between the demands of civilization and personal desires, for Freud, pathology emerges when an individual cannot satisfy their own drive for pleasure within the societal confines of their space and time. Consequently, Freud states, "what

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<sup>26</sup> Schreber's paranoia signals a "regression" or an attempt to "return to an earlier phase of development" (Freud *SE VII* 240). For Freud then, the psyche is a battleground between pleasure and reality – a space where a constant tug of war exists between desires working to become conscious and the subject's awareness of the social "forces [that] oppose them" (Freud *SE XIX* 13). Schreber's symptoms of paranoia manifest as a result of, "on the one hand the demands of the libidinal instincts and on the other hand on those made by the ego by way of reaction to them" (Freud *SE VII* 163).

we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and...we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions” (*Civilization* 38). He concludes that since “the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle,” the key to avoiding pathology is for the individual to find a way to balance said pleasure principle with the demands of the reality principle rather than fixate on an earlier stage of development (*Civilisation* 25). Stuck between this Freudian binary of pleasure and reality, self, and society, no one can win. Conform completely to societal norms, and one risks giving up any sense of pleasure; deviate too far from these same norms and remain there, and one risks being labeled as pathological, a *minority of one* in an Orwellian context.

Consequently, while perhaps initially puzzling to contemporary readers, from one perspective, Freud’s diagnosis of Schreber’s paranoia as “an outburst of homosexual libido” can be viewed as a narrative aimed at deciphering the distorted projections of Schreber’s unconscious (Freud *SE XII* 43). According to Freud, healthy individuals achieve the purported normal sexual aim when they move from self-love to object-love. In Schreber’s case, his marital status suggests that, at least to some degree, he can meet the requirements of what Freud defines as healthy adulthood (i.e., heterosexuality). However, when Schreber’s wife leaves for four days to take a short holiday, Freud concludes that Schreber experiences an eruption of symptoms and repressed desires, arguing that “the mere presence of his wife must have acted as a protection against the attractive power of the men about him” (*SE XII* 45). In other words, without his wife as a regulating force, Schreber regresses, leading to the manifestation of symptoms that seek to reproduce the pleasure of a period prior to his marriage. Thus, Freud postulates, he is caught up in the conflict between the same-sex desires of his id and the heteronormative demands of his

ego and his ego ideal, or superego. Since Schreber refuses to even speak to his wife when she returns from her holiday, Freud concludes that Schreber's id has won, so to speak. The result is Schreber's regression to an auto-erotic state in which his sexual aim is no longer dominated by object-libido but rather by ego-libido. Schreber thus manifests what Freud argues is "an antithesis between ego-libido and object-libido," whereby "the more one is employed, the more the other becomes depleted" (Freud *SE XIV* 75).

Freud's interpretation goes one step further: Schreber's homosexuality, in and of itself, is not pathological,<sup>27</sup> but it does signal a regression. Since the "normal" sexual aim of an individual is to progress to heterosexual relations, such tendencies (i.e., homosexuality) need to be "deflected from their sexual aim" and sublimated to "help...constitute the social instincts...contributing an erotic factor to friendship and comradeship...and to the love of mankind in general" (Freud *SE XII* 61). Freud thus reveals what is "actually" causing the disease experienced by Schreber. Distressed by what appeared to be a deviation from heteronormative social norms, Schreber manifests symptoms of paranoia. These symptoms, Freud argues, help Schreber to re-frame what he perceived as his own inability to conform to the normal stages of sexual development. But, since the manifestations of Schreber's regression must also be approached through a suspicious lens, Freud looks to other explanations for Schreber's regression to an auto-erotic state. Schreber's inability to sublimate his deviant desires into socially acceptable forms is thus what causes his paranoid symptoms to manifest. He

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<sup>27</sup> Given the historical context of his time, Freud had relatively progressive attitudes towards homosexuality, seeing it a regression rather than a pathological condition (though such a view, of course, is still highly problematic). In a famous letter written in 1935, responding to a mother's concern about her son's homosexuality, Freud replied: "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function, produced by a certain arrest of sexual development" (Freud *Letters of Sigmund Freud* 423).

ultimately argues that the deviant behaviours manifested by Schreber are rooted in a cause that is far less problematic in a patriarchal system,<sup>28</sup> for it “had its root in a longing, intensified to an erotic pitch, for his father and brother” (“Psycho-analytic Note” 50). Now neutralized to the problematic relationship between a son and his father, the deviant desires of the other (i.e. homosexual desire) are translated into a more palatable narrative. The aim of interpretation is met; the nonsensical is made rational, the *minority of one* is brought back into the whole, a loving son struggling for the approval of his (stern) father.

Ultimately, Freud saw his theories as part of a larger movement to provide scientific reasoning for human behaviour in the late nineteenth century. His interpretation of Schreber’s memoirs is thus a case study that demonstrates how “psychoanalysis was born of the same impulse as literary modernism” as an ostensibly “rational process of interpretation” (Nicol “Reading” 55). Indeed, “Freud’s basic project at the time of his writing about Schreber was to establish psychoanalysis as a scientific, dynamic explanatory psychology of the neurosis” (Lothane 333). Yet, in reading the case study, the parallels between Freud’s suspicious interpretations and that of Schreber’s paranoid ones already suggest how, as an interpretive approach, paranoia has a tendency of replicating itself. In other words, in seeking to reveal that which was hidden via his method of interpretation, Freud’s case study highlights how “Paranoia seems to require being imitated to be understood,” a point which undermines the so-called objective stance of the interpretative approach he adopts (Sedgwick 131). Instead, Freud’s Schreber case study seems to suggest that “paranoia is reflexive and mimetic” (Sedgwick 131).

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<sup>28</sup> As we will see in the next chapter, Orwell demonstrates how longing for the father (Big Brother) is not only demanded by the state, it is also what defines a citizen’s orthodoxy.

Freud himself recognized the congruence “between Schreber’s systematic persecutory delusion and [his] own theory” (Sedgwick 125). And, because “Freud was...aware that his theory was strikingly similar,” (not so much in content as in the approach and “structure to the paranoia of...Dr. Schreber,”) he concludes his case study by responding to a series of (imagined) objections regarding the parallels between his theory and Schreber’s dis-ease (Roseneil 127). Having donned the hat of the detached and objective scientist, the close resemblance between the interpretative approach of his hermeneutics of suspicion and that of Schreber’s paranoid narratives must too be rationalized lest it undermines the scientific basis of Freud’s case study.<sup>29</sup>

The ending of the Schreber case analysis is a good place to return to the fine line between interpretation based on a hermeneutics of suspicion and that based on paranoia. Though he will address the difference between the two approaches more specifically in other texts, here, Freud’s response to the (imagined) objections remains curiously evasive and defensive. This is so even as he admits that “many...details of Schreber’s delusional structure sound almost like endopsychic perceptions of the processes whose existence I have assumed in these pages as the basis of our explanation of paranoia” (Freud *SE XII* 79). Yet, after asserting that “his [Schreber’s] delusions” have “a striking conformity with our theory,,” he does not offer a rebuttal (Freud *SE XII* 78). Instead, he states that “It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber’s delusion” (Freud *SE XII* 78). Freud seems more concerned with staking his claim on the theory of paranoia than he

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<sup>29</sup> Such a move to rationalize bears an uncanny resemblance to what Freud locates as one of the main reasons driving Schreber’s dis-ease and is yet another way that his approach reflects that which he identifies in Schreber’s memoirs.

does the congruence between his approach and Schreber's, going so far as to offer to "call a friend and fellow-specialist to witness that I have developed my theory of paranoia before I became acquainted with the contents of Schreber's book" (*SE XII* 79). Freud does not ultimately provide a refutation to the charge that there is a fine line between the structure of his theory and that of Schreber's delusions (at least not here), which initially suggests a curious lack of concern about the parallels between the two.

But, while not addressed at the end of this case study, "the putative congruence between paranoia and theory was unpalatable to Freud," especially since it threatened to undermine his perception of his work as a rational science (Sedgewick 125). One way that he distinguishes the hermeneutics of suspicion from the pathological paranoia and conspiracy theories displayed by Schreber is through his "strict definition of the boundary between self and world [which] grounds [his] distinction between rational and irrational interpretation" (Melley 24). Linking "superstitious" people to behaving "just like paranoiacs," Freud argues that "the differences between myself and the superstitious person are two: first, he projects outwards a motivation which I look for within; secondly, he interprets chance as due to an event, while I trace it back to a thought" (Freud *SE XI* 257-259). However, while "this would seem to separate psychoanalytic and paranoid approaches rather nicely...it must be noted that the deepest 'inside,' the unconscious, is in some ways only another kind of 'outside' – a region outside conscious control" (Melley 24). So, when Freud's approach is to "Locat[e] motive there," it "is not *radically different* from locating it" in the external world, as Schreber does (Melley 24). However, while Freud resists the notion that his approach is paranoid all its own, and so invalid as a more general heuristic, "by relocating motive from the unitary consciousness of an *intending*

*subject* to a shadowy agent (the unconscious) whose deliberations are veiled and easily subject to interrogation,” he ultimately replicates the structure of Schreber’s paranoid narratives as recorded in his memoirs (Melley 24). When factoring in that Freud identifies the unconscious as a “system” (Freud *SE XX* 172), the link between Freud’s approach and Schreber’s solidifies even further. Given that Freud’s “discovery of unconscious process...invites us to form the idea of belonging to a system,” his approach to meaning making sounds even more like that outlined in Schreber’s memoirs (Ricœur 119). Freud may look inward for the persecutory force which drives Schreber, but, like any good conspiracy theorist, he also looks for truth in a system that, according to him, drives our behaviours in all sorts of hidden ways.

So, while on the one hand, Freud acknowledges that “each one of us behaves in some respect like a paranoiac, correct[ing] some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him by the construction of a wish and introduces this delusion into reality” (*Civilization* 32). On the other hand, if said paranoia does not deviate too far from the societal norms identified by Freud, then the individual remains within the acceptable range of said paranoia. Freud ultimately concludes that despite his adoption of the paranoid adjacent hermeneutics of suspicion, *he* is not delusional. Even as he notes that his mode of inquiry and analysis is much like that of Schreber’s, he ultimately declares that, unlike Schreber, he “ha[s] succeeded where the paranoiac fails” (Freud qtd. in Farrell 191). Even if he is paranoid, it is in the same way as everyone else. In other words, the narratives he manifests remain in line with the prevailing orthodoxy of his time. This, of course, is a slippery slope, as depicted in Oceania, a place where the prevailing orthodoxy is defined by a draconian Father figure.

Ultimately, however, Freud's reading and interpretation of Schreber's memoirs do not escape the problem of a Lacanian delusional sense-making.<sup>30</sup> In Lacanian terms, entering into language marks an entrance into the Symbolic Order. Influenced by social anthropologists like Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss, who "showed that even the most 'primitive' societies have a symbolic order that regulates kinship, exchanges of goods, and marriages," Lacan expands the Symbolic to include "all human activity" such that "the Symbolic is manifest in language, laws, and social structures" (Bailly 94). In other words, for Lacan, "Every person is born into a predetermined linguistic network, which forms identity and mind in conjunction with mimetic identification. Language enters man surreptitiously, to form a primary symbolized unconscious" (Ragland-Sullivan 162). For Lacan, we are caught between the demands of the symbolic order (i.e. dominant patriarchal narratives), reflecting the human desire to order the world through language as well as the inability of language to do any such thing. The problem is that language is a very unstable system of meaning-making. Consequently, the subject's move into the symbolic order is already a move into a paranoid way of seeing the world: language becomes a way of creating a world that reflects a subject's desires. In Lacan's words, "it is the social dialectic that structures human knowledge as paranoiac" (*Écrits* 77). As Freud extrapolates from his Schreber case analysis, the stories that paranoid subjects tell themselves about their

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<sup>30</sup> For Lacan, like Freud, paranoia is the response to the subject's inability to fully accept the inherent unknowability of themselves or the material world. As Lacan explains, "paranoia is being stuck in the Imaginary" (08.04.75 Draft 2 IX — RSI). Ostensibly, any vision of the world must always be mediated through the Father's symbolic structures of language which is inherently paranoid. Story is thus a paranoid response to making sense of the world but is also governed by the desire of the Other (as I will discuss in my next chapter on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). In other words, "Making sense is already delusional" — a point that "is a very deeply held conviction of Lacan's" (Miller). Paranoia thus becomes one way to address the dis-ease that comes from our inability to ever truly know ourselves or our world. In this Lacan was right: we are ever alienated from ourselves and under the constant threat of fragmentation while striving to believe in the myth of the unified self and a knowable world. Ultimately, as Jon Mills notes, "For Lacan, all knowledge is imbued with paranoia" ("Lacan on Paranoiac Knowledge").

world are attempts to resolve the subject's dis-ease which arises in response to the slippage between the subject's desire and material reality. Narratives (even when delusional) become a means of coping because they give structure to what is fundamentally arbitrary. They cloak the random under the guise of (linguistic) order.

Between Freud's privileging of a hermeneutics of suspicion as a heuristic in his approach to his subject, and Lacan's understanding of the symbolic as inherently paranoid, it is clear that despite his efforts, Freud is interpellated into the type of paranoid meaning-making which he claims to be diagnosing in his Schreber case study. His attempt to separate the structure of his approach to meaning-making from that which he identifies in Schreber's memoirs is pure sophistry. From this perspective, Freud's text thus offers symptomatic representations of paranoia for the Late Victorian and Early Modernist periods. Recall that Freud himself saw a link between the symptoms of his paranoid patients and his own method of critical inquiry, yet he ultimately rejects this link. In contrast to the post-World War II period, which adopted prescriptive paranoia, from Freud's perspective, paranoia was not a lens to adopt, but a pathological illness to diagnose in afflicted individual subjects. He thus saw his methods of interpretation as outside the realm of delusional meaning-making, even as his writing helped form the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century foundations for the Way of the Father (see below).

Based as it is on assumptions of false consciousness, the deviant/hidden nature of the other, the privileging of suspicion as well as the power of the therapist to normalize (i.e., "cure") an other's state of dis-ease via interpretation and translation, Freudian psychoanalysis has both sowed the seeds for and provided the fertile conditions for paranoia to grow beyond a clinical context. Given that adopting a hermeneutics of suspicion is based on principles of suspicion,

orthodoxy and (rational) detachment, it is not surprising that the line between theory and delusion is a thin one indeed. If anything, what the Schreber case study demonstrates is that there has been “a coupling of paranoia and theory in male dominated discourses” for some time now (Ngai 5). In many ways, by following these three principles, “a congruence” between the delusions of paranoiacs and his theories “may have been inevitable” in Freud’s Schreber case analysis (Sedgwick 125). But, what is more concerning is this: as an influential practise, Freudian psychoanalysis has provided a catalyst for that which lies at the heart of our current state of cultural and political dis-ease: prescriptive paranoia – a more virulent variant of a hermeneutics of suspicion that is highly transmissible.

So, significant consequences arise from Freud’s therapeutic approach to the other based on a hermeneutics of suspicion. As a model of suspicion for what has become a normalized approach to knowledge seeking, “Psychoanalysis is the primary discourse through which paranoia enters the lexicon of twentieth-century thought” (Paradis 27). Moreover, taking “paranoia as a logical extension of Paul Ricœur’s ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’” offers insight into the impact of Freudian psychoanalysis on subject-other relations (Ngai 5). The latter is especially relevant when considering that approaching the other through a paranoid and distrustful lens has become so ingrained as to seem the most “logical” way to approach the unknown. As Sedgwick warns us, “paranoia, once the topic is broached in a nondiagnostic context, seems to grow like a crystal in a hypersaturated solution” (131). So, though by no means the only theoretical model<sup>31</sup> based on a hermeneutics of suspicion (or, even necessarily the root source of it), because of the widespread influence of his therapeutical approach throughout the

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<sup>31</sup> There are compelling arguments to be made for “paranoia” as being at the heart of a long tradition of humanist philosophy. See Sianne Ngai’s article “Bad Timing (A Sequel). Paranoia, Feminism, and Poetry” (2001).

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the impact Freudian psychoanalysis has had on subject-other relations remains an enormous one. It has contributed to the normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the other, which has mutated into a more generalized prescriptive paranoia.

Prescriptive paranoia then builds on a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion and speaks to how the term paranoia has expanded beyond psychoanalysis with the post-modern turn to critical thinking on a number of academic, cultural, and political fronts. Reflecting Freud's approach to the individual other, many national, educational, and cultural institutions have adopted a paranoid lens as an ostensibly effective mode of uncovering hidden knowledge. While, strictly speaking, for Freud, paranoia is a term linked to an individual diagnosis, towards the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, "the term [paranoia] increasingly sheds its psychoanalytic overdeterminations and becomes a way of situating the epistemologico-materialist problematic of modernity in general" (Paradis 27). It moves out of the clinic and into the world at large, no longer a diagnosis but a prescription for uncertainty.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work, *Touching feeling affect, pedagogy, performativity* extends Paradis' insight, exploring the impact that a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion has had on the ethos of paranoia which permeates Western contemporary culture. In this text, Sedgwick questions the normalization of paranoia as the only epistemology for gathering knowledge. As she argues (with concern), seeing the world through a lens of constant distrust and skepticism has become part of mainstream critical theory as well as mainstream political and cultural practice. The latter is especially concerning given that "paranoia tends to suggest a specifically masculine point of view" (Ngai 4). Speaking to the transmission of paranoia beyond Freud's clinical use,

Sedgwick warns that “to apply a hermeneutics of suspicion is, I believe, widely understood as a mandatory injunction” (124). Such an injunction is disturbing since “the methodological centrality of suspicion to current critical practice has involved a concomitant privileging of the concept of paranoia” (Sedgwick 125). Indeed, the centrality of suspicion in current critical practices within and without the academy demonstrates how firmly a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion has taken hold in the post-modern collective imagination. Paranoia and its corollary, “conspiracy theory has developed into a male-dominated epistemology in both academic and mass cultural settings” (Ngai 4). As my primary texts will demonstrate, it has become an epistemology that has been normalized to our detriment.

Two critical works, Samuel Coale’s *Paradigms of Paranoia* (2004) and Patrick O’Donnell’s *Latent Destinies: Cultural Paranoia and Contemporary U.S. Narrative* (2000), trace the evolution of paranoia from the clinic to the collective; from pathology to prescription. Analyzing various post-World War II literary works, both critics speak to the mutation of clinical paranoia into a post-modern condition. O’Donnell, for example, defines cultural paranoia as “the symptomatic condition of postmodernity in contrast to the name for a personal pathological disorder” (5). A reflection of the paranoid symptoms which Freud identifies in his Schreber case study, postwar paranoia results from a collective need to bring order to the chaos, uncertainty and alienation associated with the post-modern condition. So, like Sedgwick, both Coale and O’Donnell identify paranoia as a normalized epistemology, a way of knowing an other (text, subject, nation) rather than an individual psychosis.

For example, Sedgwick’s articulation of paranoia points to the use of paranoia as a skeptical lens through which those *in the know* can actively view and explain the world. Taken

from this perspective, it is a preferred or prescriptive lens that uncovers hidden information. Here, skepticism ostensibly leads to revealing knowledge through critical thinking. O'Donnell and Coale also identify cultural paranoia as a lens that seeks to uncover hidden knowledge. In so doing, it functions as a response to the unknown that "manifests itself as a mechanism that rearranges chaos into order" (O'Donnell 11). In O'Donnell's words, "paranoia can be viewed as the reaction-formation par excellence to the schizophrenias of post-modern identity, economy, and aesthetics" (11). Similarly, Coale refers to conspiracy and paranoia as "a product and reaction to postmodernism" (6). Paranoia figures as a mode of knowing that facilitates a subject's ability to approach human experience with awareness: everything and everyone must be challenged or suspected.

So, paranoia is no longer simply a pathological condition that requires treatment at the level of the individual subject; rather, in the post-WW2 era, paranoia has become a politically and culturally sanctioned lens – a mutation that is prescribed as a mechanism for survival in times of uncertainty and terror. Rather than signal a regression to an infantile state as it does in Freudian terms, in post-modern terms, paranoia signals a state of awareness and experience: ostensibly, to be a fully functioning and rational adult now requires the adoption of a paranoid way of seeing.

In many respects, mass cultural and national paranoia manifests with similar symptoms to that of individual paranoia. The desire for that other that is same-as-me is repressed to keep up the semblance of an open border and the imaginary of a multicultural or melting pot nation (in the case of Canada or America, for example) because, much like the individual paranoid, the nation both desires and fears penetration. The result is a national narrative that attempts to

resolve the conflict at the border between itself and everything else. When certain events such as 9/11 or a pandemic occur, the dichotomous nature and vulnerability of the border are exposed. Threatened with the possibility of being penetrated, the nation responds with paranoia – each symptom masking colliding desires and fears taking place due to the porous border. Metaphorically, the nation struggles to rationalize its paranoid perspective in ways that echo that of the individual. The result is that paranoia shifts from a disease that needs to be cured to a prescription that “must” be dispensed. Rather than being viewed as an illness, paranoia is adopted as a critical lens or as a supposedly prudent response to the other in times of uncertainty or terror. Paranoia is normalized such that the paranoid national subject is no longer defined as diseased. On the contrary, to be diseased in this brave new world is to refuse to buy into the narrative of (post-modern) paranoia. As writers such as Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand demonstrably argue, in a post-modern world, deviations are not marked by the existence of paranoid symptoms but rather by the absence of such symptoms.

However, as these texts also compellingly argue, the repercussions of internalizing the paranoia that is prescribed come with a very high cost: paranoia has become a normative way of seeing and thinking for the individual and collective after Freud: “In a world where no one need be delusional to find evidence of systemic oppression, to theorize out of anything *but* a paranoid critical stance has come to seem naïve...or complaisant” (Sedgwick 125-126). Paranoia in this sense then becomes less about diagnosing a pathological illness and more about developing a method of protection against naiveté – a type of inoculation against potential viruses that may infect and compromise the subject and or nation. Sedgwick agrees, arguing that “paranoia has by now candidly become less a diagnosis than a prescription” (125-126).

The shift here from diagnosis to prescription is important for two reasons. On the one hand, it signals a shift from individual disease to collective vision, which is foreshadowed not only in literature with Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but also with literary and cultural critics such as Timothy Melley, Patrick O'Donnell, and Samuel Coale. On the other hand, this shift from diagnosis to prescription also points to a difference in the paranoid subject's relation to the world. In Freudian theorizations, an individual fails to progress in terms of self-development, and the disease thus needs to be diagnosed and then treated. As the OED states, a "diagnosis" is the "determination of the nature of a diseased condition." As such, the diagnosis comes after the symptoms of paranoia are made manifest. In contrast, the word "prescription" is defined as the "action of prescribing beforehand; a written or explicit injunction" as well as a "restriction or limitation" (OED). Thus, here there is no disease to be assessed. Instead, paranoia as a prescription does not refer to a disease but rather to a cure: paranoia is no longer a diagnosis but a prescription.

One has only to read a few pages of any of my three primary texts to see how concerned they are that paranoia has become normalized as an ostensible mode of preparedness against an unknown other. Whether for Winston, Daniel, or the speakers of Brand's poem, the protagonists/speakers struggle to come to terms with the paranoia promoted as a protective prescription for the subject by institutional "Big Brothers." Ultimately, as all three texts warn, prescriptive paranoia is a compensatory fiction sold by the patriarchal state to the collective. In exchange for a citizen's civil liberties or the ability to move and think freely, subjects are "offered" a way to ostensibly defend against dark others, cast as threats to the unity of the self and nation. Working as it does through narrative (i.e., conspiracy theories), prescriptive paranoia

offers “a form of accommodation” for the fearful (O’Donnell 16). In other words, as a mode of protection and knowledge informed by fear, prescriptive paranoia works to provide a (false) sense of control over the events happening in daily life. In historical moments beset by uncertainty (as reflected in the settings of my three primary texts), such a mechanism becomes an alluring opiate for the masses to counter the anxiety of facing that which is unknown. From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that cultural paranoia has been a complex contagion to contain. Not only is following prescriptive paranoia comforting, but it has also been normalized, making its impact hard to detect and even harder to resist. After all, to invoke the parable used by novelist David Foster Wallace in his famous speech, “This is Water,” prescriptive paranoia is to the masses what water is to a fish; it is challenging to see and understand that which we are steeped in.

And, yet we must try to understand why and “how paranoia has become a somewhat normative state of affairs” (Ngai 6). Finding evidence of our adoption of paranoia as a lens (i.e. our complicity with prescriptive paranoia) is not difficult; one need only glance at the “success” of conspiracy theories propagated about various others which continue to spread today. Whether about microchipped COVID vaccines or a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles who run the world, the normalization of paranoia has arguably become one of the most damaging “consequences of [the] saturation of social space[s] by fear” since World War II (Massumi ix). Complicating matters further for my feminist project is that, fueled as it is by fear, *prescriptive paranoia* (and to a lesser extent conspiracy theory) can “blot...out any sense of the possibility of alternative ways of understanding” (Sedgwick 131). Given that the “paranoid structure itself is a device by which consciousness maintains the polarity of self and nonself, thus preserving the

concept of identity,” such a patriarchal structure works to preserve an us/them dichotomy that, this project argues, produces disastrous results (Bersani “Pynchon” 108). Taken together, these structures can be characterized as the Way of the Father, a heuristic comprised of three variants of concern: fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia.

The Way of the Father has come to validate suspicion, orthodoxy, and detachment as the default paradigms of how a subject approaches the other—that is to say, the world beyond ourselves. Thus, from a schematic sense, what I am calling prescriptive paranoia is a useful phrase that helps me characterize the manifestations of the fear of the other, which are promoted as part of the Way of the Father. As is evident in the works of Orwell, Doctorow and Brand, prescriptive paranoia relates to a way of seeing the world that is state prescribed and disseminated via the *ministries* of the Father – to invoke an Orwellian image. Underlying the Father’s prescriptive paranoia is the demand that the subject remain complicit. For example, in Orwell’s novel, such complicity is portrayed in the characterization of the citizens of Oceania during the hate rituals, or, in Doctorow’s, in the depiction of the rigged Isaacson trials. In the imagined spaces of my primary texts, prescriptive paranoia relates to and is reflected in plot and characterization and intricacies in “voice” and “tone” as well as image structures, alter egos, and schizoid positions in individual and national/collective selves. Taken together, all my primary texts, imagine the wasteland produced when the state or (Big Br)Other demands that citizens adopt such a lens. In the process, as all three writers warn, citizens trade their civil liberties, their individuality, and their relationships in exchange for the Father’s ostensible protective measures.

This is the Way of the Father; accept his prescriptions or suffer the consequences. And this is so as much in Orwell’s, Doctorow’s or Brand’s imagined worlds as it is in our own. The

political manipulation of what has traditionally been viewed as a psychological disorder into a state of so-called mental preparedness is a very dangerous part of the Western world's Symbolic Order.<sup>32</sup> Not only this but, as all of my primary texts warn (in a nod to Lacan), “taking one's place in th[is] Symbolic Order means living in a paranoiac system which is *culturally sanctioned*” (Hendershot 17). Prescriptive paranoia functions under the guise of national pre-emptive defence mechanisms; to be paranoid is to be prepared. However, while prescriptive paranoia is promoted as a mode of protection for the subject, and by extension, the nation, it needs to be understood as a mode that enables the systemic exploitation and undermining of all – so much so that even the most sacred Western values, such as individualism and liberty, are willingly sacrificed in exchange for an allegedly safer and more secure nation.

Reflecting on the post-modern privileging of paranoia, the works of Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand work to parody, satirize, and critique our internalization and compliance with the Way of the Father, challenging the reader to question their propensity to approach the other from a place of suspicion. In part, they do so by “depathologizing the paranoid structure of thought” (Bersani 101). However, this is not to suggest that texts such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel* or *Inventory* support paranoid perspectives, only that they offer “symptomatic representations of paranoia in contemporary culture” (O'Donnell viii). In so doing, they provide the reader with the ability to see the severe consequences of following the Way of the Father. Adopting prescriptive paranoia as a lens through which to view the world and its peoples have produced ripples of devastation, used as it is to continually justify violence, war and hatred against those outside the walled-in collective. Through their imagined worlds, each of these

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, such paranoia is not limited to Western nations alone. There is evidence of paranoia beyond these borders as well.

writers exposes prescriptive paranoia for what it is: “a mind-set encouraged by national political leadership and the mass media” to support the three principles underpinning the Way of the Father: fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia (Pratt 9).

Fuelled as it is by prescriptive paranoia, the first Way of the Father is built on promoting a fear of the other. And not only this but once normalized, prescriptive paranoia is understood as a mechanism for protecting the subject from a “suspicious” other. However, as a method of understanding the other, prescriptive paranoia is “a mode of knowledge organized and informed by fear” (Ngai 4). And, since “everyday fear normally functions to sustain and reinforce existing forms of compliancy and subjection,” it also supports the impetus behind the second Way of the Father, complicit conformity (Ngai 6). In other words, “‘paranoid’ interpretations are often complex and self-defeating attempts to preserve a familiar concept of subjectivity” (Melley 23). At the heart of the paranoid impulse then is the subject’s desire to protect the self and transform uncertainty into certainty. However, the pursuit of this certainty comes at a great cost, especially when paranoia begins to function as a prescription to appease not just the fearful subject, but the collective as a whole. The rapid transmission of cultural paranoia demonstrates that “fear has truly become pervasive,” “no longer exist[ing] at the level of personal experience but constitute[ing] part of the very process of subject formation” (Ngai 6-7). And such a process has led to the third Way of the Father, emotional anesthesia, especially since paranoia and “Suspicion...constitutes a muted affective state – a curiously non-emotional emotion of morally inflected mistrust” (Felski “Critique”). The formation of a fearful, complicit, and apathetic subject must be challenged, particularly if there is to be any chance of dismantling the very

patriarchal systems which dictate social, economic, and political conditions that are ultimately untenable for humanity.

So, Freud was concerned with paranoia only within the context of his discipline of psychoanalysis. But an even superficial review of post-World War II events taking place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as the Cold War or 9/11 reveals that his “paranoid-style” influenced a far wider sphere of events and entered into the discourse of the powerful. By examining the role of language and the Symbolic, Lacan foreshadows what my primary texts (along with critics such as Sedgwick, Ngai, Brennan, O’Donnell, and Melley) demonstrate: the hermeneutics of suspicion continues to shape the post-modern crisis of interpretation, manifesting in a new, metastasized form. Lacan’s understanding of the symbolic order, as it relates to his analysis of Freudian psychoanalysis, helps to clarify the ongoing privileging of paranoia in Western culture. Such a crisis of interpretation is precisely what my primary texts work to critique, effectively warning us “that we are living under the sway of a paranoid social psychosis, in an ‘ego’s era’ that began more than four centuries ago” (Brennan “Age of Paranoia” 94). Certainly, as Freud’s work demonstrates, the paranoid impulse is privileged in psychoanalysis. But, as Lacan argues, the paranoid perspective infects much of human experience, shaping both our own and others’ understanding of their place in the world.

I have focused on Freud’s Schreber case study as primarily focused on paranoia as a disease afflicting an individual subject. However, in his later works, such as *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he highlights the intersections between the development of the individual psyche and the development of the collective one. In other words, he was aware that paranoia could manifest as a collective dis-ease. While in many respects the individual and the collective are in

conflict with one another, especially in the case of paranoia, “When...we look at the relation between the process of human civilization and the developmental or educative process of individual human beings, we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of objects” (Freud, *Civilization* 104). But though Freud draws many links between the individual psyche and a communal psyche in his body of work; he does not fully theorize what he calls “the pathology of cultural communities,” citing this as a task that for the future (*Civilization* 110). Indeed, it remained for authors like Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand to take up this challenge.

For Freud, the problem with diagnosing the pathology of a collective is that in addressing “an individual neurosis we take as our starting point the contrast that distinguishes the patient from his environment, which is assumed to be ‘normal’” (Freud *Civilization* 110). Freud locates pathology and neurosis in difference from the norm. But what if there is no such space of difference – a question that underpins all three of my primary texts. How can pathology be determined, since “For a group all of whose members are affected by one and the same disorder no background could exist” (*Civilization* 110)? Freud notes that the difference “would have to be found elsewhere” (*Civilization* 110). In this framework, to determine the pathology of any given group, we need another group that could be used to define “normal.” The latter is a troubling notion when said “normal” group is figured as pathological. For example, in Orwell’s and Doctorow’s novels, the so-called normal groups are cast as the zombie-like citizens of Oceania or Cold War America.

So, Freud’s reasoning is troubling on many levels because it does not adequately address the question of how, or more importantly, who defines what is normal. Complicating this

problem even further is Freud's disturbing suggestion that any attempts to diagnose group neurosis are pointless: "what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses the authority to impose such a therapy upon the group?" (*Civilization* 110). However, recent history, as well as my primary texts, each compellingly argue that the consequences of ignoring social neurosis are far too great. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four* makes clear, there are Big (Br)Others who possess and prescribe purported therapies for the ailments of our current age; but such a therapy (i.e. prescriptive paranoia) carries with it great costs. Not only do my primary texts work to expose this collective paranoia, but they also recognize that failing to diagnose social neurosis leads to ever-widening circles of fear, hatred, war, and violence.

The way this manifests in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *Inventory* is in how the government controls both disease and cure – and thus controls the fate of individuals who support the systemic manipulation that results from the paranoia that is prescribed. Ironically, the medicine here is a narcotic that – far from being a cure – is administered by the state to induce and maintain a state of metaphorical sleep – an unawareness that facilitates state control. Paranoia becomes the medicine – so to speak – prescribed by the state for all sorts of ailments such as alienation, despair, and fear of the other: it has entrenched the Way of the Father. Each of my primary texts seeks to address the vulnerability that comes from a kind of doubling of intention. In this case, the state prescribes the medicine for the disease that it has created, fully aware that "paranoia is drawn toward and tends to construct symmetrical relations...[and] symmetrical epistemologies" (Sedgwick 126).

Indeed, given his influence, we need to recognize how "The totalizing power of suspicion is a formidable weapon in the hands of a rhetorician like Freud" (Farrell 44). However,

concomitantly, it is also important to “recognize that suspicion is the most contagious of all attitudes next to simple fear” (Farrell 44). In this regard, Freud, is in many respects, a founding figure for our age of paranoia, and thus the Way of the Father – he is a figure who mistakenly assumes that he can wield the paranoid lens to reveal hidden information from a suspicious other *while* remaining immune to its effects. Like Lacan after him, Freud argues that the symbolic remains invisible – signs are not readable by everyone. Thus, where Lacan sees genius resulting from Freud’s linguistic moves to make right the meaning of the unreadable signs of the other, I see a dangerous normalization of a paranoid meaning-making that continues to impact us today. Such normalization is deeply problematic, especially since “paranoia is the one communicable mental disease” (Farrell 44).

As the literary analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *Inventory* reveals, the transmission and prescription of paranoia has produced a litany of disastrous consequences, all of which arise because “psychoanalysis assimilates the existing varieties of suspicion” (Farrell 69). For example, as I will discuss in my next chapter, Orwell’s parody of Freud’s Schreber case analysis via O’Brien’s interactions with Winston highlights how psychoanalysis has “prefigured the master code of paranoid interpretation” at the heart of the Way of the Father (Farrell 69). Through satire, Orwell provides a chilling account of the wasteland produced when a society gives into prescriptive paranoia. Similarly, whether by confronting readers with the state’s execution of the Rosenbergs during the Cold War mania of 1950 America or by confronting readers with a body count of civilians dying in the Iraq War, the works of Doctorow and Brand also show how the Way of the Father has worked to negate possibilities for empathy, compassion, trust, and acceptance. In so doing, these texts confront

readers with the repercussions emerging from cultural and social internalizations of suspicion and fear. Imagined in each of Orwell's, Doctorow's, and Brand's texts are possibilities for another path to knowledge, one which does not replicate the fear and apathy at the heart of the Way of the Father. In so doing, they support my contention that for too long "academic talks" have trained thinkers "to expect the inevitable question: 'But what about power?'" (Felski *Limits* 17). Instead, my project (and my texts) suggests that "Perhaps it is time to start asking different questions," such as "But what about *love*?" (Felski *Limits* 17; my emphasis).

In asking about love, each in their own unique ways, and by countering and questioning the so-called "normal" of the Other, each of my primary fictional texts provides a space of difference which Freud argues is needed to diagnose the pathology of the collective. In so doing, they each provide the background context Freud argues is necessary to determine pathology. However, in contrast to Freud's argument that dis-ease manifests when a subject cannot repress their deviant behaviours and desires, as the portrayal of such characters as Winston or Daniel compellingly demonstrate, it is not individual behaviours or desires that necessarily lead to pathology. Rather, what these texts suggest is that true sanity for the subject lies in behaviours and desires that represent deviation from the Way of the Father. While Freud and collective subjects (i.e., nations, academic institutions, etc.) may pathologize Orwell's *minority of one*, as each of these texts and each of these characters compellingly illustrates, sanity does not lie in sameness. If anything, in "the post-modern condition of cultural paranoia," "identity differentials (sexual, racial, national, etc.)" are necessary because they work to "reveal the work[ings] of paranoia" (O'Donnell19). As such, Orwell's (and Doctorow's and Brand's) depiction and critique of how the state destroys those who represent a "minority of one," exposes how

prescriptive paranoia works to “police the boundaries between the self and other” in ways that have led to unethical subject-other relations (O’Donnell 19). In the context of my primary texts, difference does not signal illness but rather opens the possibility for subject-other relations that move towards in peace rather than war. Each of my primary texts demonstrates how paranoia has become a destructive part of our collective vision and imagination. No longer a pathological condition affecting one deviant subject, paranoia has become a pathological prescription for the ostensible threats and ills of our chaotic post-modern world. But because to follow the Way of the Father, “the paranoid subject identifies with the rigid formation of the nation,” (consider, for instance, the rhetoric among President Trump supporters around immigration) the result is that said “subject’s paradoxical...voluntary confinement within boundaries that depend on the projection and exclusion of the other, the enemy” (O’Donnell 19). Or, as some put it, “Make America Great Again!”

## **Conclusion**

Though paranoia will likely always be with us (i.e., sometimes suspicion and paranoia are warranted responses, after all), we must seek out other ways of knowing that are not based on assumptions of suspicion and fear. Rather than prescribe it as the one way of knowing the (threatening) other, we can reframe paranoia as only one of the many possible ways of knowing. This is precisely what my primary texts offer: alternate ways of knowing others not based on exclusion and fear. Whether through satire, parody, or hyperbole, the works of Orwell, Doctorow and Brand imagine possibilities for “understand[ing] paranoia in such a way as to situate it as one kind of epistemological practice among other, alternative ones” (Sedgwick 128).

So, underpinning my analysis of these primary works is the search for modes of resistance to the Way of the Father. Here, I follow in the footsteps of many feminist scholars before me (Sedgwick, Roseneil, Ngai, Felski). Like their scholarship, this project works “to propose an approach...which operates in a register of *criticality* rather than what is too often the dominant register of critical work in the contemporary academy” (i.e., paranoia) (Roseneil 125). If, as scholar Sasha Roseneil compellingly argues, the dominant register inside and outside the academy today is “*paranoia*” and suspicion, then my project seeks to imagine and explore an alternative path to knowledge both inside and outside the academy – an alternative that I term the Path of the (M)other, which I will explore in detail in later chapters (Roseneil 125; emphasis in original). Paranoia is not the only way to seek out knowledge. And, to remain complicit with its transmission enables a dis-ease that has been and will continue to contribute to human suffering. Understanding how paranoia is privileged in various academic, cultural, or political institutions is a necessary first step on a path towards change.

In this chapter, I have provided some contact tracing, demonstrating how a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion has mutated into prescriptive paranoia. I have also shown how some of the principles at the heart of a Freudian subject-other relation prefigure the three characteristics underpinning the Way of the Father: fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia. In normalizing suspicion, orthodoxy, and detachment, Freudian psychoanalysis has modelled principles that continue to plague subject-other relations today. My point has not been to suggest that Freud alone is responsible for the suspicious and paranoid lens through which many subjects choose to view others. Rather that, given his enormous influence on understandings of human behaviour in the first half of the 20th Century, we need to consider

how the normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion embedded in Freud's therapeutic approach has impacted us.

Prescriptive paranoia has permeated the contemporary political and social push to establish policies that will "guarantee" safety in times of doubt. For this reason, I have chosen to focus my next chapter on George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Understanding as it does that "the more we parody paranoia, the more we combat it," Orwell's final novel challenges readers to consider the implications of collective internalizations of suspicion as well as the collective acceptance of prescriptive paranoia (O'Donnell x). In so doing, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* works to demonstrate possibilities for bringing down the Way of the Father.

## Chapter Two: Embracing Orwell's Heresy: Writing as Resistance in the Shadows of Father Freud

### Introduction: Why Orwell?

Written in 1948, on the heels of a ghastly world war, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides the literary and imaginative foundation for my project by deconstructing the cultural and prescriptive paranoia that manifests at the end of World War II. It is a prescient novel when viewed against the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the Cold War to 9/11 to now. Orwell's final novel (as he stated in a letter dated June of 1949 to Francis A. Henson) explores the rippling effects stemming from "totalitarian ideas [which] have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere...[to] draw these ideas out to their logical consequences" (Orwell *The Collected Essays* 287). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, however, does more than expose the deleterious effects of living under a totalitarian regime. Indeed, as we witness the response of leaders of ostensibly democratic nations to events from Orwell's time to 9/11 to the Coronavirus pandemic to the protests in the wake of George Floyd's death, it is clear that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* speaks to the consequences of *any* "society that is based on suspicion, spying, fear and hatred" (Gottlieb *The Orwell Conundrum* 54). Such a society is built by following the Way of the Father – a phrase used in my previous chapter to point to a constellation of patriarchal systems of power and oppression that prescribe paranoia and produce an environment that enables collective control. By fueling a fear of the other and demanding complicit conformity, the Way of the Father fosters an emotional anesthesia that continues to threaten our very existence on this planet. It is this unholy trinity of the Father – fear of the other, complicity conformity, and

emotional anesthesia — that Orwell’s text compellingly satirizes throughout *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

By examining *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s depiction of “paranoia’s rise,” I contemplate both how “Orwell’s text is a harbinger of things to come” and how it serves as a warning against things that are already here (Rosenfeld 343). Orwell’s novel effectively exposes the dangers of subscribing to the prescriptive paranoia of a patriarchal state, and as such, “offers militant criticism of specific aberrations in our own, present social-political system[s]” (Gottlieb *The Orwell Conundrum* 13). As Orwellian scholar, Aaron S. Rosenfeld articulates, “If today’s paranoia’s distinctive sensibility—its blend of grandiosity and abjection—has become a commonplace of the modern world ... Orwell’s version lays the groundwork for the... sense of paranoia’s possibilities” as well, I argue, a sense of its ramifications (337). Having witnessed the events occurring in the last few years alone,<sup>33</sup> it is abundantly clear that the horrific Two Minutes Hate rituals that occur daily in Oceania are as common in democratic societies as they are in totalitarian ones. For example, in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, one has had only to turn on news channels such as MSN or Fox to witness the most recent versions of such rituals of hatred; though I have yearned to see collaboration and compassion, what I continue to witness divisiveness and suspicion. A blind adherence to the Way of the Father, Orwell’s novel effectively warns readers, carries disastrous consequences for everyone.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> As I write this, we are dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine, global warming, almost daily revelations of new graves being found at the site of former Residential schools, and women’s rights being revoked in countries such as America and so much more. This is not an exhaustive list; merely some of the highlights.

<sup>34</sup> Though it is important to remember that such consequences produce far heavier burdens for those who are marginalized or disenfranchised.

In response, through his satiric and dystopic tragedy, Orwell seeks to awaken in readers what is asleep in Oceania: compassion and empathy for the other. The novel underlines that remaining paranoid about the other is only going to ensure our own destruction. As Winston Smith, the protagonist of the novel, movingly declares and accurately prophesizes, “It is impossible to found a civilization on fear and hatred and cruelty. It would never endure” (Orwell 216). Instead, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers us another approach: the Path of the (M)other. This *Path* offers possibilities for subject-other relations that are not driven by irrational fears and hatred of the other. Such fears are prescribed by dominant patriarchal social, political, and economic power structures which dominate Oceania, and by extension, our world. To follow the Way of the Father, as the citizens of Oceania do, produces an untenable environment; it is impossible to destroy the links between subject and other without destroying so much else in the process. Oceania, however, does not have to be a mirror for our world, not so long as we pay attention to that which makes human life significant: love, empathy, compassion, and connection. In other words, to use an oft-repeated phrase from the novel, what remains important is to remember that “staying human is worthwhile” (Orwell 137). Achieving the latter, however, requires that we find a way to resist the Way of the Father and instead look to the spaces imagined in the novel via the Path of the (M)other.

By looking to the behaviours modelled by the female figures in the text, readers can learn from how they “embody...alternatives to the desolate present depicted in the novel” (Hester 256). In their refusal to become complicit with the prescriptions of the patriarchal state, the multiple (M)other figures in the text hold the possibility for hope within their embrace of the other. Even within the bleak space of Oceania, the (M)other holds the other within her:

linguistically, materially, and figuratively. In so doing, she “ha[s] a major thematic importance in representing...the only conceivable hope for the future” (Hester 256). It is this hope for the future that Orwell imagines in the novel’s Appendix: a linguistic space outside the reach of the Father that is possible should we choose to embrace the Path of the (M)other. To follow this *Path*, the text argues, is to recognize that “What mattered were individual relationships” between subject and other (Orwell 135). Significantly, as both Winston, and readers, learn from the (M)other figures depicted throughout the text, even in the death grip of the Father, “a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself” (Orwell 135). Such a re-imagining of the vital importance of subject-other relations based on love is, I argue, where Orwell’s final novel offers its most important message and warning for our time: human survival requires personal connections between subject and other if we are to overcome the pathological prescriptives doled out by the ministries of the Father.<sup>35</sup> To continue approaching the other through the dehumanizing lens of suspicion prescribed by the Father will only lead to further devastation for humans and the planet. Such an approach is, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* horrifically depicts, both reckless and suicidal.

Via the Path of the (M)other, Orwell’s text gestures to another way to approach subject-other relations. Working to build bridges across the divide between subject and other, the Path of the (M)other is characterized by the cultivation of three main principles: “ownlife”, empathic connection, and the act of loving the other. The first such characteristic of the Path of the (M)other, “ownlife”, is an Orwellian term used in the novel to refer to “individualism and

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<sup>35</sup> If there is any good that has emerged from the global Coronavirus pandemic, it is that it has afforded us an opportunity to understand not only how intimately connected we all are but also the damage that ensues from severing our connections with others.

eccentricity” (Orwell 69). With its challenge to and deviation from prescribed patriarchal norms, ownlife gestures to the fundamental importance of developing our own inner humanity outside that defined by the Way of the Father. According to the novel, not having the freedom to develop such a sense of self blocks the subject’s ability to build connections with others. When this second characteristic (i.e., connection) is blocked, it leads to a lack of empathy between subjects and others which, as the novel highlights, facilitates the use of prescriptive paranoia as an effective means of collective control by the Father (i.e., Big Brother). The Path of the (M)other offers another way to approach the other – namely, through the third characteristic, the act of loving the other. Approaching the other through a lens of love rather than suspicion works to counter the hatred cultivated by the prescriptive paranoia of the Father. Taken together, these principles work to counter the fear, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia that result from following the Way of the Father.

So, Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* teaches us that we must act to bring about significant change. However, before we can do so, we must first recognize how our behaviour is contributing to our own dis-ease. As Orwell states in one of his “As I Please” editorials for the *Tribune* on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1946, “we shall get nowhere unless we start by recognizing ... that the world is suffering from some kind of mental disease which must be diagnosed before it can be cured” (*The Collected Essays* 249). An analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* highlights that producing such a diagnosis means that we must confront the dis-ease incited by the state apparatus built by the Father. This apparatus is depicted, in the novel, through the four Ministries of Big Brother: Truth, Peace, Plenty, and Love. Taken together, the portrayals of these ironically named ministries provide insight into the catastrophic future that awaits us should we continue to

blindly follow the Way of the Father. This way prescribes a cure (i.e., prescriptive paranoia) which has actually enabled the very dis-ease that ails us as a society.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s depiction of the brutality administered by Big Brother and the Party serves to effectively highlight many of the elements that render a society pathological. As such, the novel offers both a prognosis *and* a diagnosis of the Western world – a diagnosis informed by the horrors that Orwell witnessed during his own lifetime. In so doing, his novel falls into the category of “Literary dystopia [which] gives a negative appraisal of the here-and-now, a satire of what is already possible but not desirable” (Sicher and Skradol 156). In Orwell's hyperbolic, pessimistic, and vicious satiric descriptions of his present, readers can see what Freud once argued would be nearly impossible to see, namely the pathology of the collective or nation-state. Most importantly, it is “only by considering dystopia as a warning can we as readers hope to escape such a dark future” (Baccolini 520). In other words, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not necessarily predict humanity's fate but instead presents one extreme possibility should individuals continue to give into the fear and patriarchal structures at the heart of the Way of the Father. As Orwell noted not long after *Nineteen Eighty-Four* went on sale: “I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive, but I believe...that something resembling it *could* arrive” (*The Collected Essays* 502). Significantly, Orwell's point here is that once readers “allow...for the fact that the book is a satire,” they can begin to understand the warning contained in its extreme portrayal of a society that has become complicit with the savage Way of the Father (*The Collected Essays* 502). The novel warns the reader that to accept such ways – as figured through the four Ministries—is to accept the death of “the spirit of Man” (Orwell 217). Consequently, like the many (M)other figures in his text, Orwell's work calls upon readers to act,

reminding them that, “The moral to be drawn from the dangerous nightmare situation [depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*] is a simple one: *Don’t let it happen. It depends on you*” (Orwell qtd. in Carr 14-15). In recognizing that his final novel is a warning rather than a prophecy, readers can better see that this satiric novel presents them with a grim picture of what happens in a society that abandons and betrays the Path of the (M)other. This chapter is, thus, about demonstrating how the Way of the Father, that collection of Freudian patriarchal assumptions about the other, sanity, and belonging, must be brought down.

Much of the criticism levied against Orwell, and his body of work is of a deeply personal nature, especially the criticism directed at *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. These criticisms range from charges that the novel got the future wrong to it being little more than the dark ravings of a terminally ill man (Orwell was dying as he wrote the book) to it being written by a hypocrite who betrayed his commitment to socialism. However, perhaps most concerning is that there is a significant fraction of critics who view *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as little more than “a relentless tome of despair” (Slater xiii). Surprisingly, such criticism abounds even though Orwell’s text has provided language that helps to identify and fight against the Way of the Father. It also abounds even though it continues to resonate with so much that is happening in the world today.<sup>36</sup> It is curious then that “Orwell’s most important work...has been either overlooked or dismissed by critics who have determined that there is no hope evident in the novel” (Slater xiii). Post-modern academics have become increasingly cynical and suspicious (as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick compellingly argues in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2002): see my

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<sup>36</sup> *Nineteen Eighty-Four* continues to be widely read. For example, after the election of President Donald Trump in 2016, the novel rose to the top of best-seller lists in America as people sought to make sense of the many false claims made by their new leader and his advisors.

Chapter One), and it is especially odd, even hypocritical, that many of these same academics dismiss the novel because of its pessimism.

Even when critics do not overlook the text, as the well-respected Orwellian scholar Erika Gottlieb notes, “the majority of academic analysts argue that it is a flawed work” (*The Orwell Conundrum* 1). But, these academic critiques, which are often followed by rationalizations for why the novel can be summarily dismissed, result in a replication of the horrors that the novel works to expose because they place the text under erasure. Moreover, they further encourage a turning away from the horrors presented therein. Consequently, not only do such critiques miss many of the satiric points made by Orwell’s novel, but they also point to a deep and disturbing thread of complacency. It is telling that such an unwillingness to confront the dis-ease depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* makes manifest one of the central reasons behind the darkness of Orwell’s final novel in the first place: “it was not the present or the past that now made Orwell so pessimistic, but the *future*, our present, in which...emotional anesthesia might make us even more insensitive to the plight of others” (Slater xiii). Turning away from the warnings contained in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exemplifies the very thing that this novel and this dissertation project write so fervently against. In so doing, we manifest precisely those qualities that led Orwell (and I) to be so pessimistic about the present state of the world. So long as we inhabit this state of emotional anesthesia, we remain complicit with the very systems and structures that work to destroy us and the planet.

On one level, I am not arguing with these critics, per se. It is undoubtedly true that Orwell’s final novel is extremely pessimistic. Readers are confronted with scenes of human brutality, torture, war, and despair. However, *the job* of dystopic works is to warn readers by

offering up an inventory of past, present, and future problems that humans have either created or may yet create for themselves and the world. In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is not without significance that Winston is portrayed as a haunting figure, “a lonely ghost” who, despite the enormous personal risk that he takes on, and despite his worry that he is “uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear,” still puts pen to paper and does what writers like Orwell, Doctorow and Brand do: he writes for an audience that he cannot be sure will listen (Orwell 26). From this perspective, it seems that many critics remain deaf to the “truths” uttered in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. They do not recognize that when Winston, and by extension, Orwell, addresses his journal “*To the future or to the past*,” he is speaking to us all even as he speaks to no one (Orwell 26). If we do not listen, we risk the ongoing consequences of complacency, complicity, and desensitization.

Arguably, many critics miss the motif of the mirror, a critical symbolic pattern in the text. Like the telescreen that Winston describes as “a dulled mirror” (Orwell 5), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a “dulled reflection” of our world, not so much, Orwell noted, “what *will* happen inside the next forty years in the Western World” but rather what *might* happen (Orwell qtd. in Claeys 426; emphasis in original). Foreshadowing the waves of paranoia that will grip the U.S. and the world during the Cold War and challenging Freud’s statement in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that the pathology of a group cannot be diagnosed, Orwell’s text compellingly argues that a “minority of one” can offer life-affirming possibilities, and that deviating from the norm does not make an individual pathological.<sup>37</sup> On the contrary, sometimes deviation from the norm (i.e. the Way of the Father) is precisely what is needed to avoid pathology and self-destruction. Such deviation is

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<sup>37</sup> This is a point that E.L. Doctorow will also take up in his Cold War novel, *The Book of Daniel*.

what Winston valiantly attempts to maintain throughout Parts I and II of the novel and even for a good part of Part III when he is horrifically tortured in Room 101.

So, precisely *because* so many literary critics have misunderstood *Nineteen Eighty-Four*— charging Orwell’s novel with being too extreme and absurd in its portrayal – a deconstruction of their arguments is necessary to advance my own. In part, the problem is compounded by the fact that some critics seem to ignore that the novel is both a parody and a work of “dystopian satire” (Gottlieb *The Orwell Conundrum* 12). Consequently, there are “common misunderstandings...that the author was trying to predict the future, that [he was a] pessimist...and that Orwell identifies with Winston Smith” (Posner 9). The latter is an especially troubling conflation between Orwell and his protagonist— a character portrayed as doomed by his ultimate betrayal of an other. The result is that “in spite of the novel’s undeniable power and stature in twentieth-century fiction, few of its critics have shown appreciation for the complexity and consistency of Orwell’s achievement” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 53). Even more problematic are the Freudian critics, referred to by Gottlieb as the “psychological critics” who “concentrate exclusively on... psychological analysis” to engage with the text (“Room 101 Revisited” 53). By focusing too narrowly on reading the text through a Freudian lens, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s political and social warnings are reduced to little more than projections of the author’s ostensibly repressed psyche and lived experiences. For example, Murray Sperber, in his article “Gazing into the Glass Paperweight: The Structure and Psychology of Orwell’s ‘1984’” argues that the novel is less about the future than Orwell’s childhood, claiming that the “intensity [of the text] come[s] from the author’s past” (222). Other psychological critics focus less on Orwell’s childhood and more on his ill health as he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the case of

these critics, assumptions made about Orwell's experiences at the end of his life invariably lead to arguments that "Orwell's emphasis on the cruelty of Big Brother's regime should be regarded as yet another projection...of the writer's physical pain and fear of his own death" (Gottlieb "Room 101 Revisited" 53).

While I agree that Orwell's lived experiences likely impacted his writings, the danger of psychoanalyzing Orwell is that it has the effect of redirecting the reader's attention away from the important warnings embedded in his satire. Mason Harris notes that rather than considering the warnings underpinning what happens to Orwell's protagonist in Part Three of the novel, such critics view "Winston Smith's ordeal and collapse in the Ministry of Love [a]s so appalling that [they] assume that here the author must have collapsed as well" (Harris 32). The result is that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is read (as one such critic, Isaac Deutscher, does) as a work where "He projected the last spasms of his own suffering" rather than as a satire and critique (Deutscher). It is not that influential articles like Isaac Deutscher's "1984 – The Mysticism of Cruelty" or Gerald Fiderer's "Masochism as Literary Strategy: Orwell's Psychological Novels" do not provide insight into *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but rather that the heavy emphasis on Orwell's personal experiences result in highly reductive readings. In this way, Fiderer, Deutscher, and Sperber's texts are all examples of Orwellian scholarship that "suffers from the biographical reductionism to which classical Freudian literary criticism is prone" and, as a result, are highly problematic for several reasons (Carpentier 179).

To begin with, the approach embedded in such scholarship on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* bears an uncanny resemblance to Freud's highly questionable approach to Schreber's *Memoirs* as addressed in my first chapter. That is, internalized within the approach of psychoanalytical critics

to Orwell and his final novel is the normalization of a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion as the preferred mode of critical analysis. Not only do such psychoanalytical approaches suffer from biographical reductionism, but they also highlight how “Freud’s definition of the neurotic personality has been so influential that it is often accepted as axiomatic” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 53). As a result, not only is the other (in this case, Orwell himself) approached through a lens of suspicion but they are measured by their ability to conform to societal norms since, from a Freudian perspective, “the source of neurosis resides in the individual’s failure to adjust to a societal standard” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 53). Orwell’s so-called failure to conform to the Way of the Father is pathologized, leading to a problematic misreading of one of the primary purposes of this satiric novel. That is to say, the source of Winston’s neurosis is not his *failure* to adjust to the societal standards of Way of the Father but rather his *acceptance* of such standards. Remarkably, “the critic insisting on” Orwell’s ostensible “sado-masochistic tendencies...inevitably” marks Orwell as a neurotic outsider, and in so doing, replicates exactly what the Party does to Winston (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 55). Ultimately, to link the extreme despair that Orwell depicts in the novel to Orwell’s childhood experiences, physical decline, or his supposed neuroses is to miss Orwell’s warnings. It also suggests that the text itself has no relevance to real-world events, which is reductive and absurd. So, when Deutscher argues that Orwell’s “warning defeats itself because of its underlying despair,” it is ultimately unconvincing and even irresponsible. In response to such criticisms, Gottlieb wisely notes that “Reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a case study of...Orwell’s private neurosis clouds the issue...because it happens to be a strikingly accurate anatomy of the way such governments have been functioning in the past and are still functioning in the present” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 55). To focus on Orwell’s personal circumstances rather than confronting what is

admittedly a tough book to read is to completely miss the most essential parts of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and, following Father Freud, to project arbitrary qualities onto an other through a problematic and limited lens of suspicion.

Another troubling theme in the work of these scholars is the underlying assumption that Orwell's grim novel resulted from feelings of hopelessness. Such assumptions are irrational; why would Orwell go to the trouble of writing a warning that he felt was pointless, especially given that he was dying at the time? My response to these assumptions is that he did not. Rather, he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* because he was *hopeful* about the possibilities for change should readers heed his warnings. In other words, like his protagonist, who writes in his diary despite his despair and fear of death at the hands of the Father, Orwell writes this novel for us, "For the future" (Orwell 10). Significantly then, the act of writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, even in the face of death, "showed that he was still alive and protesting, no matter how grim the state of the world" (Meyers 189). Furthermore, whether or not Orwell's novel reflects his own personal despair is far less relevant than its ability to elicit some human feeling in readers for the suffering of an other. Taken from this perspective, Winston's tragic fall functions as an evocation to feel pity for an other rather than as a hopeless portrayal of humanity's inevitable fate. Like the heroes of Ancient Greek tragedies, "Winston's collapse is not the collapse of the human...dooming us all" but rather a sign that "We can hope for more from ourselves and our future" as long as we heed the warnings contained in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and "watch out" (Nussbaum 282). Watching out requires that we recognize that now is not the time for despair but rather for action: change is possible if we work together to seek out more positive and life-affirming approaches to the other.

Thus, while Orwell's final novel may feel like a "testament of despair" because the hope of redemption for the protagonist is frustrated right from the beginning of the book, it is important to pay close attention to the more nuanced parts of the text (Harris 32). So, yes, from one perspective, the text is grim: for example, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not about a saviour figure who will protect humanity from evil dictatorships or paranoid state apparatuses. Even as he opens his journal up for the first time, Winston knows what the repercussions are of his decision to write, "he reflected...He was already dead" (Orwell 26). Not only this but, while the novel opens in Spring, a season traditionally associated with images of rebirth and renewal, the protagonist is doomed, and readers are made painfully aware of this fact.

The question then that plagues many critics and readers is: why would Orwell tell the reader right from the beginning that the protagonist is doomed to die? Well, as Winston notes the first time that he writes in his contraband journal, "The consequences of every act are included in the act itself" (Orwell 26). Here, the text becomes hopeful, for Winston is not just referring to the punishment that will result from his writing; he is also speaking to the important rewards that will materialize. Though Winston's final fate may be foreordained, his impending death does not render his actions meaningless, just as later in the text, the embrace of the (M)other is also not rendered meaningless even as she faces death.

As a result, rather than the text reflecting Orwell's obsession with when he will die, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is far more concerned about how we (i.e., the future) will live. How we decide to act during our lifetimes is, this novel argues, of far more importance than allowing the fear of our death to paralyze us. As such, when the protagonist of the novel recognizes that he will eventually be executed for going against the state, his telling response is that "Now he had recognized himself as a dead man it became important to stay alive along as possible" (Orwell

26). Winston's struggle to stay alive is not only about his attempt to avoid execution but also about his struggle to remain human. In the context of this novel, staying human is defined by learning how to resist the emotional anesthesia prescribed by the Party line. Significantly, then, our role as readers is not to focus on Winston's impending death but rather to pay attention to how he lives in each moment, and by extension, to examine how we are living our own lives as well.

So, in contrast to critics who discuss *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as nothing more than an overwrought manifestation of the "depth of Orwell's pessimism," something entirely different emerges from this text when the Way of the Father is used as a theoretical lens (Fowler qtd. in Carpentier 183). Specifically, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* evinces a commitment to the power and potential of literature to promote awareness and elicit change in the world. As scholar Janine Uttell compellingly argues, "George Orwell remains an avatar for the writer of...social conscience, one who seeks to reconcile literary concerns and civic engagement" (198-199). What makes *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a timeless and extraordinary novel is *precisely* its refusal to soften its depiction of the possibilities that await us should we not heed its warnings. Only by witnessing the horrors occurring in the world can Orwell—and readers, by implication—avoid becoming complicit with what is happening. For Orwell to write about anything less horrifying would be to inhabit a state of complacency that he identified as reflecting a "'stage of irresponsibility' that comes with giving up on the world" (Rosenfeld 344). Instead, Orwell's important text "responds to the condition of the literature of his time"—literature which he felt was not doing enough to expose the serious problems facing humanity then, and which continue to haunt humanity now (Rosenfeld 337). By demonstrating that a minority of one can challenge systems of patriarchal orthodoxy, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* shows each and every reader that even

though they too may only be a minority of one, they can challenge prescribed orthodoxy and refuse the prescriptive paranoia of any collective, whether institutional or national. In this way, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* evinces an empowering view about the ability of readers to effect social change, reflecting Orwell's significantly optimistic "belief in the decency of human beings" (Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* 220). Like the protagonist of his novel, readers too can learn to love (like) the (M)other and, in so doing, do their part to turn the tide on the swell of hatred that threatens to destroy humanity.

Despite all this, a Freudian view continues to reign in Western Society. As a result, understanding *Nineteen Eighty-Four* through different lenses other than the traditional pessimism of many critics remains a challenge. As I outlined in Chapter One, Freud's psychoanalytic theories have shaped understandings and interpretations of human behaviour. His influence has been so great that as leading psychiatrist and professor Joseph Merlino states, "Probably, going back to a time 'before Freud' is...unimaginable" (xiv). Even as many discredit Freud's theories today, his work continues to inform understandings of the human psyche and human behaviour. In so doing, Freud has "succeeded in establishing an orthodoxy which exerts its power even today" (Roazen 677-678). The problem, however, is that this orthodoxy promotes a suspicious approach to the other which has greatly influenced and tainted subject-other relations. For example, as noted in Chapter One, one implication of Freud's Schreber case analysis is that only individuals who follow the (Father's) collective orthodoxy can be defined as sane. Such an approach reflects an "us vs. them" mentality that has, and continues to have, devastating consequences for all living beings on this planet. Ultimately, Freud's work highlights the infectious nature of paranoia; consider Sedgwick's wry observation that in reading Freud's case

study, it becomes clear that “Paranoia seems to require being imitated to be understood” (131). As I conclude in Chapter One, in modelling an approach to the other that normalizes a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the other, Freud’s Schreber case analysis has planted seeds for a far more pervasive and pernicious form of dis-ease and suspicion (i.e., prescriptive paranoia) to take hold.

Therefore, before analyzing the novel’s critique of prescriptive paranoia as it relates to the Way of the Father, it is helpful to first consider how Orwell’s final novel satirically challenges the normalization of subject-other relations based on a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion. Though the entire novel satirizes the divisive approaches embedded in Father Freud’s subject-other model, Book Three is especially effective because it offers a compelling “parody on psychotherapy” (Trilling qtd. in Bloom 7). By “create[ing] distance through parody and satire,” the text “enable[es] the reader to draw conclusions that” challenge those prescribed to them by Way of th[is] Father (Lonoff 42). Because the novel exposes the consequences arising from a subject’s choice to be complicit with irrational and suspicious approaches to the other, Orwell’s satire not only reveals the extent to which we continue to internalize a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion towards the other, he also brings us face-to-face with the horrific consequences of our ongoing willingness to do so.

Orwell’s satiric examination of Freudian subject-other models is best evidenced in his absurd and gruesome portrayal of Winston’s so-called conversion therapy in the ironically named Ministry of Love. Employing hyperbole and irony—in addition to parody—the final book of the novel provides a culminating and damning critique of the psychoanalytic approach that Father Freud modelled in his Schreber case analysis. In the world of Oceania, the dictates of

the Father determine the sanity of an individual depending on whether they are marked as a threat to and a deviant from the dominant social order. For this Father (i.e., Big Brother), “Whatever the Party holds to be truth, *is* truth;” no other truth is possible. (Orwell 200).<sup>38</sup> Consequently, like Freud, who claimed that the aim of the psychoanalyst is to convert a patient’s deviation into “normality,” so too is this the aim of Winston’s so-called therapist, Father O’Brien (Freud *SE XII* 35). In this way, it becomes clear that “Winston’s torture by O’Brien is clearly modelled on psychoanalytic treatment” (Roazen 684). O’Brien’s modus operandi is to ensure that Winston behaves according to the norms established and maintained by the Party. Winston’s deviant behaviour presents an unacceptable challenge to said norms. As O’Brien explains to Winston, the reason that people are brought to the Ministry of Love is “Not merely to extract your confession, not to punish you... To cure you! To make you sane” (Orwell 203). For O’Brien—a parodic Freudian figure “who had the air of a doctor”—Winston is deemed pathological for the same reason as is Schreber: he deviates too far from the norms of the Way of the Father (Orwell 203). Since Winston’s deviations contravene the will of the Father, they cannot be permitted to exist in any form; even as O’Brien tortures Winston’s body, he keeps Winston alive until he is converted into a so-called “normal” subject.

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<sup>38</sup> This brings up some interesting questions. Specifically, if a subject’s perceptions of the external world are not delusional, can the subject still be defined as paranoid? One way to respond is to invoke a quote from the popular television series, *The X-Files*, “Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean that they aren’t out to get you” (“Soft Light”). As this episode and many X-Files episodes intimate, individual paranoia can still exist in a paranoid world. Indeed, as one of the protagonists, Fox Mulder, proves repeatedly, deviating paranoia is the only way to access the ‘truth.’ However, analogous to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in *The X-Files*, paranoid individuals whose narratives deviate from state prescriptions are viewed as threats and are dealt with accordingly. On the run from the government at the end of the series, Mulder, like Winston, is ultimately unpersoned by the Other. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The X-Files* compellingly argue, the truth may be out there and deviating paranoia may be the way to access it, however, what they also demonstrate is that the consequences of choosing to stay on the deviating path are deadly.

In other words, it is not enough to punish the deviant; the deviant must be made into the image of the Father before they are exterminated. Thus, while Winston (and this reader) may struggle to understand why the Father “go[es] to the trouble of interrogating” deviant subjects since they “intend to destroy” them anyway, when viewed through a Freudian lens, both the motivation and the purpose behind the horrific actions of the Father becomes clearer (Orwell 205). To put it bluntly, as O’Brien does in the novel, for the Father, “It is intolerable...that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world” (Orwell 205). In response, the Father’s conversion treatment works to ensure that all individuals follow one of the key three tenets of the Way of the Father, complicity conformity. In the context of the novel's parody, because Winston does not comply, the aim of the Father’s conversion therapy is to “make him one of ourselves before we kill him” (Orwell 205). The state’s diagnosis of Winston’s behaviour as deviant needs to be understood in relation to Freud’s rigid definitions of what could be accepted as right. Freud famously despised and challenged those who “threatened the purity of [his] purposes [and] he did not hesitate to expel deviators as ‘heretics’” (Roazen 678). This intolerance for deviation is one of the many aspects of Freudian approaches to the other that Book Three parodies so well. Winston is one of the many citizens of Oceania who are marked as deviants. Once a citizen is marked as such, they are “treated” in the Ministry of Love—a place that works to erase any possibility for deviation to exist at all. Deviations are perceived as infections that pollute the Father’s pure purpose; O’Brien chillingly declares, “No one whom we bring to this place ever stands out against us. Everyone is washed clean” (Orwell 205). The Father’s treatment, Orwell demonstrates, is ultimately successful (at least in part) in “curing” Winston’s deviations, stripping him of his difference by the end of the narrative.

However, it is essential to remember that Orwell's text must be viewed through both parodic and satiric lenses. Specifically, the absurdity and the brutality of the Father's treatment in Room 101 serve to highlight to the reader the high cost of Winston's conversion into a so-called "normal" citizen of Oceania. Winston's ending underscores how, in erasing his deviations, the Father effectively erases so much of what makes him human; ultimately, in Oceania, successful treatment is defined by converting the subject into an "*unperson*" (Orwell 40). The horrific implications of such a conversion underpin Orwell's subversive and savage parody of Freudian approaches to the other – approaches that go too far to ensure that the Father can maintain His position of power. The Father's desire for self-replication is facilitated by viewing the other through a paranoid lens. Unless that other is like Him, they cannot be trusted.

By effectively exposing the darker consequences resulting from the normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the other,<sup>39</sup> the novel effectively critiques the paternalistic veneer applied to obfuscate the main impetus behind prescriptive paranoia. Consequently, though, "To consider Winston's torture as therapy makes it even more frightening," doing so highlights just how destructive the compliance with the Way of the Father has been (Roazen 684). To adopt the paternalistic subject-other models prescribed by the Father is to adopt a troubling approach to the other. Freud seemed somewhat oblivious to the latter, believing that "his goal of neutrality in the analyst would be enough to protect the patient from undue influence" (Roazen 685). However, as Orwell effectively highlights in Part Three of the novel,

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<sup>39</sup> Of course, this text parodies a wide range of figures and institutions, not just Freud and psychoanalysis. For example, the Two Minute Hate rituals can be read as a parody of the rituals used by many power-hungry leaders (most recently Donald Trump) to drum up irrational fears towards an unknown other as a means of achieving collective complicity. The depiction of these rituals is only one of many examples of Orwell's use of parody to satirize various Father figures and institutions from Stalin to the Nazi Party.

such a notion is highly problematic. Though a Freudian approach may not address it, there are always power dynamics to be considered in the relationship between a subject and an other. Freud may have been “naïve...about the power elements implicit in his methods of treatment” but, “Orwell...was exquisitely sensitive to power seeking” (Roazen 685). Ultimately, when O’Brien explains to Winston that “no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end,” the novel exposes one of the central problems of adopting a paternalistic approach to the other grounded in a hermeneutics of suspicion (Orwell 212). Though the message behind Orwell’s parody here is grim, it also offers a salient warning: no prescribed therapy is neutral.

Orwell’s final novel presents a radical challenge to many of the principles underlying Freudian approaches to difference and to the other. In particular, and not surprisingly given what Orwell witnessed in his lifetime, “Orwell disliked the idea that normality can be established by counting the number of people who share any belief” (Roazen 391). While “Freud never went very far in exploring this line of critical thought,” Orwell goes all the way, so to speak (Roazen 691). Through parody and satire, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exposes the problematic idea that conformity (especially to the precepts of the Way of the Father) equals sanity, effectively underlining the consequences of an approach to the other built on a paranoid model of understanding. The novel also exposes the dangers of equating difference from the norm with pathology. If anything, it presents a compelling argument to the contrary since “it is by adjusting to the norm of the majority that Winston has now become, finally, insane” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 73). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s disturbing portrayal of what happens to subjects in a

society where “Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation” serves to highlight the disastrous consequences of following the Way of the Father without question (Orwell 205).

One of the main themes of this text is that “Orthodoxy means not thinking...Orthodoxy is unconsciousness” (Orwell 46).<sup>40</sup> To counter the latter, Orwell invites the reader to embrace heresy because, for “Orwell, unorthodoxy was a necessary part of intelligent thinking” (Roazen 678). As evidenced throughout Orwell’s satiric portrayal of psychoanalysis, he “admired heretics as those who refused to allow their consciences to be stifled by quietly accepting received wisdom” (Roazen 678). In direct defiance to the Way of the Father, which holds the “still widely held enlightenment view that as progress continues, the triumph of reason will spell an end to...inhuman activities...Orwell’s view contradicts this idea” (Paden 261). As this novel demonstrates, in many ways, ideas of progress and reason have served to justify some of the most heinous acts committed by humans. In response, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts the importance of learning to see beyond such views, significantly imagining possibilities for an approach to the other that promotes difference rather than conversion, love rather than fear.

Orwell’s use of parody to support his satire of Freudian subject-other models is thus significant because, in doing so, “Orwell suggest[s] that a too-literal application of Freudian thinking to politics and social control dehumanizes those who suffer it” (Buchanan 79). Instead, Orwell’s text calls for a different approach to the other – one based on humanizing rather than “unpersoning” either the subject or the other. Rather than continuing the hate rituals which hurt *us* as much as they do *them*, we are called to embrace the Path of the (M)other. The longer

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<sup>40</sup> For chilling proof that this kind of unconscious orthodoxy continues today, just watch Trump supporters mindlessly chanting three-word slogans such as “LOCK HER UP” or “STOP THE COUNT” at one of their rallies or protests about the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee 2016 Hilary Clinton.

subjects continue to follow the Way of the Father, the longer they enable their own subjugation and exploitation at his hands; this is the message at the heart of Orwell's "final satirical image of Big Brother" (Grossman 55). In the end, Orwell's text shows readers that, in a world that has become pathological, the only sane path for the individual is precisely what Freud defined as pathological; sanity lies deviating from the Way of the Father. This is much as Gottlieb reveals when she notes that, "By juxtaposing the single individual's sanity and humanity with the insanity and inhumanity of an entire state, he proposes that in certain societies the exclusive norm of sanity many indeed reside in the 'minority of one'" (Gottlieb "Room 101 Revisited" 53). Through his hyperbolic portrayal of Winston's therapy in Book Three, Orwell exposes the absurdity that comes from arguing that deviation from the norm signals the pathology of that individual. When O'Brien declares to Winston that "We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves," the full horror of the Way of the Father is revealed (Orwell 206). To *unperson* the other is precisely how the Father ensures his powerful hold over the collective; resistance appears to be futile. However, underpinning Orwell's satiric critique of the Freudian subject-other model is a refusal to accept the so-called norms of sanity as defined by the Father – whether that Father is Freud or Big Brother. In other words, becoming an *unperson* is not an inevitable state of being. On the contrary, there are different paths to being.

To counter the Way of the Father, the novel explores the possibilities available to the "minority of one" (Orwell 67). From the perspective of the novel, "Being in a minority, even in a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad...Sanity was not statistical" (Orwell 174-175). Significantly, "Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is one of the first works which

genuinely and systematically challenges th[e] assumption” that sanity need be defined by the Father (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 53). Not only does Orwell’s counter to Freudian approaches to the other demonstrate an “avowed anti-psychoanalytic position,” it also provides a frightening portrayal of the consequences arising from internalizing the Father’s ways (Salton-Cox 145). In so doing, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exposes the disastrous outcomes of accepting state prescriptions which, far from curing subjects, are responsible for destroying the very parts of the self that are needed to avoid replicating the wasteland in the novel. That so many of the citizens of Oceania have an unthinking, instant complicity with the Way of the Father (i.e. consider the ease by which the Party switched external villains in Hate Week) highlights the difficulty that arises when pathological people in power begin to make sense – especially given that such complicity invites the destruction of those who comply. Clearly, the collective sometimes struggles to diagnose pathology in the powerful.<sup>41</sup> By providing a compelling critique of a subject’s internalization of a Freudian subject-other approach, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* opens doors to alternate models of approaching subject-other relations. Ultimately then, “At the most universal level of the satire...Orwell sets out to parody...an insistent tendency toward polarizing, towards splitting the entire world into the opposites of ‘them’ and ‘us’” (Gottlieb *The Orwell Conundrum* 52). Orwell’s message is clear: follow the divisive, the rationalistic, the paternalistic, and this is the society you will get. In contrast, to the extent that happiness is present in Oceania, it is on the Path of the (M)other – a path that offers the potential to subvert the divisive strategies used by the Father to maintain social control. In Her absence, the novel warns, what is left behind is a desolate world infected by a contagion of paranoia and hatred that is all-consuming.

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<sup>41</sup> This latter point is especially apropos in the wake of Donald Trump’s surprise defeat of Hilary Clinton in 2016.

But I have yet to demonstrate how this hermeneutic Way of the Father is parodied in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Written at a time in history (i.e., right after World War II) when the world is reeling from a multitude of horrific events and tragedies, Orwell's satire works to expose how "Authoritarian regimes gain strength from Freud's theory...since political oppressors can claim to guard civilized norms while pursuing their own agendas" (Buchanan 72). However, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does more than expose how authoritarian regimes gain strength from Freud's theories; it also exposes how *democratic* patriarchal systems gain strength from them. After all, wielding control over a collective by stoking fear of the other is hardly the exclusive domain of authoritarian regimes alone. Thus, by exposing and satirizing the normalization of suspicious approaches to the other embedded in a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion, Orwell's novel provides context for that which enables the Way of the Father to succeed both within and without authoritarian systems of power. Having effectively critiqued the problems arising from approaching the other through a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion, the scope of Orwell's satire expands, exposing the broader implications of a world where suspicion has metastasized into a more generalized and pervasive prescription for ostensibly protecting the subject from the threats posed by unknown others.

For example, in Oceania, paranoia is a disease that fuels not just the sadomasochist desire for "power entirely for its own sake," as hauntingly explained by O'Brien as he tortures Winston in Room 101, it is also a part of more widely disseminated state-prescribed approach to the other (Orwell 211). Paranoia is deployed in ways that enable the Party's control over the collective: via the mechanisms of prescriptive paranoia, to be paranoid is to evince a social virtue. Moreover, the citizens of Oceania remain vulnerable to being manipulated by the Party because the "Party

may channel all their pent-up energy into the hysterical quest for new victims, leading to the equally hysterical worship of their leader” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 72). In this way, the Father maintains control by fueling the fear that keeps subjects isolated from one another. In other words, prescriptive paranoia enables the Father to effectively “cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman” (Orwell 215). Without empathy for the other, the subject is far more susceptible to his machinations. Taken together then, Orwell’s satiric depiction of Father Freud’s approach to the other thus speaks directly to the three key characteristics which I have identified as being at the heart of the Way of the Father. Fuelled and enabled via the active dissemination of prescriptive paranoia, these three characteristics are fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia.

The first of these (i.e. fear of the other) is a rich vein to be mined. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s grim portrayal of Oceania illustrates, maintaining power over the collective is mainly dependent on the Father’s ability to induce subjects to follow His Way. In Oceania, He does so by subjecting citizens to constant surveillance, deprivation, and torture. That He can demand compliance from citizens is clear; even within the homes of private citizens, there is no sense of trust or connection, and so no reprieve. Acceptance of the conditions of life in Oceania is rooted in the citizens’ internalization of Big Brother’s prescriptions for paranoia against an ostensibly threatening other, manufactured through the state’s “illusion of perpetual war” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 56). Orwell’s novel highlights one of the most damaging consequences arising from the paranoid prescriptives of the patriarchal state. By giving in to the fear of the other, the citizens of Oceania become complicit in their own subjugation and exploitation by the Father. In so doing, as this satire makes clear, “All people of Oceania become instruments in the hands of

the Party, ready to denounce one another in order to assure their own survival” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 72). However, when a subject betrays the other, they seal their own fate as well because they betray that which makes them human, as Winston so tragically does in Room 101. Consequently, “there is a tragic irony in this process: as the victim’s last bond of personal loyalty is broken, he has become the agent of his own enslavement, and ultimately his own extinction” (Gottlieb “Room 101 Revisited” 72). Though the Father prescribes the fear of the other as an ostensible way to protect the self, it does anything but; to give in to the fear of the other, the novel demonstrates, is to invite death for both subject *and* other.

The first Way of the Father is, like the others, a tool for the dissemination of prescriptive paranoia. This is enabled via the active promotion by the patriarchal state. For example, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, fear of the other is prescribed as a mode of survival. To ensure that no one deviates from the Party line, the state cultures a system where subjects police other subjects. In Oceania, even children, as seen in the Parsons’ son and daughter who live next door to Winston, are trained to watch their parents “night and day for symptoms of unorthodoxy” (Orwell 23). From a young age, citizens are trained to follow the Way of the Father. In a collective where paranoia is the norm, being paranoid *does* protect the self – though this protection is fleeting at best. Subjects in such a society are not singled out because they are paranoid about the other. On the contrary, they are singled out when they cease to be so. So, for example, when Tom Parsons lets down his guard in his own home and is overheard uttering “Down with Big Brother” in his sleep, he is turned over to the Father by his own daughter (Orwell 187). Though Tom seems to recognize the need to resist the Way of the Father – at an unconscious level at least – when he is caught doing so, he expresses only relief, declaring that he is “glad they got me before it went

any further” (Orwell 187). That Tom is as complicit with the system as is his young daughter is evident when he tells Winston that “I don’t bear her any grudge for it. In fact I’m proud of her. It shows that I brought her up in the right spirit” (Orwell 188). However, the sad truth is that by raising his children to follow the Way of the Father, he has only enabled a system that ultimately leads to his own death in Room 101. This is the danger of training children to be paranoid about the other; once fired up, such fears are not easily extinguished.

What happens in the Parsons’ home is a microcosm of the dynamics occurring throughout Oceania as a whole. Paranoia is not a disease to be cured but a condition to be normalized, a mass-marketed prescription sold to ostensibly cure the ailments of subjects who live in fear of a nebulous and threatening other. This other is personified in the novel as either the Jewish Emmanuel Goldstein or the Eurasians and Eastasians. The Party’s ability to keep the fear of the other alive via prescriptive paranoia is seen throughout the text. For example, by reporting on a perpetual war between Oceania and a continually shifting opponent – Eurasia or Eastasia – the Party maintains a heightened sense of fear among its citizens. The fact that the reports of these wars are grossly exaggerated is irrelevant. As the novel demonstrates, in a world where the state maintains control through prescriptive paranoia, it is very difficult to approach the other from a place outside that of hatred and fear. Even Winston, who consciously recognizes that history is being manipulated to suit the needs of the Party, not only buys the Father’s “fake news,” but he also writes and produces it as an employee for the Ministry of Truth.

Perhaps even more disturbing is that Winston’s awareness of the manufactured nature of his fear of the other is not enough to extinguish it. For example, in one of the most alarming passages in the novel, the narrator introduces the Two Minutes Hate rituals. Winston’s vivid

description of these rituals showcases the infectious nature of prescriptive paranoia; when once a subject gives into the fear of the other, they lose the capacity for reason and resistance:

The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledgehammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. (Orwell 15)

Winston's intellectual attempts to challenge the frenzied collective hatred of a foreign other falter under the pressure of this hate-fest. Individual awareness of manipulation by the Party and Big Brother alone is not enough to resist being assimilated into collective paranoia.

This disturbing account of the Two Minutes Hate presents an insightful, if disturbing, examination of the epidemiology of prescriptive paranoia. Once introduced into a collective, it quickly metastasizes, infecting everyone to the point that they not only hate others they have never even met, but they also worship the very leaders who oppress them. So, when the Two Minutes Hate comes to its climax, and the crowd is shown the face of Big Brother, rather than responding by seeing Him as the oppressive force under which they all live, they chant "a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother" (Orwell 17). The frightening conclusion of this scene serves to highlight the efficacy of prescriptive paranoia as a means of collective control. Once infected with hatred and paranoia about the other, each Oceanian becomes a willing participant; even when these subjects are aware of the delusory nature of their fear, they choose to follow the first Way of the Father by engaging in "an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate

drowning of consciousness” (Orwell 17). Against the backdrop of historical events such as the Holocaust, this passage underscores the terrifying consequences which emerge when we give into the first Way of the Father.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to understand then that the first Way of the Father is all-consuming. When this prescription to fear the other is normalized, subjects facilitate that which leads to their own ruin. As Tom Parsons sadly discovers, once the fear of the other takes root in his children, it metastasizes to the point where feeling love for any other is no longer possible – not even when that other is a father, mother, child, or spouse. To follow the first Way of the Father is to succumb to an act of self-hypnosis so great that it leads subjects to hurt others indiscriminately. They do so under the false pretext that the Father’s prescriptions will guard against the ostensible threats posed by the other. However, the sad reality is that once a subject abandons their connection with the other, they abandon any possibility of saving them selves as well. So, when Winston abandons Julia in Room 101 because he believes that it will protect him, he soon learns that this belief is delusional: “By betraying Julia (mother), Winston has [only] avoided the unendurable fate of paternal” torture “temporarily” (Carpentier 193). For Winston, fear of the other offers no protection. On the contrary, it robs him of the very things that could have saved him, if not physically, then at least emotionally: his individual humanity and his capacity for love. It also ensures his complicity with the Way of the Father, for in the act of abandoning his lover, Winston effectively “evacuates himself in order to merge with the object of his fear” (Rosenfeld 354). In so doing, Winston comes to “accept... his condition, choosing identification” with the Father, “rather than the struggle for autonomy” (Rosenfeld 354). Having

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<sup>42</sup> Such consequences remain visible today under leaders such as Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, and Vladimir Putin.

given into the first Way of the Father, he loses everything that gives his life meaning and purpose.

This life purpose functions as “The central thesis of Orwell’s humanistic warning;” namely, once a subject betrays the other, they empower the Father even further (Gottlieb, “Room 101 Revisited” 59). Clearly, “the most dangerous threat facing us...is the inevitable loss of the individual inner world,” which occurs when we give into the first Way of the Father (Gottlieb, “Room 101 Revisited” 59). While Winston is identified earlier in the text as “the guardian of the human spirit,” when he betrays Julia, he is reduced to being another pawn for the Father (Orwell 217). Winston’s subsequent demise contains an important warning for readers: to succumb to the Father’s prescription to fear the other is to open the door to “the end of human beings as we know them” (Nussbaum 282). At the core of Orwell’s text then is “a warning against a system based on the mystical adoration of the ‘sacred’ leader and the fanatical hatred of the ‘satanic’ enemy” (Gottlieb, “Demonic” 59). It is important then to find a way to counter the first characteristic of the Way of the Father; to give in to the fear of the other needs to be seen for what it is – the Father’s project to ensure complicit conformity and emotional anesthesia via “the political overthrow of the human heart” (Nussbaum 282).

However, if the first Way of the Father is facilitated by fueling a fear of the other, the second Way of the Father is facilitated by fueling a fear of ourselves. Like the first, *complicit conformity* is also disseminated via prescriptive paranoia. Having internalized the edict that living in an “age of Big Brother” is to live in an “age of uniformity,” fear arises in response to the threat of being singled out as different (Orwell 26). In the face of punishment and death, to “make the act of submission” to the Father’s Way is “the price of sanity” and survival (Orwell

200). For example, in Oceania, being found guilty of deviations (known in the text as “Thoughtcrimes”) “does not [just] entail death: *thoughtcrime IS death*” (Orwell 26). Even those who are “filled...with horror” in response to their own complicit conformity try to “do what everyone else was doing, [because it] was an instinctive reaction” (Orwell 17). So, while there are consequences for doing so, Oceanians choose self-hypnosis because it enables them to “participate in the delusions propagated by the Party” (Anson 360). In the face of suffering – whether their own or that of others – to follow the Father’s prescription to “enter...into a state of controlled paranoia” is ostensibly the only way to ensure that they do not betray their own thoughts (Anson 360). To hide one’s horror in the face of tyranny seems a small price to pay in exchange for a sense of safety and security – however false and temporary this may be.

This is the second Way of the Father: the complicit conformity that each individual adopts within a patriarchal society. This mental posture requires the cultivation of advanced “doublethink,” both in the use and production of language. As members of modern societies, subjects are forced to enter a paradoxical Symbolic space where they not only pretend but actually see that all is well *and* that “TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE” (Orwell 223).<sup>43</sup> Those who cannot agree to use cognitive dissonance as a coping method are judged deviant, relegated to the margins of society. This second aspect to the Way of the Father requires a mental surrender of a subject’s meaning-making faculties. Complicit conformity requires that the individual otherize any subject who does not correspond to the dominant narratives of their society because not to do so would threaten the entire intellectual construct upon which patriarchal power rests.

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<sup>43</sup> One only needs to consider humanity’s ongoing lack of response to global warming for an example of modern complicity conformity facilitated via double-thinking.

However, the mental posture necessary to avoid expressing a subject's deviations proves to be difficult to maintain. It is one thing to know that uniformity is demanded by the Father, but quite another to adhere to such demands when confronted with the horrific consequences of doing so. While Syme, one of Winston's co-workers, argues that "there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrimes," Winston's experiences throughout the novel suggest otherwise (Orwell 45). For example, once he falls in love with Julia, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to submit to the demands of the Father – a thing which both he and the Father are well aware of. Though Winston tries to follow the second Way of the Father, as he comes to realize, "Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while...but sooner or later they were bound to get you" (Orwell 19).

In response, to ensure that the collective submits to the second Way of the Father, the Party employs several "methods of discursive manipulation" which work to "contribute to the forms of paranoia that are endemic to life in Oceania" (Ansom 360). Two of these methods, Newspeak and doublethink, support the Party's project of collective control via the "deconstruction and reconstruction of systems of meaning" (Anson 365). Whereas Newspeak can work to "narrow the range of thought" and remove any "reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime," doublethink can offer subjects "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them" (Orwell 45 and 172). Both tactics work in tandem with one another. For example, if Newspeak "is the means by which the real is made inaccessible," then doublethink is the means by which such inaccessibility is normalized (Rosenfeld 351). Taken together then, Newspeak and doublethink extinguish the possibility for subjects to deviate from the Way of the Father since they work to ensure the "collapse of a self

capable of opposing itself to the external reality” (Rosenfeld 350). Once the self loses the capacity for opposing the reality created by the word of the Father (i.e., Newspeak), the conditions are produced for their adherence to the second Way of the Father.

As the novel underscores, power is in the hands of those who control language. For example, by defining who is sane and who is insane, those in power can exploit, control, and manage the collective. In such a world, being a deviant is not only pathological but also criminal. Those defined as deviant commit “thoughtcrimes” and are perceived as threatening to the state or collective. To be deviant is to be a terrorist. In other words, as Lacan argues in *Seminar XI*, “desire is the desire of the Other” (38). It is not surprising that Winston’s torture/cure is only over once he submits to the desires of Father; as O’Brien instructs, Winston must “Only surrender, and everything else [will] follow” (Orwell 223). In Oceania, as in our world, the subject’s move into the Lacanian symbolic order is already a move towards such a surrender. Language enables the creation of a world that reflects the desires of the Father – a point that is well known to the Party. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* makes clear how our identities are shaped – for good and for ill, consciously and unconsciously, willingly and unwillingly – by the ostensibly “civilized” Big (Br) Other. To resist the gift of language offered by Big (Br)Other appears to be impossible since even the possibility of refusal is colonized. Consequently, to be initiated into the Other’s language means that “When finally you surrender,” you do so of “your own free will” (Orwell 205). While we may reason that Winston’s surrender to Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is simply a portrayal of an extreme case that does not apply to Western democratic societies, the reality is that all subjects are forced to accept the gift of language willingly. In this context, democracy is only another delusion (like “free” markets and the American/Canadian

Dream) that appears to be freely chosen and yet is used to exact compliance from the individual and, by extension, the collective.

Furthermore, not only are deviations from such “delusions” not tolerated, refusals to accept the “gift” of democracy and of language lead to the diagnosis that something must be righted with the individual (i.e., they must be cured of their refusal as Winston is in the ironically named Ministry of Love). Žižek agrees, arguing that

Belonging to a society involves a paradoxical point at which each of us is ordered to embrace freely, as the result of our choice, what is anyway imposed on us (we all *must* love our country, our parents, our religion). This paradox of willing (choosing freely) what is in any case compulsory, of pretending (maintaining the appearance) that there is a free choice although effectively there isn't one, is strictly co-dependent with the notion of an empty symbolic gesture. (*How to Read Lacan* 12-13)

In effect, once the subject has entered into the paradoxical space of the Father's Symbolic, “sanity” is measured by their ability to doublethink. Doublethink, like paranoia, ostensibly helps the subject to avoid behaviours that invert or deviate from societal norms. Ultimately, doublethink facilitates the ability to accept the paradox that language is a gift that must be willingly accepted, even while knowing that there is no option to refuse it in the first place. It helps subjects to mediate what Freud famously identified as the discontent of belonging to civilization.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> However, significantly, like the propaganda flicks that attempt to depict the mother's embrace as a futile act, the fact that the Party needs to “train” its citizens to doublethink highlights the resiliency of the human spirit to challenge the father's problematic “gift of language.”

Like paranoia, doublethink is a coping mechanism that ostensibly helps the subject to reconcile and rationalize the gaps between what they are *supposed* to know and what they *actually* know or *think* they know. Consequently, to view the world through the mechanism of doublethink is to view the world through an inherently paranoid lens. In this way, “double-think is almost a parody of the psychoanalytic ideal of normality” because it claims to offer the subject “the capacity to endure in the face of ambiguity” (Roazen 639). While adopting such a lens may distort reality, said distortions serve to “cure” the symptoms of dis-ease in the subject, though often only temporarily. In effect, the delusions which result from this “cure” become a protective border around the subject because they mediate the internal conflict between the id and superego, between pleasure and enforced reality, between the individual and the collective. But like the gift of language, this “cure” also carries with it a high price.

While ultimately corrected, delusions of individual refusal do serve an important purpose for the Party. These give them the ability “to define in a precise way the figure of the *sociopath*” (Žižek 13). In the terms of Big Brother, the sociopath is an individual who cannot maintain doublethoughts; in other words, one who cannot conform. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the sociopath is a subject who sees the other through a non-paranoid lens. In a significant reversal of Freudian theorizations of paranoia as pathological, Orwell demonstrates that madness has been redefined in our post-WWII world. Rather than encourage subjects to see that their visions of the world are delusional, the postmodern world encourages such paranoia, appropriating the discourses of fear and persecution to manipulate and control the collective. Consequently, any subject who can see through doublethink is diagnosed as pathological as well as defined as, in an ironic twist, delusional and anti-democratic.

In any event, Big Brother's response is that Winston must be re-trained to conform to the norms of the society he lives in. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to be deviant is to attempt to reject the paranoid lens: sanity is defined by the ability to doublethink or blind oneself from reality, leading to complacency. In Orwell's case, doublethinking is symptomatic of a pathology of collective delusions. In a world where "Sanity was statistical" and where sanity was "merely a question of learning to think as they [the Party] thought," pathology is not defined by how delusional the subject is; it is defined by how *different* the subject is from the norm (Orwell 223). Thus, O'Brien characterizes Winston as one who "preferred to be a lunatic" because he preferred to be "a minority of one" (Orwell 200). To be different is to be sociopathic; to be delusional is to be sane.

Orwell's novel depicts the horrific consequences of a society that chooses to repress anyone that it defines as different. It also highlights the arrogance of the Father figure who works to "cure" the deviant, regardless of the high cost faced by that individual. As aforementioned, Winston's belief about free choice and his failed attempts to refuse Big Brother is effectively reduced to delusional notions that must be made right. While O'Brien's claim is that the Father's therapy is able "To cure you! To make you sane," such "conversion" therapy, as O'Brien chillingly calls it, exists to wipe out any sense that the individual has of them self (Orwell 208). Subjects claiming to see the gaps between internal truth and external truth are not to be trusted: their (in)sight is perverse, and their ideas suspect. O'Brien points out to Winston that his insanity is due to his "belie[f] that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right" (200). But because the Way of the Father demands conformity and submission via absolute control, it precludes such a thing. For example, when Winston challenges the possibility that Big

Brother controls reality, O'Brien responds by telling him that "We control matter because we control the mind... There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation – anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wish to" (Orwell 213). Put another way, reality is always malleable to the demands of the present Father, as recently observed in the aftermath of the 2020 American election with Trump accusing the Democrats of stealing the election.

For O'Brien, what Winston fails to recognize is that his deviant insight is problematic: "When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you do. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists...not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes...[but] only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be truth, *is* truth" (Orwell 200). As such, Winston is only deemed cured when he finally accepts that "It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party" (Orwell 200). To avoid being labelled as mad in this tyrannical world requires "an act of self-destruction" (Orwell 200). Once Winston adopts the second Way of the Father, he regulates and condemns his own behaviour, policing his own deviations on behalf of the Other. Winston's "cure" leads to a dark conclusion; to accept the reality of the Father, is to conform to His vision so completely that all ties with others are destroyed.

Still, in contrast to others in the novel (like the Parson's children), for most of the novel, Winston courageously refuses to betray those he loves – even as he is horrifically tortured. However, by the end of the novel, he is finally "convinced" that loving the other is a deviation that he must correct if he is to survive. The chilling conclusion that he comes to is that "There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being, the body of

another human being between himself and the rats” (Orwell 230). Having done so, Winston finally accepts the Father’s demands for his complicit conformity; as he accepts the call to follow the prescriptive paranoia of the Father, he opens the door to adopting the third Way of the Father: emotional anesthesia.

In this third Way, “emotional anesthesia” underpins the complacency of subjects in the face of an other’s suffering. Having been implicated into the symbolic order of the Father, the subject sacrifices the capacity for love and empathy because “When we are forced to obey uncritically a repressive system of signs that makes up a symbolic order, we lose our affective contact with the world” (Conley 79). This loss of our affective contact with the world is, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, one that enables the Way of the Father to endure, even as it ensures our own destruction as well.

This is clearly depicted in the novel when Winston finally submits to the symbolic order of the Father in Room 101; he is no longer able to feel anything for Julia or his mother. This untethering between subject and other is at the heart of the third Way of the Father. Subjects who lack empathy for the other are isolated by their own emotional anesthesia, leaving them vulnerable to the prescriptive paranoia of the Father. The portrayal of Big Brother’s project to “systematically uproot...local attachments” between subject and other underpins one of the most significant warnings contained in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Nussbaum 285). In the absence of love for the other, what awaits individuals is the desolate wasteland that Orwell imagines in this text. To avoid the fate facing the citizens of Oceania, readers must instead consider “Orwell’s claim that the emotions of the family lie at the heart of our moral humanity” (Nussbaum 285). Without

said emotional connections between subject and other, any possibilities for reconciliation, resistance, and redemption are lost as well.

Consider that before Winston falls in love with Julia, he struggles to elicit any feelings of love or compassion for others. Even as Winston struggles against the oppressive regime he lives under at the beginning of the text, he simultaneously participates and enables the Way of the Father, demonstrating that it is “the father whose law Winston embraces” (Rosenfeld 354). Yet, as long as he “commit[s] himself to the patriarchal deathstate,” Winston is incapable of feeling love or compassion – even though such feelings offer the potential to restore his well-being, as we see later in the novel (Carpentier 193).

So long as he inhabits such a state of emotional anesthesia, he will not have the ability to resist the Father. Instead, Winston remains complacent with the horrendous suffering occurring around him. For example, in Part 1 of the text, Winston is walking in the street when a bomb explodes. As he rises from the ground, he sees “a human hand severed at the wrist” (Orwell 71). Rather than reacting with empathy at this loss of human life, he responds by dehumanizing the other, “kick[ing] the thing into the gutter” (Orwell 71). While he knows that one of the most important ways to resist the Party is to reject its culture of paranoia and emotional anesthesia, Part I of the novel demonstrates that Winston has internalized many of the principles that he tries to resist on an intellectual level. Though he is not unaware of his double-thinking (as seen during the Two Minutes Hate), he manifests many of the pathological traits that the Party prescribes – that is, until he falls in love with Julia.

Love is one of the greatest threats to all three aspects of the Way of the Father. For this reason, the Party displays its most brutal acts of violence in the ironically named Ministry of

Love. As long as Winston loves an other, he performs a deviation that will not be tolerated. Winston's love of an other counters the "political project" of the Father, which is focused on "extinguishing compassion and complex forms of personal love and mourning that are its sources...replacing them with simple depersonalized forms of hatred, aggression, triumph and fear" (Nussbaum 281). The sole purpose of the "treatment" in Room 101 is to ensure that the subject stops loving the other; the subject is only cured once they inhabit a state of emotional anesthesia. Consequently, as long as Winston continues to love Julia, he is, according to O'Brien, "a flaw in the pattern...a stain that must be wiped out" (Orwell 205).

So, the Party extinguishes any possibilities for connections between subjects and others. For the Father, "Nothing will do but an us-them view of the world, where the goal is to assail anyone who threatens [His] 'preeminence'" (Nussbaum 281). Once Winston allows the Father to sever his connection with Julia, disastrous consequences follow; Winston's so-called cure leads to his eventual physical death and the death of his humanity. Of course, this is precisely what Big Brother desires. As O'Brien tells Winston, "you are the last man. Your kind is extinct...Do you understand that you are *alone*? You are outside history" (Orwell 217).<sup>45</sup> O'Brien's so-called cure is a part of the Party's larger project to annihilate any vestige of the human that may be left because, in so doing, they can extinguish any potential for resistance.

Maintaining control by keeping subjects divided from one another is very effective, as it turns out, underscoring why it is that "The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one"

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<sup>45</sup> While some of Orwell's critics have lobbied critiques against the grim and extreme brutality of the third book of the novel, and especially the extended torture scenes, what they fail to recognize is that it is precisely the hyperbolic description of this book wherein one of the main points of the novel lies. I agree with these critics that the third book of the novel is extreme and absurd; however, I would argue that this absurdity is precisely what assaults us as readers and what facilitates our understanding of both the vulnerability of our humanity under the Way of the Father as well as the redemptive potential that lies therein.

(Orwell 7). In a building with no “windows” or light, human subjects are ultimately emptied of any sense of compassion, empathy, or love for an other (Orwell 7). Here, the Father converts subjects into obedient zombies, ready to promote and enact the Party’s project of hatred and fear towards the other. Winston’s treatment is ultimately deemed a success; he emerges from the Ministry of Love struggling to elicit feelings of love or empathy for anyone, including Julia and his mother. Winston is no longer deviant, but he is no longer human either; he has accepted the Father’s prescriptive paranoia, which directs us “not to see the complexities within a nation...not to have emotions acknowledging the presence of poverty, misery, and injustice in distant nations, or our own possible complicity in the genesis of those problems” (Nussbaum 281). In so doing, Orwell’s parody of the Way of the Father leaves readers with a bleak sense of what happens when the Father’s prescriptions are accepted; to allow the erasure of a subject’s humanity, is to be remade in the Father’s image – cold, calculating, and compliant.

Ultimately then, while the Way of the Father offers the subject a (false) sense of protection, submitting to this way is to destroy everything worth living for. Once Winston betrays the other and accepts the Way of the Father, he is but a shadow of his former self; his “abandonment of Julia in Room 101, indict[es] his complicity with patriarchy” (Carpentier 188). The main consequence of this complicity is that Winston participates in his own dehumanization by the Father; by sacrificing his love for the other, he also gives up the “gesture of compassionate protection...to which his humanity is anchored” (Nussbaum 282). The Father’s project is to separate subject from other. Winston’s inability to remain anchored to his humanity results from the fact that Winston “lives in a dystopia of signs that control consciousness through ideology, to the point where the patriarchal Symbolic...divid[es] child from mother” (Carpentier

183). And, in the process of dividing child from parent, subject from other, “Something was killed in your breast: burnt out, cauterized out” (Orwell 234). Despite Winston’s understanding that “the object was not to stay alive but to stay human,” he ultimately submits to the Way of the Father even as this choice “threatens complete annihilation of the ego” (Orwell 137 and Carpentier 183). Consequently, in betraying Julia, Winston betrays himself and everything he has fought for throughout the novel. In an ending that carries a terrifying warning, Winston becomes another instrument for supporting the Father’s project to maintain complete control.

How, then, does the subject challenge the groupthink of the Father? In exploring the disastrous consequences that befall the subject who succumbs to the Way of the Father, Orwell's final novel also imagines possibilities for bringing the Father down. From Orwell’s perspective, the writer's role is to challenge readers to see beyond prescribed orthodoxies. While a great admirer of many of the Modernist writers of his time, Orwell argued that many of their works were too preoccupied with aesthetic and technical forms of writing rather than confronting the disturbing events happening in the world. He notes that the intellectuals of his time were suffering from groupthink — a considerable problem that Orwell identifies as responsible for much of the insanity in the world. That “Orwell was contemptuous of [these] intellectuals” is evident not only in his works of fiction but also in his works of non-fiction (Posner 18). For example, in his essay, “Inside the Whale,” Orwell laments that in the works of writers such as Joyce, Pound and Eliot, “There is no attention to the problems of the moment...Our eyes are directed...to everywhere except the places where things are actually happening” (“orwellfoundation.com”). For Orwell, responsible intellectuals need to bear witness to events occurring in the moment. Through their works, they can elicit the very responses that work to

counter the fear, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia at the heart of the Way of the Father.

Orwell's text, like those written by E.L. Doctorow and Dionne Brand, challenges readers to confront the horrors occurring in the world as well as to be held accountable for them. Having depicted the consequences of a subject's entrance into the Father's symbolic, the novel confronts readers with another option. Though such a confrontation is a difficult one, "if language is to be recovered" from the Father, "it will be via individual truths that address the collective reality" (Rosenfeld 345). Though grim, the downfall of Orwell's protagonist carries with it an important call: the Way of the Father must be challenged, especially when it normalizes the prescriptive paranoia responsible for severing subjects from one another. Through his depiction of Winston's experiences, "Orwell's fierce defense of the individual" is effectively underscored (Rosenfeld 345). Even though Winston ultimately fails, for most of the text, he is the minority of one who, at great risk to himself and in defiance of the Father, seeks out individual "truths [which] must necessarily be lonely truths, derived from singular perceptions, if they are to be valid" (Rosenfeld 345). Though Winston's final defeat at the hands of Big Brother is disquieting, it is a necessary part of the warning: "In interrogating this vision of Orwell's [sense of] humanity, we interrogate our own...And, in the world we live in now, that confrontation remains vitally necessary" (Utell 203). Rather than read Winston's ending as a reflection of the inevitability of humans to succumb to the prescriptions of the Father, it would be far more productive to view Winston's story as a whole. From this perspective, Winston's ending contains one of the most important "lessons learned from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" because it "forms a necessary counterpoint" (Utell 203). In so doing, readers can imagine alternatives to the Way of the Father

which contain within them “the possibility of a more human and hopeful understanding” of one another (Utell 203).

So, while *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is dark because “Orwell shows us a world without humanity, a world where human feeling has died,” the text is also a vehicle through which we, as readers, can access that which counters the death of human feeling; namely, the embrace of the (M)other (Utell 202). As readers direct their eyes to the tragic fate of his protagonist, Orwell’s final novel highlights, in a hopeful gesture, how “human feeling can be accessed throughout literature and then brought into the public sphere” (Utell 202). Though Orwell’s novel “serve[s] as a warning for what might happen without that human feeling,” it is also a hopeful testament to the possibilities open to those brave enough to love the other in the face of the Father (Utell 202). Readers can look past the end of Winston’s demise to the often overlooked Appendix to see evidence of said hope. Here, Orwell imagines a world after the fall of the Father where Big Brother’s “regime is a thing of the past” (Sicher and Skradol 168). In so doing, Orwell’s text gestures to possibilities beyond the Way of the Father.

So, as we emerge from reading this text, “we can now speak of what went wrong” (Sicher and Skradol 168). In Oceania’s case, rather than speaking of what went wrong, too many of its citizens are complicit with the Party’s attempts to extinguish possibilities for resistance. Indeed, not only are the citizens of Oceania passive and accepting of the Party’s paranoid prescriptions, many of them actively work to support Big Brother’s use of various mechanisms of control over them. Newspeak works to interpolate Party members into its delusional, pathological, and paranoid worldview, negating an individual’s ability to maintain a sense of their own humanity – whether this be from a subject’s inability to overcome their fear of the

other, remember their past or imagine a more hopeful future. To put this another way, “Newspeak performs a paranoiac rejection of old systems of meaning at the level of language” (Anson 366). As a result, it destabilizes a subject’s sense of identity and renders all knowledge provisional because “if one can control language/reality, one can control individual thought” (Carr 99). This novel argues that subjects are too often complicit with their own subjugation in patriarchal systems (economic, institutional, governmental, etc.) built on exploitation, hurting themselves and others who they are told to fear. In so doing, such subjects support the Way of the Father – a way that leaves too many feeling hopeless about the future.

In response, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* works to counter the complicit interpolation into patriarchal systems. Taken from this perspective, “Orwell’s paranoid poetics act as an effort to mediate between competing literary discourses and their attendant models of subjectivity” (Rosenfeld 337). Such models of subjectivity have been shaped by a Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion and its offshoot, prescriptive paranoia. The Way of the Father adds to their malignancy and leads to unethical and destructive subject-other relations, as seen with Winston and Julia. Through his satiric novel, and more specifically, his parody of Freudian therapy, Orwell exposes the dire consequences that result from the prescriptives disseminated through the repressive and prescriptive Fathers who run the world. In so doing, Orwell’s novel contains an important warning; specifically, as his book highlights, “The individual subject...is dangerously tied up in signifying systems that threaten to overwhelm agency” (Rosenfeld 345). In response, through its use of satire, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* functions as a model of resistance for the reader. In other words, it is “a form of counternarrative to hegemonic discourse. In its extrapolation of the present, it has the potential to envision different worlds that can work as a purely

imaginative...critical exploration of our society” (Baccolini 519). Different possibilities emerge out of such critical explorations; there are more life-affirming paths open to those who refuse to follow the *Way of the Father*.

Then, what remains for individuals is to counter this so-called Way of the Father with a different subjectivity, a way that does not prescribe paranoia as the only lens through which to view the other. Instead, the other must be approached through a lens of empathy and compassion: to see and embrace (as the mother figures do throughout the novel) the other in love. Significantly then, a deep reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides glimmers of another possibility, the Path of the (M)other. While a “Way” of doing things suggests domination, a “Path” invites travel and infers a destination. Once on this path, multiple possibilities arise that, even if not entirely successful, yield value in the journey itself, opening small spaces of resistance even in the darkest moments of the text.

For example, recall the Two Minutes Hate ritual. Even as the individuals around him drown their consciousness during the daily Two Minutes Hate rituals, Winston is “filled with horror” (Orwell 17). Thus, while he “chanted with the rest,” “as an instinctive reaction” linked to self-survival, “there was a space of a couple of seconds during which the expression in his eyes” demonstrates his disgust of what he is witnessing (Orwell 17). While this small space may not seem like very much at this bleak moment in the text, it is essential to remember that Winston’s flashback happens while he is in the act of writing a journal which, in a meta-textual way, is one of the most important spaces of resistance offered in the text. Thus, while the description of mass delusion during the Two Minutes Hate is disturbing, Winston remains aware of the need to challenge the patriarchal cult of the Father. Indeed, when Winston returns to the present moment

after his flashback, he notes that what he had been writing while remembering the Two Minutes Hate was one phrase over and over again: “DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER” (Orwell 18). This space of resistance, symbolized through Winston’s journal entries, is, I argue, one of the most significant challenges to the Father located in Orwell’s novel; by seeing the inhumanity of the Way of the Father, Winston opens the door to a path that will take him away from the hate rituals of the Father towards his greatest act of defiance, his love for Julia.

While he will eventually submit to the demands of the Father, in the moments that he and Julia are a couple, Winston’s love exists as a rejection of the prescriptive paranoia of the Father. Though, at first, Winston views Julia through a lens of suspicion, even going so far as to think that “she might be an agent of the Thought Police,” once he lets go of his “fear” of her, he opens the door to what will be the one thing that will support his project to remain human and bring Big Brother down (Orwell 12). That love is a threat to the Way of the Father is clear. Winston is taken in by the Party because he ceases to follow the prescription to suspect the other; he has enacted a radical act of defiance against the Father by embracing the other to himself – an act that shows how Winston has taken some steps to walk the Path of the (M)other. That his relationship with Julia is perceived as a threat against the Party is clear not only in the fact that the Party spends time and resources surveilling their relationship but also in the fact that O’Brien does not consider his conversion therapy of Winston complete until Winston betrays her. For example, when O’Brien asks Winston, “Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you?,” Winston responds that “I have not betrayed Julia” (Orwell 220). Though Winston has been tortured by the Party, at this moment in the text, he recognizes that “He had never stopped loving her” (Orwell 220). This love for Julia still links him to his own humanity; it

is also what allows his continued resistance against the dehumanizing prescriptives administered in the Ministry of Love. From the Father's perspective, the problem with Winston's love for Julia is that such emotions are generative, leading Winston to feel compassion for all others.

Such compassion for others is marked as an enormous threat to the Party. Hence, though the Party knows about Winston and Julia's relationship, it is not until Winston shows that his compassion for others goes beyond his love of Julia that the Party decides to take him to the Ministry of Love. Love between Winston and Julia is a threat because it opens up possibilities for loving subject-other relations, outside the prescriptive paranoia of the Father. Therefore, the Party finally moves in to take Winston and Julia away when Winston's response to a Prole woman (who he sees outside the window of the love nest that he and Julia share) is not disgust or apathy but rather a "mystical reverence" (Orwell 176). His reverence for the Prole woman leads to the realization that resistance lies in the connections between subject and other; in so realizing this, Winston now poses a significant threat to the Way of the Father. For as soon as Winston realizes that he and "millions of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence, [were being] held apart by walls of hatred and lies," the Thought Police finally come to take him and Julia away (Orwell 177). It is essential to remember that what threatens the Way of the Father is within reach of everyone. Loving the other is the "power that would one day overturn the world" (Orwell 177). Such a power underscores one of "Orwell's goals" throughout so many of his written works; namely, to elicit the reader's "Empathy" because it is here that resistance lies against the Way of the Father (Roazen 684).

As a result, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers a prescient warning about the dire consequences which result from following the Way of the Father—His ways promote an ongoing paranoid

approach to others and produces the kind of complacency that threatens to push humanity ever closer to extinction. From this perspective, Orwell's novel offers a significant intervention, opening imaginative possibilities for subject-other relations. Protecting our humanity, as Orwell's novel makes clear, is essential should we wish to avoid the grim fate that awaits his protagonist. For Orwell, in the face of war and tragedy, "there was nothing that a thinking and sensitive person could do, except to remain human, if possible" (Orwell "Inside the Whale"). Remaining human is imagined as the most important site of resistance for Orwell's protagonist against the dehumanizing prescriptives which isolate him from others and ultimately render him defenceless against the crushing embrace of the Father in Part Three of the text. Indeed, "To remain human, to not be dehumanized, to not succumb to the tyranny of the state, is the primary motivation of Winston" (Tyner 134). Only in remaining human can he overcome the prescriptions to fear and hate the other.

But, to retain humanity, requires that subjects choose to embrace rather than betray the other. *And*, to do so, the novel argues, subjects must protect "the inner humanity" wherein they cultivate a space of love for the other. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such a space is "most fully embodied in [the] mother" figure, whether that mother is Winston's mother or other mother figures in the text such as the Prole woman or Julia (Hester 256). Through Orwell's repeated depictions of the mother's love for an other, he imagines a powerful alternative to the Way of the Father. This alternative, the Path of the (M)other, is characterized by a linguistic, literal, and figurative embrace of the other. Within the arms of the (M)other lies an alternative to the desolate spaces administered by the Father.

By depicting the horrific consequences which arise in her absence, Orwell's novel warns readers against becoming complicit to her erasure and extermination; to exterminate the (M)other is to exterminate the better parts of humanity. Indeed, "Hope...and values like loyalty, fairness, and love survive...as legacies of women like Winston's mother" (Hester 257). By looking to the examples set by the women in the text, an understanding emerges of how to cultivate the three principles underpinning the Path of the (M)other: ownlife, empathic connection, and loving the other. By walking this Path, a space of connection opens between subjects and others, offering the possibility of resisting the destruction that emerges in the wake of the Way of the Father.

The first characteristic begins with an act of resistance, with a subject's cultivation of their inner humanity, or in the terms of the novel, ownlife. To cultivate ownlife is to create a private space that resists the colonization of the Father; it is a space that represents "a negation of Oceania's political ideal[s]" (Grossman 55). While the Way of the Father demands that the individual negate their identity in favour of one constructed by the Party, the Path of the (M)other invites its adherents to follow it to a place of true subjectivity. On this Path, "resistance was not to 'acquire' power, but instead to retain a semblance of humanity, of individuality" (Tyner 142). Ownlife, then, is a space inhabited by an empowered and connected, not isolated, minority of one; a space that withstands the pressures of the Father to give into his Way. And, the figure who best inhabits this space in the text is the (M)other; it is she to whom Orwell "assigns [a] crucial role...in maintaining what he clearly regards as essential to human dignity" (Hester 257). Even as Oceania lives under the tyranny of the Father, it is the (M)other figures, symbolized through Julia, "The prole woman and Winston's mother [who] carry...important

thematic weight” (Hester 257). And it is they who “represent...the unconquerable vitality of life and the private loyalties that make life significant” (Hester 257).

For example, Winston’s mother is depicted as a powerful woman with an established sense of her ownlife. Even though she, like all Oceanians, lives with the pressure to conform to the Way of the Father, she refuses: “the standards that she obeyed were private ones. Her feelings were her own, and could not be altered from outside” (Orwell 135). Despite the Party’s attempts “to persuade [citizens] that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account,” his mother does not submit to his Way (Orwell 135). As she knows, allowing the Father to penetrate your ownlife to negate feelings of love and loyalty is to allow him “rob...you of all power” (Orwell 135). Because her inner humanity remains outside of His reach, she becomes a model of resistance in a desolate world. Like the other (M)otherly figures in the text, Winston’s mother manifests the power granted to those who are “governed by private loyalties” (Orwell 135). By disallowing the Father’s attempts to colonize her inner humanity, Winston’s mother symbolizes the possibilities for those who maintain their ownlife. Significantly, ownlife is a state that disallows the fear of the other and emotional anesthesia by its very definition. Those who maintain it defy the complicit conformity prescribed by the state.

Along with finding independent meaning from establishing a sense of one’s ownlife, a second aspect of the Path of the (M)other is also characterized by building connections between subjects and others based on empathy and compassion. Under the Way of the Father, this second principle at the heart of the Path of the (M)other (empathic connection) is strictly policed and prohibited because it threatens to unravel the hold of the Father over the collective. Such a connection between a subject and other destabilizes the very principles of fear and suspicion

upon which the Way of the Father is built. Because an empathic connection between subject and other is a life-affirming space, it acts as a powerful force against the deathstate of the Father.

By approaching the other through the lens of empathy, the connection which emerges between subject and other works to counteract the destructive effects of fear and suspicion. For example, in contrast to the terms which define the Way of the Father outlined throughout Part One of the novel, “Another set of terms emerges in Part Two as Winston discovers the supreme importance of...human love and loyalty” (Lonoff 36). For example, at one point in the second part of the novel, Winston is depicted as walking down a corridor at the Ministry of Truth, where he works. He notices Julia walking towards him with her arm in a sling. When she trips and falls on her injured arm, his reaction marks a significant shift from his earlier state of emotional anesthesia. Rather than viewing Julia’s injured arm like a thing, as he does the severed arm earlier in the text, here Winston experiences “A curious emotion stir[ing] in [his] heart” (Orwell 87). That he deviates from the Father’s requisite state of emotional anesthesia is especially significant because, at this point, he still views Julia as an other, “an enemy who was trying to kill him” (Orwell 87). Yet, despite his internalization of the first Way of the Father here, Winston simultaneously recognizes what he does not in Part I of the text, that rather than a thing, what was “in front of him...was a human creature” (Orwell 87). His reaction to “instinctively...help her” rather than kick her to the gutter, so to speak, highlights the possibility for empathy and compassion towards the other, even when under the spell of prescriptive paranoia (Orwell 87).

Winston’s decision to care for the broken arm of the (M)other in this first encounter with Julia is highly symbolic. On some level, at least, his gesture of caring towards Julia serves to

foreshadow what the main theme of Part II of the novel will be; to walk the Path of the (M)other is to open doors to a life-affirming space not possible under the Way of the Father. Before his love affair, Winston is consistently described as mentally, emotionally, and physically unwell; there is little that is life-affirming in Winston's daily experiences. For example, the text opens with Winston's inability to climb the stairs to his apartment without needing to "rest several times on the way" (Orwell 5). In addition, upon waking, "he...double[s] up by a violent coughing fit which nearly always attacked him soon after waking up. It emptied his lungs so completely that he could only begin breathing again by lying on his back and taking a series of deep gasps" (Orwell 29). Significantly, Winston's gasps for air underscore not only that he is physically "frail," but also that he is emotionally and mentally frail as well; it highlights the suffocation of subjects who are isolated under the Way of the Father (Orwell 5).

In contrast, by building an empathetic connection with Julia, he embraces the "female side of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" (Lonoff 36). In so doing, he discovers a space where he can breathe, a space that counters the dis-ease of living under the Way of the Father. For example, as his connection with Julia deepens, Winston's physical health is restored: "He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped" (Orwell 123). Additionally, his healing does not stop with his body. No longer isolated by the Way of the Father, "The process of life had ceased to be intolerable, he had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice" (Orwell 123). Once he commits to establishing an empathetic connection with another, Winston's sense of purpose and agency is restored as is his *joie de vivre*.

Since “Winston evades domination by a patriarchal State...through reviving this maternal connection... with Julia,” it becomes evident just how powerful the second principle of the Path of the (M)other truly is (Carpentier 183). Even in the darkest shadows of the Father’s world, there remains the embrace of the (M)other: it is “A gesture that haunts the novel...a gesture of the arm: a mother encircles her children” (Nussbaum 286). This gesture of love characterizes the empathic connection between subject and other on the Path of the (M)other. Though an embrace of the other cannot ultimately prevent the other from dying at the hands of the Father, it remains an important symbol of resistance in the text. Within the embrace of the M(other), what matters most—our humanity—is protected because “the maternal gesture [is] a gesture of compassion” (Nussbaum 282). Within her arms, a subject can find a space of healing for body and mind as Winston does in Part Two of the novel.

However, this space of healing is only possible should the novel’s call to stand up against the Father’s erasure of the (M)other be heeded. Nor surprisingly, this signals the third and final counter to the threefold Way of the Father: the act of loving the other. The very opposite of “emotional anesthesia,” this call to action comes very early on in the text in Winston’s first journal entry where he describes the citizens’ response to the propaganda films—films which depict the savage extermination, by the state, of defenceless men, women, and children. That the films are effective as a mechanism of control is clear in the audience’s response to them. Though Winston’s graphic descriptions of the state’s brutality seen in the films are horrifying, “*the audience shout[s] with laughter*” as people are dying (Orwell 10). By highlighting the audience’s complicity, Orwell’s novel establishes the call to action that is at the heart of this novel. Rather than offering “*applause*” to the brutal images of the extermination of innocent others (tellingly

identified as “*refugees*”) as most of the citizens in the theatre do, the novel asks readers to stand up to the Father (Orwell 10). And it does so by establishing an alternative to the Way of the Father in its depiction of the acts of several brave women throughout the novel. Secure in their own life, these women embrace the other even in the face of certain death. Significantly, though the Father tries to stop them, He is ultimately powerless to prevent their acts of love for the other.

These acts are introduced early in the novel as Winston writes in his journal about the state's propaganda films. These films are aimed at desensitizing the audience and encouraging feelings of hatred towards others. They also serve another dark purpose: they attempt to negate the power of (M)otherly love. For example, as Winston describes his experience of attending one such film, the actions taken by two important (M)otherly figures are highlighted. The first such figure is portrayed as a character in the film. Held at gunpoint by the state police, she thinks only of her son, “*putting her arms around him...although she was blue with fright herself*” (Orwell 11). In stark contrast to most of the audience members in the theatre (and to Winston's betrayal of Julia later in the novel), this (M)other refuses to give in to her fear: her final act is to show love for her son. Though she and her son are brutally exterminated in the film, her embrace of the child remains a site of resistance, a powerful image that stays with Winston, and with the reader, despite the Father's attempts to destroy it.

The second remarkable figure described by Winston in this journal entry is a woman in the audience at the theatre. Unlike those around her who passively accept the depiction of innocent lives being extinguished by the Father, even applauding at times, she acts in protest. Refusing to be paralyzed by fear, though she is an outsider like the Jewish mother in the film (she is a Prole), she stands up, “*shouting [that] they didnt oughter of showed it not in front of the*

*kids*” (Orwell 11). Like the (M)other in the film, she chooses to act, showing love for the other even as she is threatened by the same brutal regime. In so doing, both women model the final principle of the Path of the M(other). They, like “Orwell,” see “love as capable of releasing one’s best self” because by loving the other, one opposes the Father’s attempts to dehumanize and destroy (Roazen 689). The human capacity to act in love towards the other is one of the most powerful points of resistance to the Way of the Father. And, what happens in Room 101 (the absolute heart of the Way of the Father) symbolizes the devastating consequences that arise once a subject stops loving the other. Through his novel then, “Orwell warn[s] that once *we* accept such a process” of fearing and hating the other, “it could become world-wide and irreversible” (Gottlieb 12). As long as we are “being deprived of...intimate relationships, we may be deprived of the core of our being” (Gottlieb 12). So, in the end, “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not just about lies and totalitarian projects of domination. It is about the end of human beings as we know them, the political overthrow of the human heart” (Nussbaum 282). But, as I indicate here, there is an alternative; as the (M)otherly figures demonstrate throughout the novel, it is possible to protect the human heart from the destructive Father.

With this three-fold framework in mind, consider one of the most important symbols that repeatedly appears throughout the novel: the (M)other’s arms encircling and protecting her child. At the site of this loving embrace lies one of Orwell’s main themes: to move outside of the ministry of Big Brother, subjects must learn how to harness the love of the (M)other – a force in this text that is represented not only through portrayal of the mothers in the flicks that Winston describes at the opening but also in the many dreams and memories that he has of his own mother. In imagining the desolation of a world that attempts to extinguish the love of the

(M)other, “we see what becomes of human connections;” “Lacking the intense emotions of the family,” subjects “never learn to regard anything in the world with wonder or profound love” (Nussbaum 285-286). That the love of the (M)other is central to life is not only located in her reproductive role then but also in her ability to model that which can overturn the Way of the Father.

So, even though all the (M)other figures in the text are killed, along with their children, the value contained within their acts of loving the other remain. As we see in Part Two, in Oceania, it is the only source of life, health, and happiness to be had. Without the love of the (M)other, all that is left is misery. Winston and Julia may evade death in Room 101 by betraying their loved ones, but they do so only on a physical level. Winston’s final days are bereft of health, happiness, and love. For much of the text, the reader sympathizes with Winston as he struggles against the paranoia and lies of the Party. Each time he resists the “party” line, the reader roots for him. It is perhaps the latter point that makes his ultimate surrender so devastating. But, even within the desolate landscape of Oceania, Winston’s and Julia’s love has value: it highlights how much loving the other makes life meaningful. Once they betray their love, they pay terrible consequences for giving in to the Father’s prescriptive paranoia. Irrevocably cut off from one another, Winston and Julia have lost their capacity to feel anything at all.

By betraying his lover, Winston seals his own fate, a fact that he recognizes when he concludes that it is “your own acts, from which you could not recover” (Orwell 234). Winston’s realization demonstrates one of the main themes of the novel as a whole: giving into a discourse of fear about the other leads to death on spiritual, intellectual, and emotional levels. Being

connected to one another is necessary for emotional, mental, and physical health.<sup>46</sup> So, from one perspective, the real Winston dies in the Ministry of Love; the man seen at the end is but a caricature of Winston. As O'Brien warns him, Winston is nothing more than a shell that has been scooped out and filled with Big Brother. In the end, "By betraying Julia (mother)," all that is left for "Winston...[is] living an alcoholic death-in-life" (Carpentier 193). The final message is clear: embrace the Father, and he will hollow you out and leave you wishing for death; embrace the love of the (M)other, and you will still die (nothing can stop that for any of us anyway), but until that time comes, you will be whole, human, and alive.

Winston's resignation to Big Brother highlights what happens when the minority of one is unpersoned. Not only is Winston assimilated into the whole by the end of his narrative, but he also loses his ability to see outside of state prescriptions. Thus, while *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ends with an embrace of the Big Br(Other), as Orwell chillingly demonstrates when the embrace of the Other requires the erasure of a subject's ownlife, the result is the figurative and literal death of that which makes them human. As the novel notes, Winston's body will soon follow his deadened emotional state: it is only a matter of time before "the long-hoped-for bullet was entering his brain" (239). In other words, the embrace of the Father is not a site of healing but instead of paranoia and death, interpellation, and assimilation.

So, by the end of the text, Big (Br)other has succeeded in penetrating Winston's ownlife. No trace of his former (own) life remains. His mind is scrambled because of the torture he experiences within the Ministry of Love, he is continuously stupefied by victory gin and his journal is incinerated in the memory holes of Big Brother. Having betrayed his lover, Winston is

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<sup>46</sup> As the coronavirus pandemic has made abundantly clear.

barely a shadow of his former self. As he sits in the Chestnut Tree Café, waiting to be executed, he is not even able to hold the memory of his mother and sister in his awareness for more than a few brief seconds –though this is a memory that even at this point he significantly describes as “a moment of reconciliation” (Orwell 237). Evacuated of his ability to feel and of his ability to love, Winston succumbs to the prescriptive paranoia of everyone around him, relinquishing the only power he ever had as a minority of one and repressing his rebellious nature by dulling his awareness of his own unpersoning with alcohol. Consequently, he finally fulfils the earlier prophetic statement that both he and Julia utter just before discovering that they have been watched all along during their love affair. In finally embracing the Way of the Father, Winston and Julia lose their humanity. While they are physically alive after leaving the Ministry of the Father, as they well know, “We are the dead” (Orwell 177). Though Winston’s final thought in the novel is that he finally “loved Big Brother,” the reader is keenly aware that Winston’s ability to feel anything at all has been erased along with any sense of his ownlife (Orwell 240). In the absence of the (M)other, the embrace of the Father offers only death.

#### This is Not Our End

As a work of satire then, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* belongs to a genre that implies that there are better alternatives to the Way of the Father. On the one hand, Winston’s final act is to declare his love for Big Brother. As such, the ending may appear to be utterly bereft of hope. However, on the other hand, if readers scrutinize the third-person narrative, there they will find a modicum of hope at the end of Winston’s narrative. While Winston has finally succumbed to the Party, his embrace of Big Brother is not motivated by forgiveness but rather by a gin-induced resignation. The final glimpse the reader has of Winston is of his deeply disturbing “victory over himself”

(240). However, as the final pages underscore, while Winston ultimately gives into (Big Br)Other, he still does not locate salvation in the embrace of this Other but rather in his self-induced alcoholic stupor (240). Drawing heavily on biblical allusion, the narrative notes how Winston grants the victory gin with salvific properties: “it had become the element he swam in. It was his life, his death, and his resurrection” (Orwell 236).

Winston spends much of the novel attempting to articulate and open a space for his feelings by writing in his journal as well as through his relationship with Julia. However, the final scene demonstrates that he no longer has the will to get to the matter of his heart – to borrow an oft-repeated phrase from the novel in my next chapter, Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel*. Though he is depicted as crying at the end as he declares that “He loved Big Brother,” it is important to note that his tears are significantly described as “gin-scented,” leaving the reader to conclude that this declaration of love is anything but heartfelt (239-240). While at this point in the text, Winston has strayed far from the Path of the (M)other, by highlighting that Winston’s interpellation happens in a drunken stupor, Orwell’s narrative refuses to give in entirely to the ministrations of “Big Brothers.” The latter is further emphasized in the Appendix that follows Winston’s narrative. On the one hand, Winston has succumbed to the crushing embrace of Big Brother. On the other, in his final act of self-erasure, the narrative underscores that his unpersoning and self-repression are only successful because of his continual consumption of the ironically named “VICTORY GIN” (Orwell 8).

So, in response to those critics who declare that Orwell’s novel is a work of despair and that Winston’s death is a moment of resignation, an ode to the supreme reign of the Father, the evident counter is that the novel itself exists “In opposition to the totalitarian destruction of

public history and personal memory” (Finigan 435). Even as Winston and Julia abandon the Path of the (M)other, the call of the text endures. From this perspective, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is ultimately a hopeful text, “explicitly imagining...documents for a future history beyond the reach of the regime’s control” (Finigan 435). By focusing on the redemptive space of the (M)other in response to the Father’s attempts to wipe out any personal story or connection, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* “raise[es] the possibility that the archive could function as the means of a historiographic corrective that would counter the totalitarian manipulation of history noted by Arendt with a supposedly more accurate—and thus *anti*-totalitarian—record of authentic individual experience” (Finigan 435-436). In this way, regardless of Winston’s horrific ending, that reading subjects are reading the story of his ownlife at all is an effective challenge to the Way of the Father.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains a powerful story about one human’s struggle to stay human, and as such, it remains a powerful call to action for its audience. What *Nineteen Eighty-Four* highlights is that individuals have the power to resist. Though the Father may try to enforce his ways, subjects can choose another path; on the Path of the (M)other, “The affective orientation...can be seen as opening up spaces of resistance for the subjects of Oceania,” and for readers, by extension (Finigan 455). The novel reminds readers that all is not lost if they too work to prevent the calamity seen in the novel. Even in Oceania, hope remains; after all, as the Appendix makes clear, Winston was right all along: Big Brother does eventually fall. By providing a gross exaggeration of our own world, the novel reminds us that things are not yet that bad because “the human spirit is not so easy to break, because again and again artists,

thinkers, and people from every walk of life resist being broken, creating subcultures of resistance that display complex forms of reciprocity” (Nussbaum 292).

It is here that I wish to briefly return to Orwell’s Appendix, entitled “The Principles of Newspeak” (Orwell 241). The Appendix provides a detailed analysis of the stylistic structures of Newspeak. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed analysis of it, what is significant for my purposes here is that it writes about Newspeak as a thing of the past right from the first sentence. By writing that “Newspeak *was* the official language of Oceania,” readers are shown that Big Brother has fallen and that a new world has emerged, though readers are not told what this looks like (Orwell 241). While it is often not considered, the Appendix is an integral part of the novel’s project to “move [us] toward a horizon of hope” (Baccolini 521). It does so through its “form [as] a scholarly monograph looking back on Oceania as an extinct and almost incomprehensible civilization” (Resch 158). So, by imaging a post-totalitarian space as it does, the Appendix leaves the reader with the possibility of a world that moves beyond that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* because it “asserts that a revolutionary overthrow of totalitarianism has taken place” (Resch 158). In so doing, the Appendix suggests that it is possible to reject the pathological paranoid world system into which the subjects of Oceania have been interpolated. While the novel doesn’t tell readers exactly how to dismantle the Way of the Father (this work is left to them), Orwellian scholar Raffaella Baccolini concludes, it is “By looking at the formal and political features of science fiction, [that] we can see how these works point us toward change” (521). The hope of this novel then appears outside of the main narrative – not only in the Appendix but also in the reader. However, this horizon of hope is only possible should we

speaking about what has gone wrong; to put this another way, it is possible should we choose to follow the Path of the (M)other.

On many levels, Orwell focuses on telling Winston's story because he is one of the only measures of sanity in the novel: "By juxtaposing the single individual's sanity and humanity with the insanity and inhumanity of the entire state, he proposes that in certain societies the exclusive norm of sanity may indeed reside in the 'minority of one.'" (Gottlieb 53). Through the development of Winston's character, Orwell effectively argues that being part of a pathological collective does not necessarily mean giving up our sense of humanity. On the contrary, readers must strive like Winston, not to focus on death (a thing which cannot be avoided anyway) but rather to focus on living and, by extension, avoiding the emotional anesthesia that the Party adamantly prescribes. While it may be true that once subjects are interpolated into the symbolic and language, they cannot entirely divest themselves of it, as Orwell's novel compellingly argues, it is possible to – at least to some extent – establish a sense of ownlife. The latter is absolutely necessary if we are to overcome the disastrous consequences of prescriptive paranoia.

## **Conclusion**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, thus, demonstrates how the post World War II and the postmodern period saw a shift away from the pathologization of paranoia as a disease affecting individuals to something that could affect a whole nation. As Orwell correctly predicted, paranoia has become prescriptive – a part of the state apparatus for sustaining power and justifying horrendous acts of hatred towards others. Rather than identifying pathology in the deviation that an individual manifests from societal and cultural norms as Freud does, Orwell's prescient novel challenges readers to look at the pathology of the state and, by extension, the collective, which is made up

of complacent individuals who fail to question the institutions that control them. Consequently, as I argued in Chapter One, if there is pathology present in the minority of one, it has more to do with an individual's passivity rather than their paranoia. If readers reflect on the horror of Winston's final acceptance of Big Brother, then they will realize that underpinning Orwell's warning not to let this happen is his injunction to reject the prescribed paranoid pathology of the state and the collective. In so doing, Orwell's novel sets us on a different path because the Path of the (M)other offers us "the possibility of unpacking, of disentangling from their impacted and overdetermined historical baggage that many of us carry around under a label such as 'the hermeneutics of suspicion'" (Sedgwick 124).

In witnessing the consequences of Winston's interpellation into the Party's pathology, as readers, we are granted the perspective necessary to succeed where Winston cannot. Rather than give ourselves over to the institutions that use us to maintain their power, we must continue to challenge the systems that attempt to erase or negate our inner lives. Instead, we must, as my next chapter on E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* will also argue, challenge the Way of the Father. By rejecting the hermeneutics of suspicion and passive subjectivity, which enables state power structures—we can avoid the horrors depicted in Oceania. Embracing the position of the minority of one opens up the possibility not only of challenging pathologically prescribed paranoia but also of embracing one of the most significant epiphanies that Winston has in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: "the sky was the same for everybody, in Eurasia or Eastasia as well as here" (Orwell 176). Only once we understand that humans share some common bonds of experience can we move beyond the walls that so many states build in order to secure control and power. The latter understanding is especially important since these walls do more than their

purported task of keeping us safe from the (terrorist) other. Indeed, as Orwell persuasively demonstrates, erecting walls between “us and them” keeps us captive by interpolating us into a system that only serves to rob us of what matters most: our inner humanity and the love of others.

Orwell’s final novel foreshadows what many writers, including Doctorow and Brand, will continue to highlight through the second half of the Twentieth Century. Specifically, in a post-World War II world – one bookended by the Cold War and the war on terrorism – there is a far more threatening disease that individuals are suffering from: *pathological passivity*. Said pathology is, I argue, a dis-ease that arises in the wake of the collective acceptance of paranoia as a prescription for the uncertainties facing humanity. In other words, pathological passivity is a disastrous side-effect, if you will, of the dissemination of prescriptive paranoia: it is, as all my primary texts show, an opiate for the masses prescribed by Way of the Father. However, it is not the only way; there is another possible path to follow. In this way, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* foreshadows what Brand’s *Inventory* will say quite directly: it is not up to the writer to enact change and offer hope; it is up to the reader. The writer’s task is to raise our sensitivity to the issues, not to solve them or help us to feel hopeful.

### Chapter Three: Getting to the Matter of the Heart: E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*

In my previous chapter, I demonstrated how late modernist/early post-modernist texts, specifically George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, offer a good starting place to begin a tentative diagnosis of the collective pathologies that emerge in a post-World War II Western world. Orwell's novel makes concrete a cultural paranoia that, like a malignant tumour, continues to grow in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. Greatly indebted to Orwell's final novel, the important postmodernist text by E.L. Doctorow entitled *The Book of Daniel* explores the fears that Orwell so eerily prophesized would come to dominate our approach to the other<sup>47</sup> in the latter half of the twentieth century, highlighting how prescriptive paranoia continues to mutate unabated.

Though set more than twenty-five years after the end of World War II and written almost as many years after Orwell's book was published, *The Book of Daniel* highlights that too little changed between its publication in 1971 and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s in 1949. As *The Book of Daniel* compellingly depicts, as a society, we remain infected by institutional prescriptions despite the knowledge that "All Governments stand ready to commit their citizens to death in the interest of their government" (Doctorow 85). In response, *The Book of Daniel*, set in part during the Rosenberg trials and executions, highlights the consequences that emerge from a nation of citizens who have normalized a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the other. The novel's critique is damning: the American nation and its citizens have passively accepted state prescriptions of paranoia and fear of the other despite the knowledge that, as the book grimly

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<sup>47</sup> Consistent with my other chapters, I use lower case "other" to signify an individual body and upper case "Other" to refer to an institutional body.

warns, “We are at a moment of great insanity” (Doctorow 62). That moment has, in fact, never ended and continues into the present.

Shaped and bookended by the collective’s traumatized responses to two wars, World War II and the Vietnam War, *The Book of Daniel* traces how Cold War paranoia continued to metastasize in America, infecting both national and individual subjects long after the end of World War II. As Ray Pratt cogently argues in his text *Projecting Paranoia: Conspiratorial Visions in American Film*:

[O]ver more than half a century since World War II, a series of inadequately explained sociohistorical traumas—from JFK, Martin Luther King Jr., and RFK assassinations to the crashes of TWA Flight 800 and EgyptAir Flight 990—have inspired widespread tension resulting from explanations given and public suspicions. Paranoia in such a context becomes ‘a way of knowing’ and ‘a mode of perception.’ (Pratt 9)

When viewed from these perspectives, paranoia is both a response to trauma and a coping mechanism: it manifests on collective and cultural levels and on individual and personal ones, as most recently evidenced in American responses to the coronavirus pandemic.

In *The Book of Daniel*, America is metaphorically another Orwellian wasteland – a place that ostensibly cannot function outside of a constant state of war: wars that are used to offer a delusional sense of stability in an ever increasingly chaotic world. Through the characterization of the main narrator, Doctorow’s novel highlights how paranoid Cold War narratives offered “concrete” understandings of the other – but these understandings are only imagined notions of a world against which American identity can be defined. In so doing, the novel speaks to the desire for order which emerges after a war is over; instead of post-war “closure,” what arises is a fear of

a new world order due to its supposedly hidden nature. Speaking to this fear of the other, R.D. Laing notes that “Intense *frustration* arises from the failure to find that other required to establish a satisfactory ‘identity’” (70). In response, paranoia is prescribed to render visible the fears that haunt America: ostensibly, once categories of us and them are established, and enemies so revealed, preparations can be made to protect against these threats – a dangerous notion that continues to be disseminated today in the various wars on terror as well as by the former President of the United States, Donald Trump. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four* demonstrates, giving into the fear of the other does nothing to protect the subject. If anything, it makes them more vulnerable to the machinations of the (Big Br)Other.

However, perhaps more concerning even than the rising paranoia seen infecting the American public after World War II is that once adopted, such modes of knowing with their supposedly protective benefits are difficult to let go of. As the protagonist of Doctorow’s novel notes, there is always “the continuance beyond the end of war of war hysteria. Unfortunately, the necessary emotional fever for fighting a war cannot be turned off like a water faucet. Enemies must continue to be found” (Doctorow 33). His observation is a sobering point about the difficulty of ending the paranoid impulse to create enemies where none exist, highlighting how “The cold war in foreign policy...mutated into a state of generalized deterrence against an enemy without qualities...[leaving America in] a permanent state of emergency against a multifarious threat as much in us as outside” (Massumi 11). Through its first-person paranoid perspective, the novel offers readers an intimate look at the power of the Imaginary not only to distort our perceptions of others but also to distort our perceptions of ourselves. In so doing, Doctorow’s novel effectively warns readers how the normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion feeds into the dangers of a prescriptive paranoia that has been internalized so fully that both individual and

collective subjects struggle to see the difference between the real world and the (dis)simulated one, between actual threats and manufactured fear. For Doctorow's protagonist, Daniel Lewin, née Isaacson, the struggle to extricate himself from being chained in a Platonic cave, or, to invoke a more contemporary analogy from popular culture, a Wachowskian matrix, is at the heart of his story.

As a result, understanding the underlying fear of the other that permeates so much of Daniel's narrative requires considering how this trepidation has become so thoroughly pervasive in a postmodern world. As outlined in Chapter One of this dissertation, postmodern prescriptive paranoia is on the same continuum as earlier hermeneutic traditions of suspicion. Recall that, in a general sense, the hermeneutics of suspicion is a mode of interpretation shaped by the assumption that knowledge acquisition comes from interpreting the world through a lens of skepticism. In this way, it is a precursor to and remains deeply embedded in the prescriptive paranoia, which I discussed previously in Chapters One and Two. Like *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this prescriptive paranoia is uncannily depicted in Doctorow's novel as well. For example, Daniel has internalized the hermeneutics of suspicion and accepted and adopted the paranoid lens prescribed to him by various patriarchal institutions. Each of the roles that Daniel plays in the text, from Ph.D. student to son of so-called Communist spies, demands that he questions everything and "trusts no one." The latter produces an isolating space that threatens to keep him in a perpetual state of fear and emotional anesthesia. In other words, Daniel is caught in the web of the Father. Though he struggles to free himself from the legacy of prescriptive paranoia that has destroyed his family, like his father before him, he follows the Way of the Father, subsumed by his fear and unable to feel.

*The Book of Daniel* is broken up into four books, entitled: Memorial Day, Halloween, Starfish, and Christmas. For the first three books of the text, Daniel struggles to extricate himself from the patriarchal narratives written for him by his father, his dissertation supervisor, the state, and the media. The novel opens with Daniel as a figure imprisoned in the grip of the Way of the Father. Though Daniel has allowed himself to be lulled into a deep state of emotional anesthesia, he is snapped out of it when he discovers that his sister, Susan, has attempted to commit suicide. Confronted with the reality of losing yet another loved one, Daniel is forced to confront his own complicit conformity with the Way of the Father. But, to do so, he must learn how to see beyond the narratives of multiple father figures, especially his own father and his dissertation supervisor.

While his sister will succumb to the Way of the Father, sliding so deep into a state of emotional anesthesia that she will have no capacity to bridge the chasm between her and those she loves (much like Winston and Julia), Daniel sees other possibilities. Indeed, this book, “the book of Daniel,” is a recording of Daniel’s struggle to reconcile the loss of his loved ones with his intellectual awareness. But, while his attempts to exonerate his parents from the dominant patriarchal narratives are one step, they do not go far enough, especially since in following the demands of his dissertation supervisor, he only replicates a system that is rooted in the Way of the Father. Daniel’s repeated attempts to make sense of his past by “drawing...analogies (between the Issaaccon’s trial and the cases of similar trials in the politically induced paranoia) do not necessarily reveal a genuine understanding; they rather display a reading of history that is already ‘tainted’ by a paranoid perception” (Karoui-Elounelli 24-25). That Daniel struggles to separate his story from the dominant Historical narratives of others highlights his entrapment in the narratives of the Father.

If he is to heal the infection of prescriptive paranoia that has effectively killed his family, Daniel must follow the Path of the (M)other. To do so, he must learn that his dissertation is more than an academic exercise; indeed, as he discovers, his attempts to employ a hermeneutics of suspicion to “reveal” the truth of what happened to his parents only serves to keep him imprisoned in the narratives of the Father. Daniel must learn that his commitment to the prescribed (academic) approach to interpretation (which follows a hermeneutics of suspicion), in this case of his past, “not only fails to solve the problem of the absent historical truth, but it also unveils the possibility of Daniel’s entrapment in an alienating paranoia” (Karoui-Elounelli 23). It is this entrapment – in prescriptive paranoia, in patriarchal narratives, in academia, in History – that Daniel needs to break free from since his complicity with these systems threatens to displace his voice and negate his sense of agency.

To free himself from these narratives, Daniel must stop writing a dissertation that corresponds to the Way of the Father and instead write his own book, one which recoups all that the Father seeks to erase. Like Winston, Daniel needs to understand that what remains essential is his drive to remain human. But he cannot stop here: as the Path of the (M)other demonstrates, change can only happen when we *act* to love the other. This is precisely what the final book of the novel addresses. Whereas the first three books of the text document that Daniel is entangled in the Father’s web of fear and apathy, in the final book of the novel, Daniel ultimately does what Winston cannot: he embraces the other in love. Though the final book sees Daniel bent on seeking revenge against the man whose testimony led to his parent’s death, as he is confronted with his “mortal enemy,” he does what his mother has shown him to do. He shows the other love, building the empathetic connection needed to overcome the emotional anesthesia that has threatened to destroy him as it does his sister. As the novel concludes, Daniel is able to move

past the prescriptive paranoia of the Father, symbolically walking out of the university library and submitting a hybrid dissertation that brings back to life what the Way of the Father has tried to extinguish: his heart.

What Daniel recognizes is that the world imposes prescriptive paranoia on all of us as part of a Faustian bargain that allows us to function while simultaneously consuming our souls. In response, Doctorow's novel demonstrates that only when subjects see how images of others are distorted can they write their own stories and thereby effectively resist the powerful institutional forces that seek to silence, suffocate, and unperson them. Such resistance requires an escape route away from prescriptive paranoia and towards the Path of the (M)other, a roadmap the text, fortunately, provides readers with through Daniel's deconstruction of how said images function as "essentially instruments of torture" (Doctorow 84). The latter is especially important since, as the text compellingly argues, paranoia creates an infinite loop that keeps individuals on an ultimately self-destructive path. Ironically, such a path is often born from a self-fulfilling prophecy fueled by complicit conformity with the very system that seeks to harm them. Instead, *The Book of Daniel* argues that through storytelling – in this case, a novel written in the form of an unconventional doctoral thesis – the subject can confront and address what the text repeatedly identifies as the central problems facing them. More specifically, through storytelling, the subject can honour their ownlife – which, as we saw in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is a necessary part of resisting the emotional anesthesia produced via the Way of the Father.

Opening in 1967, on Memorial Day, Doctorow's novel begins by portraying Daniel as a traumatized 25-year-old man. As his paranoid tone underscores, Daniel struggles to extricate himself from a system that has sacrificed his parents on the altar of prescriptive paranoia. Not only this, but it has rendered him and his sister, Susan, emotionally stunted and unable to

reconcile what has happened to their family. Throughout the text, Daniel witnesses the fallout of the Cold War: tellingly, the effects of prescriptive paranoia continue to devastate the Isaacson children long after their parents are executed. In the first few pages, we learn that Susan has attempted to commit suicide – an event that has the effect of forcing Daniel to confront the past that he has been trying to escape from. Desperate to help his sister as her mental and physical condition deteriorates, he attempts to make sense of their tragic past in the hopes that he can somehow prevent her death from “shock” like their father before her. This same shock also leads to their father’s decline when he is on death row.<sup>48</sup>

At the opening of the text, we come to understand that Susan’s despair has led her to a figurative death row as well. Unable to cope with the loss of her parents and defeated by her failed attempts to exonerate them through her activism, Susan has slashed her wrists and is taken to a state-run psychiatric hospital. Though Daniel and his adoptive family attempt to secure Susan’s release, the hospital staff refuse to do so. Her institutionalization (in what is figured as an Orwellian-type ministry of the Father) effectively underscores Susan’s entrapment by the Way of the Father. Daniel reacts violently to her incarceration, highlighting his distrust of state-run institutions and figures of authority. He may not be free of the Way of the Father, but like Winston, he recognizes the dangers posed to individuals who are taken into His ministries. His concern that Susan will not be taken care of by the system is further underscored by his questioning of the police, who decide to “take her not to the nearest hospital, but to the nearest public insane asylum” (Doctorow 26). The final straw for Daniel is the suggestion that Susan’s psychiatrist is considering treating his sister with “shock therapy” – a traumatic echo of his

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<sup>48</sup> While both parents are executed and die by electric chair, his mother, Rochelle resists the system to the very end. His father, Paul, however, is already dead in spirit before he is executed: the latter death is a result of the shock that comes from attempting to reform the system from within it—a mistake that Susan ultimately repeats.

parent's execution by electric chair (Doctorow 222). Significantly, the "insane asylum" here figures in ways that are eerily similar to the *Death House*, where Daniel and Susan's parents are kept before their execution. Susan eventually dies from pneumonia – a complication arising from her inability to overcome the traumatic events of her past and her subsequent descent into a catatonic state. Like Winston and Julia, Susan never recovers from that which has been *killed in her breast* to invoke an Orwellian figure; by the end, her state of emotional anesthesia is so complete that she, like Winston, passively accepts her own death.

The problem is that, though she sees herself as an activist, Susan's choices have led her to follow the Way of the Father. Sadly, this way has been modelled for her by her own father, Paul Isaacson, a man who allowed himself to be consumed by a political system that ultimately destroyed him and his family. So, when Susan follows Paul's lead by arguing that "the proper position now was not to stand outside and criticize but to get inside and help create," Daniel disagrees (Doctorow 92). What Susan fails to see, at this moment, is that attempting to change the system from within does not work. Daniel, who *does* understand this, concludes that she has given into complicit conformity; in his words, she has become "a dupe of the international moralist propagandist apparatus" (Doctorow 20). His observation is critical because it foreshadows that he will ultimately come to understand that "Susan's leftist politics are personally destructive," just as such politics are to their father and their family (Totter 89). Her willing assimilation into and subsequent support of the very patriarchal and paranoid systems that serve to destroy her family is both understandable and lamentable.

Like Susan, Daniel has also been interpolated into multiple patriarchal narratives. The latter is underscored by his biological family's last name: Isaacson. Both Daniel and Susan note with dismay that "They were like figures in a myth, who suffer the same fate no matter what

version is told” (Doctorow 75). With its biblical allusion to Genesis 22, Daniel and Susan’s surname highlights their position as not only political pawns for the American state and media but also for the Left and Communist Party—each of which, Daniel realizes, is no less guilty of betraying its members than the Capitalist and Legal institutions they claim to fight against. Taken together, each of these institutions remains deeply embedded in promoting the Way of the Father. Regardless of the institution, Daniel Isaacson is, as underscored by his namesake, a sacrificial lamb. In this way, he inhabits, at least initially, the same position as both his father and his sister.

However, unlike both his relatives, Daniel comes to recognize how he is bound by the patriarchal narratives that attempt to dictate his story as a means of exerting control over him. Early in the *Book of Daniel*, as Daniel tries to process his sister’s suicide attempt and subsequent institutionalization, he sees how easy it is to get sucked into the narratives that continually threaten to destroy them both. Like Winston, Daniel, and Susan struggle to resist being interpolated into the Way of the Father. For example, Daniel sees not only how Susan has internalized said narratives but also that “Susan could restore in him the old cloying sense of family...That this was their thing, this orphan state, and that it obliterated everything else, and separated them from everyone else, and always would, no matter what he did to deny it” (Doctorow 19). But rather than give into the state of inertia, isolation, and emotional anesthesia these narratives have prescribed and produced, Daniel recognizes that while he must confront his past, he need no longer be defined by it. Thus, in response to the pressure he feels from Susan to continue to play the role of paranoid, traumatized orphan, Daniel notes that while “I don’t try to deny it...I reserve the right to live with it in my own way, if I can” (Doctorow 19). Daniel’s attempts to live with the legacy of the Isaacson myths in his own way make up this text. What he

learns, in the process, is how to write his own book (“the book of Daniel”): a text which ultimately functions as an act of resistance against the constant pressure to be silent and against the demands arising from the Way of the Father.

Unlike his father and sister, who attempt to work within the conventions of the institutional systems that imprison them, both figuratively and literally, Daniel comes to understand that such attempts indicate that “Reform is complicity. It is complicity in the system to be appalled with the moral structure of the system” (Doctorow 243). This insight is significant: resistance to the Way of the Father lies outside the system. As such, I disagree with critic Jieun Kwon’s claim “that under the text’s dissenting gesture lies the desire and even the necessity to redeem the legitimacy of American liberal democratic principles” (85). To suggest “the text’s radicalism can be defined rather as a vigorous reform within the system” is to misread the clear path to resistance that the text outlines (Kwon 85). In making this argument, Kwon’s reading replicates the very actions that Paul and Susan are critiqued for in the text, ultimately failing to account for the radical call to resistance rather than reform, which is modelled first by Daniel’s mother, Rochelle, and then by Daniel.

While at first, it appears that Daniel will comply with the roles that have been prescribed to him, over the course of the book, he consistently rejects the narratives that he has been interpolated into, choosing other paths rather than reform from within. He concludes that escape can only come through completing his dissertation: a text that, admittedly, threatens to consume him even as it presents the potential to escape the system that has destroyed his family. But, however difficult, it is only through the telling that Daniel can come to the necessary “acceptance of the ‘othering’ of literary space”: a space which facilitates “the persist[ance] in the self-critical tendency of postmodern literary writing [of] an ethics of relating to otherness...through a sense

of responsibility which is not socially administered” (Karoui-Elounelli 30). In other words, “In writing his story, Daniel is finally able to stop attacking the world, his family, and himself and to learn the lessons of the heart,” thereby allowing him the ability to process the devastating consequences of inhabiting the position of the other (Gordon 90). Through writing, Daniel develops the sense of responsibility necessary to effectively resist prescriptive paranoia, overcome his complicit conformity, and act to love the other. In other words, he can walk the Path of the (M)other. In so doing, he can effect positive change. That he can do so is foreshadowed before the final book of the text by Daniel’s keen ability to see how prescriptive systems feed on manufacturing the fear of and marginalization of others. But in those final pages, Daniel – and the reader by extension – learns that the first step towards breaking out of such a cycle first requires awareness of the system into which he has been interpolated.

So, although Daniel eventually finds potential ways out of the narratives he inherited, he does not do so until the final book. For the first three books of the novel, Daniel and Susan are bound to the Isaacson mythology—a legacy of the (cold) war on the other fueled by prescriptive paranoia. This binding is underscored at the beginning of the narrative as Daniel struggles to process his sister’s recent suicide attempt. As he notes, they are both overwhelmed by their trauma and grief—trapped in the patriarchal narratives of a past that places them both in a constant state of fear, erasure, and self-implosion. Seeing the bandages over his sister’s wrists, he describes the paralysis that arises from the “sense of being overcome” and of being “suffocated” by their past and their prescribed identities (Doctorow 18). Clearly, the fallout of the war on the other has greatly impacted the Isaacsons, a family that is marginalized on multiple levels as poor Communist Jews. The extent of this impact is apparent in the constant references to the inability to breathe, an affliction that impacts Winston as well. Indeed, the only character who is not

afflicted with the inability to breathe is his mother, Rochelle. Rochelle effectively resists the suffocation produced by the state's deployment of prescriptive paranoia even as it seeks to destroy her family. In so doing, her approach models an important alternative to the versions of analysis prescribed by the state and then internalized by his father, Paul, and later, his sister, Susan (see below).

Not surprisingly, given their traumatic family history, the sense of being overcome is constant for both Isaacson children. The narrative is filled with stories of how Daniel and Susan teeter between their rebellion against their inherited identities and their utter surrender to them. The result of the latter is that, at various points in their lives, both Daniel and Susan fall into states of paralysis that are difficult to escape from and threaten to sever their relationship with each other and themselves. These moments of paralysis—moments which Daniel identifies as “spells”—highlight how thoroughly they have been stripped of any sense of their own voice or agency, as well as how they have succumbed to emotional anesthesia (Doctorow 18). During such moments, Daniel laments, “You didn’t know what to do” because “Something was torn, there was a coming apart of intentions, a forgetting of what you could expect from being alive” (Doctorow 18). That neither Susan nor Daniel knows how to “live” in healthy and adaptive ways is clear. They exist in a state of emotional anesthesia, much as Winston and Julia do after they have been similarly “torn” by the Way of the Father in Room 101. For Daniel and Susan, the fear of who they have become leaves them so disconnected from themselves that neither can inhabit the space of affect that is, arguably, so desperately needed to move them outside of the destructive cycle produced by a system fuelled by prescriptive paranoia.

In fact, at different points throughout the novel, Daniel and Susan are so traumatized by the trial and loss of their parents that they retreat into varying states of emotional limbo, Doctorow’s

own version of the emotional anesthesia that is central to the Way of the Father. One particularly significant moment where both children retreat into such a void is when they are moved into the East Bronx Children's Welfare Center in response to their parents being taken into custody by the state. After being asked if she liked living in the Center by a judge attempting to understand why she and Daniel tried to run away from it, Susan cannot respond, foreshadowing her ultimate withdrawal into complete silence before her death. Another factor contributing to Susan's ultimately permanent retreat into silence, one of the most damaging, is fueled by her (understandable) desire for justice for her dead parents. Unlike Daniel, who also attempts to, through his academic research, prove the innocence of his parents, Susan tries to exonerate her parents by relying on the very system that destroyed them. Her naïve participation in the New Left and her attempts to continue her parents' work by establishing the Paul and Rochelle Isaacson Foundation for Revolution only lead to the same disastrous consequences previously faced by her parents.

Still, though they both attempt to extricate themselves from the narratives written for them and are even successful during certain periods of their lives (such as when they are adopted into the "normal" middle-class Lewin family), the pull of the Isaacson mythology is strong. In one powerful moment that reveals the extent to which both he and his sister have been traumatized, Daniel expresses the complete disconnect they both experience: "You were in dread of yourself and it was dread so pure that one glance in the mirror scorched the heart and charred the eyes" (Doctorow 18). This struggle—to reconnect with their hearts and restore their sight—underpins Daniel's evolution along the Path of the (M)other, a deliberate departure from the Way of the Father that dominates much of the text.

So, while Daniel and Susan do attempt to resist the prescriptive paranoia that leads to the demonization, incarceration, and ultimate execution of their parents, for much of the text, they view their experiences from a reactive paranoid stance. This is an unsurprising if misguided response to ostensibly protect themselves from suffering the same fate as their parents, even as it brings about the same disastrous consequences (i.e., Susan's death). Like the citizens of Oceania, Susan and Daniel give into the Way of the Father, engaging in whatever self-hypnosis or doublethink is necessary to address the dis-ease that such complicit conformity produces. As we saw in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this doublethink leads to a complete state of inertia and isolation for the subject. Also, it makes them far more susceptible to being controlled by the Father. When Susan, for instance, becomes a "starfish" where "The five points of the star lead not outward...but inward, toward the center," it effectively underscores the consequences of following the Way of the Father (Doctorow 267). The figure of the starfish highlights one of the most damaging ways that both Daniel and Susan respond to their traumatic childhoods: they withdraw so fully into themselves that any connections between the self and the other are completely severed, erasing any possibility for reconciliation within or without. This is one of the few coping mechanisms afforded to us by prescriptive paranoia, a withdrawal so complete that the potential for ownlife evaporates. Emotional anesthesia becomes the children's chosen defence mechanism, a choice in line with that demanded by the Way of the Father.

The adoption of such a passive, inward stance is not without just cause: "Being an Isaacson, Daniel expects to get the same treatment from his own country as his parents" – that is death (Assadi 10). However, subscribing to prescriptive paranoia only serves to expose the fallout of their collusion with a system that both negates their ability to resist while, at the same time, threatening to consume them. For example, before Susan inhabits her ultimate state of

complicit conformity, the *starfish*, her final words to Daniel reveal her inability to see a way outside of her own entrapment. Consequently, when she pronounces to Daniel that “They’re still fucking us... You get the picture,” her statement serves to foreshadow her final state of complete paralysis in a paranoia that is so consuming that it ultimately leads to her death at the end of the novel (Doctorow 19). The picture Susan sees is too large for her to take in fully: she cannot make the necessary leap from reform to resistance, in large part, because rather than attempt to accept responsibility for the other, she chooses to retreat into herself.

Daniel is similarly blinded at this juncture in the text: he is as unable to reconcile with his context as his sister. Consequently, as Daniel well knows, he too exhibits similar *starfish* qualities. In this way, he and Susan “were like the compensating halves of a clock sculpture that would exchange positions when the chimes struck” (Doctorow 18). This multi-layered image of a clock is symbolically significant for several reasons. First, it not only underpins how much the two siblings have come to depend on one another. It also illustrates how they both retreat into their respective shells. Consequently, the interdependence between them has both positive and negative qualities. On the one hand, Daniel and Susan have supported one another through some horrendous experiences. On the other, they have also struggled and failed to find their way to a space of healing. As the image of the exchanging clock halves depicts, not only are neither of them whole, but only one half can be present at any given moment in time. They are effectively slaves to a clock that works to pull them out of the present moment actively—the only moment where they, or any of us, can exert any agency. As such, Susan and Daniel inhabit the classic paranoid subject position, concomitantly imprisoned in a past they cannot change and fearful of a future that has not yet come. Without said reconnection and restoration, neither Susan nor Daniel will be able to reject the prescribed state of complicit conformity demanded of them—demands

that leave them powerless and trapped in a vicious cycle that prevents them both from moving on from their past.

This inability for both children to be fully present foreshadows that only one of the Isaacson children will survive—a tragic point that Daniel slowly realizes for “the weaker her signals the stronger mine become” (Doctorow 225). Rather than remaining trapped in clock time, the Isaacson siblings must “recognize in paranoia [the] distinctively rigid relation to temporality,” which is to say that paranoia is “at once anticipatory and retroactive” (Sedgwick 146). To really *get the picture*, so to speak, they must come to understand that prescriptive paranoia with its requisite “elements of fear, anger, and curiosity” will only continue the project of tearing both him and his sister apart (Felski “Suspicious Minds” 211). While it is entirely understandable that both siblings choose to react in paranoid ways, restoring the heart and regaining (in)sight requires that they recognize that “suspicion constitutes an asocial form of affect that sows the seeds of division and conflict” (Felski “Suspicious Minds” 221). It is only with such recognition that they can ever hope to be released from the clock structure that they are now bound to. To found a practice of resistance, they must first come to accept the responsibility they hold to the other.

As children, for example, both siblings attempt to overcome the widening gap between them. Significantly, through these attempts, we not only witness Daniel’s intense love for his sister but also his willingness to accept responsibility for her. Even as Daniel appears to be in a state of emotional anesthesia throughout the first three books, behaving in cruel ways towards his wife, child and adoptive parents, his little sister still “made his heart leap” (Doctorow 18). Sadly, however, even though the love between the siblings is evident, as they mature into adults, they ultimately fail to overcome the seeds of division sown by the paranoid mythology they have been

interpolated into. Daniel's grim realization that "An Isaacson does things boldly calculated to bring self-destructive results," demonstrates his recognition that their complicit conformity only serves to hurt them both (Doctorow 222). The siblings have their own versions of doublethink, their own versions of complicit conformity at work as they fail to challenge the prescriptive paranoia of postwar America. Daniel laments that "they were like those two horses who hitched up to pull apart two hemispheres that had been fastened by vacuum; who heaved and strained, one pulling one way, the other the other way, to prove that nothing was more powerful than a vacuum" (Doctorow 75). This vacuum and the resulting alienation between Daniel and Susan are something that they cannot recover from—it is a space that is, by definition, one from which all the air has been removed (OED). And, it serves as yet another reference to the persistent negation of life prescribed under a patriarchal and paranoid system. This system seeks to exact obedience from its subjects by suffocating, silencing, and separating them. Broadly speaking, once again, we arrive at the three characteristics of the Way of the Father: complicit conformity, emotional anesthesia, and fear of the other.

That Daniel and Susan once had a very close bond is evident. In a particularly touching and symbolically significant scene, the young Daniel and Susan are brought to a rally to support their parents. Foreshadowing Susan's ultimate inability to see outside of her father's hermeneutics of suspicion and the paranoid vision which ultimately serves to destroy him, Susan struggles to get to the rally at first because she has "something in [her] eye" (Doctorow 29). The adults in the scene, notable members of the Communist Party, have no compassion for the little girl, seeking only to use her and her brother to engender sympathy for their parents' cause and the Communist Party, in general. They, too, suffer from emotional anesthesia, failing to recognize their responsibility for the little girl who has been effectively orphaned by her father's blind

acceptance of their Party's politics. This deeply disturbing scene also foreshadows how Susan will later be similarly used by the New Left, underscoring the extent to which so many different institutions have appropriated this family with self-serving intentions. In an act that depicts Daniel's realization of the latter, he insists on stopping to help Susan, reminding the adults that "She's only a little girl, you know" (Doctorow 30). Daniel's focus on the personal here foreshadows his rejection of the dehumanizing actions of the Communist Party and concomitantly his eventual rejection of his father's willingness to accept the negation of the personal for the sake of the Party. In these moments, Daniel's capacity for resistance is evidenced, for in sticking up for this sister, the young Daniel rejects emotional anesthesia and chooses empathic connection instead.

Thus, while his father is committed to an "analytic cool...claim[ing] to believe in the insignificance of personal experience within the pattern of history," despite being a young child in this scene, on some level, Daniel already understands that resistance necessitates paying attention to personal history and personal relationships (Doctorow 43). In other words, resistance requires taking responsibility for those who are othered (a point I will return to in my final Brand chapter). In this light, his father's commitment to his so-called "analysis" only serves to highlight his complicit conformity with the prescriptive paranoia of the period. Tellingly, as Daniel notes, his father couldn't "quite make that violent connection...between what he believed and how the world reacted" (Doctorow 43). He concludes that his father "was without real resources of character, like most intellectuals" – intellectuals who, the narrative demonstrates, are all too ready to privilege analysis even as the knowledge it brings is purely academic. Significantly, while Daniel clearly adores and even talks about how he misses his father's ability to "expos[e] the lies in the newspaper," he comes to recognize that his father's suspicious approach to

everything and everyone only serves to enable the systemic destruction of the Isaacson family (Doctorow 177). Put differently, Paul Isaacson has no ownlife. His primary reason for being is criticism, but he does not fundamentally challenge the prescriptive paranoia of his era; he merely redirects it.

The better alternative is the one offered by his mother, Rochelle, who, rather than looking to reform from within, understands that the system is entirely corrupt because, as Daniel comes to understand, it is she who “was the realist” (Doctorow 423). Her ability to see the world outside of any blind adherence to Party or state prescriptives is, in large part, why she avoids the starfish state that subsumes both her husband and her daughter. Because she actively cultivates her ownlife, she avoids withdrawing into emotional anesthesia. In this way, Daniel begins to see that his mother’s perspective offers a path outside of prescriptive paranoia. For example, he realizes that though Rochelle adores Paul, she is not blind to his complicity in his own destruction. Indeed, Rochelle views her husband’s constant need to analyze all of the so-called lies in the media as a waste of energy; in contrast, “She put them all down and that was the end of it” (Doctorow 45). What is important is her insight that “It was nonsense to distinguish one capitalist perfidy from another” (Doctorow 45). Daniel understands this, acknowledging that his father is far too “indiscriminate in his attention to ideas, problems,” while it is his mother “Rochelle who worried about having enough to eat” (Doctorow 47). Rochelle’s priorities are clear: attention must be paid to the personal, to ownlife. Similarly, Daniel’s focus on his sister in the above scene reflects the same kind of pragmatic care that puts emphasis on people over institutional ideals, much like Winston’s mother does in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Daniel attempts to share this maternal insight with his sister Susan, but she is ultimately unable to see outside of her father’s vision: Daniel’s ability to get the “thing” out of her eye in

the aforementioned scene, is sadly, only temporary. Ultimately, because “Susan tries to become a political hero like her father before her,” she plays into a system that capitalizes on her “refusal to establish any true familial links” (Totter 89). In other words, she, like her father, dismisses the significance of the personal and of empathetic connection. Her inability to connect with her only remaining family, Daniel, “serv[es] to be her undoing. Susan is not an example; she is a warning” to Daniel of the pitfalls of looking through the eyes of the Father (Totter 89). Though Daniel may not yet fully understand the larger ramifications of this at this early point in the novel, he already knows that she sees the world as their father did. His observation that “his [father’s] large rude eyes [were]...Like Susan’s eyes” is thus, a telling one (44). Though Daniel does his best to save his sister, in the end, her inability to remove that which blocks her own I-sight also blocks her ability to see a way of escaping the Isaacson legacy.

Thus, unable to get the prescribed visions of her father(s) out of her head, Susan is ultimately completely consumed by them. When his sister dies, Daniel concludes that, like their father, “She died from a failure of analysis,” underscoring the devastating consequences of Susan’s inability to see that reform from within is untenable (Doctorow 317). Susan’s death from a failure of analysis is not just about her failure to apply analysis; it is also about the failure of analysis alone to account for the personal in a paranoid system. In other words, analysis without action and affect leads to a state of paralysis that is ultimately self-defeating; it marks the absence of one’s ownlife. Consequently, “her commitment to a single interpretation of the family fate leads her to...a state of profound withdrawal which constitutes [a] refusal of perception and ultimately of reality itself” (Thompson 151). With her final retreat into herself, she confirms her inability to see beyond the system that entraps her and her family. She is ultimately unable to overcome the emotional anesthesia that subsumes her. Like her father before her, she is propelled

towards a self-destructive end, a willing participant in a system that ultimately robs her of her heart and sight.

In contrast, Daniel repeatedly identifies himself (at four points) in the text as a “criminal of perception” (Doctorow 41, 45, 87, 291). This identification is significant because it speaks to the transgressive nature of his role as a witness: in narrating his family's personal history, Daniel defies the prescriptive to view the world solely through the Fathers’ analytic lens—whether this father is his own or his academic supervisor. Daniel thus avoids dying from a failure of analysis because of his willingness to “give himself to the act of perception” (Doctorow *Conversations* 47). By “open[ing] himself to it—much as all writers must...he survives” (Doctorow *Conversations* 47). Thus, unlike Susan and their father, Daniel forces himself to confront the events of his past even as such visions torture him because writing this “narrative reflects Daniel’s self-therapy” (Gordon 85). Put another way, Daniel recognizes that as long he inhabits a state of emotional anesthesia, he allows himself to be interpellated into the Way of the Father. Indeed, he is so committed to his role as witness that he even wills himself to “doing his parents’ executions,” revealing “Daniel’s commitment to perception and the painfully ambiguous reality it reveals” (Thompson 151). His commitment remains even as he comes to the increasingly certain realization that he will be doing so alone. However, Daniel’s path to confronting the past and embracing the personal is not a linear one.

At the outset of his figurative (and soon to be literal) orphanage, Daniel, like Susan, displays a similar kind of withdrawal into silence as a child. Characterized by a congruent sort of emotional evacuation seen in Susan’s starfish, Daniel performs the role of “Inertia Kid”—a nickname referring to the catatonic state of a severely disabled boy in the state-run shelter Daniel is placed into after his parents are taken away by the state. Desperate to find a way to assert some

control in a world where his family has been ripped apart, the young Daniel attempts to reclaim some sense of agency and control by mimicking and bullying the disabled boy. He justifies his behaviour by reasoning that he has “to prove myself to the other unreclaimed kids...to make it so thoroughly as a Shelter kid that I would become one of the leaders. Leaders are the only ones who ever feel at home” (Doctorow 186). However, far from helping him achieve a sense of belonging, his cruel actions backfire because they set him on a self-destructive path. This destruction is foreshadowed in Daniel’s description of his performance: to do “the Inertia Kid...you had to disconnect your heart muscle, you had to give up your heart...and let the heart lie there in you with disconnected eyes, and unconnected tongue, and limbs lying in their own slackened strings” (Doctorow 187). Daniel’s description of his performance contains some crucial insight. Specifically, to some extent, he already understands what neither Susan nor his father does: a disconnected heart leads to disconnected eyes. This disconnect serves to underscore one of the most critical thematic arguments in this novel. Specifically, to see outside prescriptive paranoia, we need a connection to our emotions. We cannot retreat using emotional anesthesia as a panacea towards the trials of the world. To sever the connection between heart and sight carries serious consequences: it is both self-destructive as well as self-perpetuating. For example, though Daniel initially mimics the disabled child as a way to gain the respect of the other children in the shelter, his “cruelty” becomes addictive, “a fascinating trip of its own for the wonder of others, and each time it got harder and harder to stop” (Doctorow 187). Though Daniel is only a child at this point in the novel, his addiction to hurting others in order to protect himself stays with him and threatens his ability to establish any connections with others, including his wife, child and adoptive parents. Once again, the Way of the Father appears as

Daniel slips into Orwellian-style hate rituals, fearing the other and numbing his connection to others.

As a result, like Susan's starfish, Daniel's performance of Inertia Kid carries a similar risk of death. For instance, Daniel notes that "from one moment to the next there is stillness. I even forgot to breathe. I listened for my heart to stop. My guts strained for air while I tried to remember how to breathe. I was blacking out trying to remember what the light was for" (Doctorow 187). Daniel's performance thus speaks to his own confrontation with "death row," underscoring how he too is at risk of dying from the failure to move on from viewing others through a solely analytic lens. But he does not rest here. Even as Daniel is aware of this risk, even as he feels compelled to protect himself by exploiting an other, he also finally acknowledges that "I feel terrible. I feel the sickness of someone who has sold out" (Doctorow 191). At this moment, Daniel recognizes that "protecting" the self in this way only leads to disease: he also sees that he could have chosen another path towards the other, a path of connection and love. In this radical departure from the subject-other approach all too often prescribed in response to fear, Daniel realizes that instead of cruelly mocking the disabled child, "I could have taken care of him and protected him from impersonations" (Doctorow 191). Though Daniel fails to completely embrace this approach of care towards the other at this moment in the text, that he is beginning to see outside of the prescribed lens is crucial.

Significantly by this point in the text, Daniel comes to understand that his performance as Inertia Kid is unconscionable and untenable if he is going to survive the fallout of prescriptive paranoia and the cold war. There is too much of the Way of the Father in it. Yet while Daniel knows this intellectually, he retreats into silence once again as a teenager, initiating a split between himself and his sister that will prove to be impossible to overcome. His retreat occurs

during a period in his life where he withdraws from reality, succumbing once again to the lure of paranoia even as he knows—at some level—that doing so leads to dis-ease. The persistent pull of paranoia is, this text demonstrates, difficult to resist because the latter requires a level of effort that is arguably hard to sustain over time. It is easier to follow prescriptions to fear the other than to embrace an approach of care towards the other. However, choosing complicit conformity over care comes with a considerable cost.

The latter is something that Daniel will eventually come to understand and attempt to rectify: as he notes, “when he came to his senses, and the real life of his childhood, that had become a dream, became real again, he tried to make contact with Susan” (Doctorow 75). Unfortunately, however, by this point, it is too late. As he “mourn[s] the [loss of his] little kid sister,” he is confronted once again with the same lesson that surfaced as a result of his performance of Inertia Kid (Doctorow 76). He concludes that rather than retreat from the other, “We should have talked, we should always have talked” (Doctorow 76). Though Susan is still alive when Daniel has this realization, he already knows that they will be unable to overcome the forces tearing them apart— a fact that both haunts him and which he struggles to fight against throughout his narrative. Too late, he realizes that reaching out via the Path of the (M)other and connecting with other human beings is what could have saved them.

Daniel’s realization that connection (i.e., talking) could have saved them comes too late for the Isaacson siblings to reconcile. Unfortunately, their retreat into silence has not protected them; it has only enabled the paranoid project of dividing the one from the other. The permanent nature of this division between subject and other is showcased in one particularly touching scene in the novel. Though Susan has descended into a catatonic and unresponsive state, Daniel attempts to reconnect with her hoping that she will once again speak to him. He picks her up, calling,

“*Susan*, in her ear, *Susan*, whispering, *Susan* hugging her bones...*Susan* kissing her eyes” (Doctorow 226). The failure of Daniel’s repeated attempts to connect with Susan in this scene underscores just how effectively prescriptive paranoia works to isolate individual subjects from one another. Susan has become yet another victim of the (cold) war on the other, unable to inhabit a space of affect and healing. Like her brother’s performance of Inertia Kid, her performance as starfish results in a disconnect between heart, eyes, and tongue. From this point on, in the novel, she exists in a state of inertia and “cannot extend her expression of love to” her brother or to her adoptive parents (Culp 161). Even when Daniel does finally act to inhabit the affective mode needed to reconnect with his sister, as he does in this scene, his embrace cannot overcome the chasm between them. Her inability to accept the loving embrace of her brother illustrates the destructive effects of the prescriptive paranoid system, which she has both lived under and internalized. As if to emphasize the effectiveness of prescriptive paranoia to evacuate the subject of love, Daniel’s embrace figuratively registers in the same way as that which killed their parents. Daniel notes that when he puts her back down on the bed, “the shock of” his embrace “distributed itself through her body, and her feet twitched, and her hands twitched” (Doctorow 226). Tellingly, his loving embrace has been transformed and now figures as a kind of electric chair. The vacuum produced by the fallout of the cold war proves to be a formidable one. Susan becomes yet another victim of prescriptive paranoia, and like her father before her, ends her life as an evacuated and complicit subject – an inert starfish shocked unto death. Her ending is what is produced when trust is placed in the Way of the Father.

Daniel’s and Susan’s approaches to making sense of the trial and execution of their mother and father are, in large part, what makes them vulnerable to being sucked into the vacuum produced by prescriptive paranoia. Daniel’s response to loss, at least in the first three books of

the text, is to internalize the violence against his parents, ultimately leading to his projection of distrust onto others as well as his emotional and physical abuse of those he loves. On the other hand, Susan attempts to sublimate her grief into activism – specifically, activism aimed at somehow redeeming her parents. While the siblings clash because of their differing approaches to their grief, leading Susan to sever her connection to Daniel, they are both motivated to find ways to exonerate their parents and to rewrite history. The problem is that neither has found a healthy way to reconcile themselves to their tragic loss; both are trapped in a mythic narrative that seems to doom them not only to a life of paranoia and fear but also to one of ambivalence, despair, and martyrdom. They each take different paths, but both end up at the same final destination, an Orwellian room 101—a place dominated by complicity and complacency that works to break even the strongest of human bonds. To put this another way, adopting the paranoia prescribed to them also means that they are complicit in their own binding – a problem that, the novel argues, affects many Americans.

In so doing, the novel agrees with and supports the idea that “Given the fact that most Americans know that the U.S. government, represented by officials or specific agencies, routinely lies, there are related dimensions of public complicity and denial involved in the governing process” (Pratt 20). To counter such complicit conformity, the novel argues, subjects must stop living in denial. For Daniel, overcoming this denial begins with realizing that his performances as Inertia Kid “were a failure” (Doctorow 190). Though ultimately this realization takes some time before it leads to action on Daniel’s part, the fact that he is “sorry for my routines,” showcases his growing awareness that his behaviour reflects a complicity with the system that is dehumanizing him and his family (Doctorow 190). In other words, Daniel knows

that he has a choice in his approach to the other; he need not follow the Way of the Father but may search for an alternate route to the goal of emotional health.

Yet, despite having these epiphanies, there continues to be a cognitive dissonance between what Daniel knows and how he acts. This disconnect between knowledge and action highlights one of the most disconcerting outcomes arising from a culture of prescriptive paranoia. Intellectually, subjects may know that what they are doing is wrong; materially, nothing changes. For Daniel to avoid selling out, he must embrace an approach of care towards others. However, he continues to respond in defensive ways – even when others care for him. For example, in response to his wife caring for him while he is sick at one point in the novel, he reveals with concern that “already stirring in this marriage...were the forms of my fearful kindness coming out like magic watercolour under her rubbing” (Doctorow 16). Though there is the potential for his relationship with his wife to exist outside of a space of paranoia, Daniel sees the emergence of kindness as something to be feared; in this scene, Daniel equates the act of loving the other with being vulnerable to threats by the other, a response which is in line with the fear of the other that is cultivated by the Way of the Father. Though his wife’s love offers him the potential to heal here (not just physically as she tends to him, but mentally as well), Daniel has yet to place his trust in the other at this point in the novel.

As a result, his retreat into silence and inertia as a teen does not stop with his realization that he has made mistakes with the disabled boy and his sister. Instead, Daniel remains trapped in a cycle of prescriptive paranoia, using the violent and cruel ways of the Father to define himself well into his adulthood. Fearful of inhabiting an affective space, he is driven by the delusional need to both protect himself from some perceived threat as well as to follow the paranoid prescriptions disseminated through various media. As such, he continues to relate to others by

asserting his physical or emotional mastery over them—a variation on “fear of the other.” For example, though his wife treats him with care, he describes her as being “made to be kicked around” (Doctorow 14). The problem, however, is that in kicking others around, as he so frequently does throughout the narrative, Daniel is as guilty of the same complicit conformity with the system as those he harshly critiques. From child bully to sadistic husband and father, Daniel’s actions serve to replicate the system he claims to abhor. In so doing, his critique of others for their “failure to make connections” applies no less to his own cruel behaviours than to those around him (Doctorow 243). His conclusion that “The failure to make connections is complicity” is important, even though he does not yet include himself in this critique (Doctorow 243). Much like the doublethink outlined in the previous chapter, Daniel’s behaviour here betrays his unwillingness to take responsibility for his inaction. Like Winston, Daniel’s awareness only gets him so far; he may “*understand HOW,*” but he “*do[es] not understand WHY*” his academic knowledge is also failing to make meaningful connections (Orwell 67, italics in original). While he knows enough to reject the dehumanization and erasure of the personal by the state, the Communist Party and his own father, Daniel does not understand exactly why or what kinds of connections are important. As his initial attempts to conform to the structure of traditional dissertations reveal, he does not, as yet, understand that making connections between ideas is academic; instead, the kinds of connections that will establish a practice of resistance come from compassionate ones made between subject and other.

Though Freud’s case analysis and Doctorow’s novel differ significantly, each text traces at least one “paranoid” male voice struggling to break from their fixation on an earlier stage of psychosexual development. For example, in *The Book of Daniel*, the narrator’s inability to move beyond his anal fixation is clear in his pathological and sadistic abuse of his wife, Phyllis. From

a Freudian perspective, Daniel's deviant behaviour suggests that he is struggling to move past his childhood traumas. This point is highlighted by the constant movement in time in his narrative between his present experiences and his past ones. However, as the novel demonstrates, he must move beyond his fixation on the past to focus on his present experiences. As such, "Daniel's fascination with sexual violence can thus also be read as a reversal of early feelings of powerlessness" (Morgenstern 77). That the adoption of violence or of a paranoid lens only serves to hurt the individual subject becomes increasingly clear in the novel.

As the reader witnesses the ongoing abuse of his wife and child throughout the text, it becomes clear Daniel is as addicted to his performance of the sadistic father as he was to his performance of the Inertia Kid. For example, in one of the most disturbing scenes of the text, Daniel describes an outing to a park with his wife and son. The scene begins as an idyllic one but then takes a dark turn when Daniel, who has been throwing his laughing child up into the air, takes the play too far. Despite seeing his son's face as it was "locked in dumb dread of the breath-taking flight into the sky and the even more terrifying fall toward the earth," Daniel persists in throwing his son higher and higher into the air (Doctorow 146). He does so even as he admits that "I can't bear to think about this murderous feeling...I enjoyed the moment...I enjoyed the fear in his mother" (Doctorow 146). His addiction to cruelty is stark here. Such performances signify power as well as protection for Daniel. In other words, in so acting, Daniel mirrors the paranoid approach to the other being disseminated in America during the cold war; he also becomes another agent for the Way of the Father, "proving" his mastery by culturing fear of the other. His performances also register on another level, for in his attempts to protect himself, Daniel also reveals a sense of acute loss. Specifically, his performances express his conflicted feelings towards his father, a man Daniel longs for even though he prioritized Party

principles over his own family's wellbeing. Thus, even as Daniel chides himself early on in the text for “looking for another father,” he also shares at various moments in the text how much he “missed his father’s voice analyzing, endlessly analyzing and exposing the lies” (Doctorow 26, 176). Of course, as we already know from Susan’s ultimate demise, if Daniel persists in following his father’s model of analysis, his end will be the same as both his father and sister.

As such, even as he performs the role of the sadistic father, he also knows that in doing so, he depicts a complicit conformity with the systems responsible for destroying his family. Indeed, so long as Daniel performs this “identification with a paternal function,” his actions will only serve “the violent paternal authority of the state” (Morgenstern 78). Though he mocks the rising paranoia of Americans who are giving into the cold war fear that the Reds “were about to take over the country and shove large cocks into everyone’s mothers,” Daniel is no different (Doctorow 34). As long as he performs the role of sadistic father, he is, both figuratively and literally, allowing himself to become exactly what he fears most: a paternal paranoid prick of and for the state. He is, thus, only partially correct when he concludes that he has been robbed of his ability to resist his government. The latter only occurs so long as Daniel allows himself to be bound to the paternal function; once unbound from this state, resistance to the Way of the Father is entirely possible for Daniel.

However, said resistance can only come if he can realign himself with a maternal function, figured through his mother, Rochelle. The first sign we get that Rochelle offers a redemptive path to resistance comes from her decision to change her name as a young woman. Reflecting a fierce independence and unwillingness to have her identity defined for her, she changes her name from Rachel (Hebrew for female sheep) to Rochelle (French for little rock). By reimagining herself as a rock rather than a sheep, Rochelle displays her unwillingness to follow any flock,

whether Capitalist or Communist, Right or Left. In so doing, she models an essential lesson for Daniel: to resist Big (Br)Others, you must first learn how to reject inherited mythologies and prescriptive paranoia, regardless of the patriarchal institution that imposes them on you (i.e. the academy, the husband, the father, the state, the party). Rochelle's characterization, thus, serves to counter that of Paul's. Unwilling to give into complicit conformity, Rochelle's behaviours highlight how damaging Paul's delusional commitment to party politics and naïve notions of American democracy is for both himself and their family. As Rochelle knows, resistance begins by establishing one's ownlife in the face of the Way of the Father.

Paul's characterization also, as Doctorow notes in an interview, reveals a problematic feature of "The left, the radicals" who are not only "isolated and made objects of terror" but who also "have often been complications in their own destruction in some peculiar way" (Doctorow *Conversations* 51). To highlight just how self-destructive Paul's beliefs and behaviours are, Doctorow depicts Rochelle's repeated attempts to warn her husband of his complicit conformity with the systems he claims to be fighting against. The most salient of such warnings is in response to Paul's obsessive attempts to ostensibly expose the corruption of the state; she reminds him that "You know it's all rigged. Why must you eat your heart out?" (Doctorow 51). Rochelle recognizes that Paul's obsession with revealing systemic corruption only results in "wast[ing] too much of himself and [her son]" (Doctorow 45). Paul's ritual of focusing on a system that cannot be changed is an act of complicity so great that it consumes his heart, leaving him emotionally unavailable for his family.

In contrast, Rochelle concludes that current political, social, and economic systems are broken, "put[s] them all down and that was the end of it" (Doctorow 45). Consequently, unlike Paul who "continue[s] to be astonished, insulted, outraged, that [America] wasn't purer, freer,

finer,” “Rochelle didn’t have to do that. She didn’t have to go through the primer again and again. She knew the lesson” (Doctorow 51). This lesson is that following the flock leads to “the ritual of eating your heart out” – a prescribed and self-destructive practice that enables the fear of the other, complicit conformity and emotional anesthesia that not only marks the Way of the Father, but is also the triumvirate that destroys Paul and eventually their daughter as well (Doctorow 51). Though his family needs him to connect with his heart, Paul ignores the familial in favour of political systems that will ultimately consume him. He ends up complicit with the system – both Left and Right – that tears his family apart, an emotionally evacuated subject who serves the system that will ultimately execute him.

Though she continues to warn him, much to Rochelle’s dismay and surprise, Paul continues to believe that they are protected members of the American nation as well as the Communist Party. Even as he will be a victim of it, he responds to prescriptive paranoia by doublethinking. For example, he continues to believe in notions of the American Dream, such as justice and equality for all despite what is happening to his family. During one particularly disturbing discussion about the details of their trial, the results of which are increasingly depicted as stacked against them, Rochelle is incredulous, asking herself, “Dear God, does he really look for justice?” (Doctorow 206). Though she prays that he will finally gain some “foresight,” Paul remains committed to the Way of the Father; he is complicit with these patriarchal ideologies, highlighting the difficulty inherent in resisting either state or Party prescriptions (Doctorow 206). It is not surprising then that Paul crumbles when the state rules to execute him and his wife because he “never really believed it would happen” (Doctorow 51). Rochelle, however, “wasn’t to be surprised from the day they were indicted” (Doctorow 51). Her refusal to be deluded by tales of justice and the American Dream is, in part, what enables her to reject the paternalistic

attempts of her husband as well as the Communist Party to transform her into a sacrificial lamb for the flock. Not only this, but she also successfully resists any attempts, whether by the state or the media, to refigure her as a threatening other. Instead, she notes grimly that “Our trial brings out in me a self-knowledge that I might never have had to suffer: I am made of stone” (Doctorow 218). Rochelle ultimately concludes that Paul’s behaviours and beliefs set dangerous precedents for their children, confronting the reality that “Paul leaves his family for his cause” (Totter 88). In response, because he never gains the insight necessary to see past his own delusions, Rochelle knows that she is left with a “terrible burden” (Doctorow 206). Specifically, she must teach her children that they are not bound to the inheritance of any Father, even their own.

Once the state begins to tear her family apart, Rochelle astutely anticipates the challenges that will face her children. Their futures, like hers, will be determined by whether they choose to accept their so-called fate as Isaacsons or whether they choose to redefine their own identities; whether they choose to follow the Way of the Father or walk the Path of the (M)other. Rochelle focuses on showing Daniel alternatives to the way taken by his father, hoping that he will be able to pass down this knowledge to his sister at some future point. That she is both unsure and concerned about which path Daniel will choose to follow is clear. As Daniel observes, “I feel sometimes she studies me as if gauging the amount of my father in me, and the amount of Rochelle” (Doctorow 136). From her perspective, Daniel needs to move beyond Paul’s impersonal and analytical approach to others. As she knows, because she learns it from her own mother, “The only way to endure strife...is to be familial rather than political,” to build empathic connections rather than give into the Way of the Father (Totter 88).

This very choice—to be familial—will ultimately provide Daniel with a way to break free from the paternal binding that he finds himself in for much of the novel. The longer he follows

the paternal political path, the higher the chances that he will lose everyone and everything that is important to him. For his father, such insight comes far too late; only once all the legal appeals fail does Paul finally realize what he has done to his family. His betrayal of Rochelle and his children is a stark one for “ignoring family to fight for the left proves to be an empty struggle” (Totter 86). Despite its pretensions of moral superiority, the Left is just as willing as its opponents to sacrifice human lives for its cause. When Paul finally writes Rochelle a letter in the hopes that he could “get her approval for what he had done alone,” she refuses and instead chooses to “suspend[...] all communication with him” (Doctorow 297). Rochelle may be, like Paul, on death row, but she will not be bound to his namesake. Though throughout their trial, she “had been shielding him” from the reality that they were both being used by the state and the Communist Party, she ultimately decides that she must put her energy into preparing her children instead (Doctorow 297). Having been robbed of a future with her family as a result of Paul’s “gamble [with] her life,” Rochelle makes the best of what she has left, believing that “The child would make it worthwhile” (Doctorow 297 and 53). She dedicates her final days to ensuring the future well-being of her children because she understands the grim reality that her “death [will] be his [Daniel’s] bar mitzvah” (Doctorow 314). As such, to ensure that Daniel is not suffocated by the Way of the Father, she must show him the powerful capacity of the maternal to forge a new path—a Path of the (M)other that leads to a space of connection with one’s own heart and with the hearts of others.

Thus, while Paul’s constant analysis leads Daniel to feel as though he is doomed as an Isaacson, Rochelle shows her children that they too can reject the binding inherent in their father’s legacy. As a result, “Rochelle succeeds in protecting Daniel while Paul fails” (Totter 88). Even as she is abandoned by the Left and physically imprisoned by the state, she remains

emotionally and mentally free of the (Big Br)Other's prescriptions. Though the Way of the Father encompasses fear of the other, complicit conformity and emotional anesthesia, Rochelle will resist each of these in turn.

For example, she continues to demonstrate possibilities for subject-other relations that are not infected by suspicion or fear, even after being wrongfully convicted of treason and sentenced to death. As her actions emphasize, resisting the prescriptive to fear the other is possible when we move beyond analysis towards affect. It is not surprising that Daniel concludes that "she was a more committed radical" than his father (Doctorow 51). She understands that Paul's adoption of a hermeneutics of suspicion to reveal supposed injustices only serves as a mechanism of control for the Party and the state. Any connections that he makes are purely academic ones.

These connections lead to a sort of complicit conformity. The academic remains within the system even as they critique it, certain he is making a difference when in fact, he becomes a useful straw man for the state. This requires a sort of willful suspension of reality, similar to those who believe change is affected by signing online petitions or sending out a tweet. In contrast, Rochelle understands that effective resistance demands connections based on the heart—a possibility so long as the subject rejects the heart-eating rituals endemic to prescriptive paranoia. Of course, it would be totally understandable for Rochelle to give into her hatred of those who betray her and her family. It would also be understandable for her to succumb to the delusion that fear will protect her, especially since she loses so much because of those who follow the paternalistic prescriptions of the state. From her husband and "the complicity he had forced upon them," to Selig Mindish and his confession to the FBI, to the many Big (Br)Others who unjustly accuse her of treason, Rochelle has many reasons to give into suspicion, fear, hatred, and inertia (Doctorow 297).

Yet, despite the betrayal of all these Fathers, Rochelle will not do so. She does not succumb to fear, nor withdraw as do her children. In direct opposition to the paternalistic drives that she has seen leading to divisiveness and apathy, Rochelle rejects emotional anesthesia and continues to push for empathetic connection and compassion. Even as Paul continues to be obsessed with analysis and suspicion in prison, Rochelle takes action to address what she identifies as the “need for concrete improvement” (Totter 87). As a result, even when she does experience moments of rage towards a variety of paternalistic others/Others, she responds by focusing on human connection rather than defensive withdrawal.

What is particularly interesting about this is that in the novel’s depiction, “Rochelle’s anger at the state is coded as both familial and maternal” (Totter 88). In doing so, Doctorow’s text imagines a compelling counter to a paternal way. By imagining a maternal and familial approach to the other, the novel imagines possibilities for effectively negating the schism between subjects and others that enables the contagion of prescriptive paranoia to thrive and spread. One of the most dramatic examples of Rochelle’s commitment to fostering empathetic connection and acting to love the other is her response as she listens to the testimony of her former friend, Selig Mindish. Though it is his testimony that will lead to her execution, “She [still] saw the comrade’s life of terrible regret, of sad determination, one to another, and the assumption of their shared knowledge” (Doctorow 297). Rochelle’s ability to see the common humanity between them at this moment is a remarkable act of resistance against prescriptive paranoia, particularly so since it takes place in one of the strongholds of the Father, a court of law. Rochelle effectively resists even as she is surrounded by paternal figures in the courtroom who have clearly succumbed to cold war prescriptions of paranoia and fear. She retains an emotional empathy for Mindish, not a fear of the other. She knows that the fear of the other in times of crisis only makes a subject more

vulnerable to becoming a pawn for the Way of the Father. As such, when Daniel expresses his fear of Mindish, she responds by telling him, “Don’t be afraid of the Mindishes of the world. Pity them” (Doctorow 139). Her message to Daniel is clear: to choose the familial path is to choose an approach of care towards the other despite the prescriptives to do otherwise. Though she may not be able to save herself (like Winston’s mother or the mother in the Party’s flick), her embrace of the other stands as a site of resistance, a space of love that cannot be colonized by the prescriptive paranoia of the Father.

Rochelle similarly demonstrates her ability to defy the state’s attempts to control and prescribe her behaviour towards the other by refiguring the prison ward she is incarcerated in. Here, Rochelle refuses to define herself or the women in her cell block by the dictates of the law and state. Rather than fearing the so-called “criminals” in each of their various jail cells, “green shoots of concern go out from her to these women” (Doctorow 215). Significantly, Rochelle’s reach is depicted as regenerative here. Figuratively linked with life and mother earth, she shows the inmates, and Daniel, how to live despite the hostile conditions they find themselves in. She may be in prison, but the bars of her cell cannot contain her concern for others. That all the inmates “have enormous respect for her” serves to further underscore Rochelle’s ability to build community and foster empathetic connection even in spaces that are controlled by the (Paternal) Other (Doctorow 214).

Not only does “Rochelle’s refusal to give up her role as mother give...her community, even in prison,” it also becomes a crucial lesson for Daniel (Totter 93). During one of his final visits to see his parents on Death Row, Daniel’s narrative juxtaposes the differences between a visit with his father and a visit with his mother. In so doing, the narrative offers crucial insight into the powerful potential of the maternal to resist becoming assimilated into patriarchal

systems of oppression. For example, in what is an oblivious choice on his part, Paul spends his visit with his children showing them the dead bug collection he has amassed while in prison, describing how he uses a “paper cup...[to] hold it over them till they suffocate” – a description that eerily replicates the same acts by the state to “suffocate” his own family (Doctorow 263). In contrast, Rochelle—the only Isaacson who is never described as having breathing problems in the narrative—brings with her a sense of care so strong that even those who work in the prison are positively impacted by her. The Father prescribes anesthesia; the Mother evinces caring. As Daniel observes during his visit with her, “she ruled this place...[even] the guards were like servants who took care of her” (Doctorow 259). Significantly, not only does he recognize how powerful his mother is, but he also sees how she has managed to reconfigure the paternalistic space of the prison into a maternal one. Under her leadership, even those in the system—the guards—work to care for others; acting to love the other can also be contagious. Through Daniel’s narrative then, the novel highlights Rochelle’s power because “when Daniel sees her as synonymous with family,” Rochelle is granted “supernatural qualities” (Totter 88). Significantly, Rochelle chooses a different path than her husband’s: rather than suffocate life, she generates it. As such, she shows Daniel, and the reader by extension, a mode of resistance that results in an entirely different subject-other relation that promotes life rather than death. This alternative approach is one we can understand as a Path of the (M)other – a path that figuratively, materially, and linguistically holds the “other” within. That Rochelle is committed to ensuring that her children follow this approach is symbolically underscored when she tells Daniel, during this same visit, that she has chosen to send him and his sister to live with a family in “New Rochelle” (Doctorow 261).

As intimated by the name of their future home, both Isaacson children are offered an alternative to the paternal function modelled by their father. To her own detriment, however, Susan “rejects ...her mother’s familial nature” even though, as the text compellingly argues, it is the only sight/site upon which effective resistance against prescriptive paranoia can be built (Totter 89). Despite her mother sending her to New Rochelle, Susan continues to inhabit the space of the Father. In so doing, she demonstrates the same lack of foresight as Paul. Like him, she repeatedly chooses to focus on the political rather than the familial. The result, as is seen from her descent into a state of inertia, is that “Rather than being an agent of liberal change in the name of her family, Susan is so busy berating...her mother and Daniel—that no link can be established” (Totter 89). Susan’s internalization and acceptance of the divisiveness prescribed by paranoia forestall her ability to cope with the traumatic events of her childhood in adaptive ways. So, when Daniel laments to Susan that they have “taken away your granny glasses,” this statement figures as an important portent of her inability to see through the eyes of the (grand)mother: she cannot see outside of the patriarchal system that has rendered her mute (Doctorow 20). Because Susan is unable to connect with her family, she becomes complicit with her own erasure, retreating into “the silence of the starfish,” a state of emotional anesthesia which Daniel notes is “not many degrees of life lower before there is no life” (Doctorow 223). Consequently, though Susan is horrified when her father shares his dead bug collection during their visit to the prison, her choices also lead to the same suffocation of life, though in this case, the life snuffed out is her own. Because she rejects her grandmother and mother’s insight, she ends up like her father before her, eating her own heart out until her capacity to speak and feel is completely negated.

At first, Daniel is enraged with Susan for what he perceives as her willing surrender to being silenced: “You don’t talk, you don’t reinforce their sense of you” (Doctorow 224). His rage, however, quickly dissolves into grief and despair. Though he tries to pass on what he has learned from his mother throughout his young life, Daniel ultimately cannot save his sister—a fact that haunts him throughout the text. However, while Daniel blames himself for his sister’s decline, saving her was never in his hands. As the text repeatedly underscores, unlike Rochelle and Daniel, who “withdraw from the Isaacson family name...Susan...fiercely attaches herself to her heritage” (DeRosa 478). She remains bound by the legacy of her father. As such, she becomes yet another scapegoat sacrificed to enable the divisiveness prescribed to maintain control over subjects in a collective.

Daniel’s awareness of his sister’s impending death threatens to suffocate him as well, especially since he has yet to process the traumatic events of his childhood. As Naomi Morgenstern notes, “Susan’s suicide attempt and eventual death...retraumatize[s] Daniel” (83). However, her “death [also] functions as a repetition,” pushing him to confront a past that he has attempted to repress since his childhood (Morgenstern 83). Indeed, from the moment the FBI begins to tear his family apart, “The cold [has] hung like ice from his heart” (Doctorow 130). Though he is an adult when we first meet him, there is no question that Daniel, like his sister, has been “coping” with his grief by practising the ritual of eating his heart out. The consequences of this ritual are evident, for “Daniel shows throughout the whole narrative a feeling of detachment from others and a very restricted range of affect” (Ferrández 8). Through repression, Daniel has sought to protect himself from processing the grief of his parents’ death. This is his own form of emotional anesthesia, and his initial choices place him firmly on the Way of the Father, whether modelled by his own father or “state” fathers. He remarks throughout his narrative, for example,

that he feels nothing, which is evidenced repeatedly in his cold and abusive treatment of everyone around him.

It is thus fortunate for Daniel that he has not only his mother but also his grandmother to guide him towards a maternal path. For example, when his grandmother tells him that “You are a good boy, Daniel,” this serves to remind him that he can move past the emotional anesthesia that has infected him and facilitated his imprisonment in the paternal narratives that he has inherited (Doctorow 83). These narratives threaten his ability to establish the life-giving connection to the familial necessary if Daniel is to avoid the fate of his father and sister. Avoiding the latter, his grandmother reminds him, will require the same approach that his mother models for him in her final days in prison: namely, what makes it possible for him to resist the paternal narratives that bind him, she says, is “that you have compassion” (Doctorow 83). It is compassion that leads his mother to successfully refigure her literal and figurative imprisonment in the spaces of the Father; and, it is compassion that will allow him to do the same. Daniel’s book then documents his struggle to write a story outside of that prescribed for him by any number of paternal figures, whether his father or his dissertation supervisor. As such, writing becomes the vehicle for Daniel to free himself from the passive and emotionally cut-off man that he is throughout much of the novel, for him to move from emotional anesthesia to empathic connection.

While Daniel worries early on in the text that he has been permanently marked by his paternal heritage, as the novel continues, it underlines how Daniel’s fate is not a forgone conclusion (unlike Winston’s fate). Though his father has trained him to focus on developing an analytical rather than affective response to the other, Daniel questions such training right from the opening of his narrative. As he declares near the beginning of the text, “I, Daniel, was grieved, and the visions in my head troubled me and I do not want to keep the matter in my

heart” (Doctorow 27). Daniel’s unwillingness to continue to repress his emotions comes from his realization that doing so has only served to suffocate him. As he acknowledges, “Heart rejection is a problem” (Doctorow 309).

Through Daniel’s story then, Doctorow highlights how prescriptive paranoia works to invalidate and negate the personal and the familial. Indeed, personal experience and familial connection are perceived as threats to the political because of their ability to expose the subject’s dis-ease with(in) the system as well as the mechanisms used to keep subjects under control. Thus, when Daniel identifies that “Every man is the enemy of his own country,” it is this threat that he is referring to (Doctorow 84). Not surprisingly, one of the primary mechanisms used to keep subjects under control is to silence the personal. Subjects are thus always under the threat of erasure in one of two ways. First, they are taught to believe, as Paul teaches Daniel, that the personal is insignificant. And, second, their stories are replaced by master narratives that are sanctioned by those in power. The result is that the space of the paternal leads to the suffocation of the individual subject, of their ownlife. As *The Book of Daniel* depicts, “Daniel is the subject excluded from a history that he is nevertheless forced to inherit” (Morgenstern 69). To exit such a space then depends on his ability to revisit, reconcile and, ultimately, reinscribe these inherited historical narratives such that his personal voice is heard.

We learn at the opening of the text that this “book” is, in fact, Daniel’s dissertation in History – a document strictly regulated by the prescriptions, rules, and conventions of the university and his dissertation supervisor, Professor Sukenick. The most damaging of such prescriptions is the push towards adopting a so-called objective hermeneutics of suspicion. Significantly, while Daniel begins the dissertation from a third-person perspective, even at this early point in the novel, he recognizes that doing so enables others to imprison him in their

narratives. For example, his supervisor has become yet another paternal presence that he needs to resist. As Daniel struggles to express his personal story within the rigid academic framework prescribed by his supervisor, he asks himself, “are you just looking for another father. How many fathers does one boy need?” (Doctorow 26). His feelings of imprisonment in the paternal narratives prescribed by academia and his supervisor are further underscored not only by the opening image of Daniel as dressed in “a blue prison jacket” but also from his sense of the exhaust fumes of the cars on the road around him as “curling around his ankles, his waist, and finally his throat” (14, 15). These stark images highlight that Daniel’s voice and mobility are being stifled by the Fathers that he mistakenly continues to seek out at the opening of the text. It is significant then that his dissertation writing in the library is punctuated by calls for “SILENCE IN THE LIBRARY” (Doctorow 27). Clearly, Daniel is being suffocated by the paternal prescriptions embedded in the narratives he has inherited, whether from his own father or the other fathers he has sought guidance from. It is, thus, imperative for his survival that “Daniel finally understands [that] his mission: [is] to speak the *private* trauma of” his family (DeRosa 481; emphasis added). It is only in the subversive telling of his family’s personal history that Daniel can resist the political rituals that have effectively led him to replicate the same betrayal of the family as his father before him.

Though he struggles with the responsibility of speaking for them as he writes his dissertation, telling his family’s private story, Daniel realizes, is part of the necessary action needed to effectively resist the inherited patriarchal narratives that Susan is ultimately destroyed by. Moreover, while Daniel struggles with his guilt because he cannot save any of his family members from being scapegoated as a result of the prescriptive paranoia used by the state, he comes to realize that, through story, he can recover them from being othered—a point that his

grandmother predicts when she tells him that “I recognized in you the strength and innocence that will reclaim us all from defeat” (Doctorow 83). Telling the personal story of the Isaacson family, thus, becomes the purpose behind his book. Significantly, in so doing, he can answer his grandmother’s call to “exonerate our having lived and justify our suffering” (Doctorow 83).

Through story then, Daniel lays claim to the matrilineal inheritance left to him by his mother and grandmother, opening the door to a new path that is not governed by the patriarchal paranoid symbolic that he is imprisoned by. Arguably, the novel highlights that “Daniel’s journey is meant to parallel his mother’s, who clings to her familial identity so strong[ly]” that Daniel can learn how to follow her lead, rather than her husband’s (Totter 99). In this “new Rochelle,” Daniel can overcome his emotional anesthesia and establish empathic connections between himself and others which are built on “foregiv[ness] rather than some politically motivate[d]...quest” (Totter 99). Doing so can also help Daniel process his grief in more adaptive ways and facilitate his ability to overcome his fear of the other.

Though Daniel and his sister are defined as being “like figures in a myth, who suffer the same fate no matter what version is told,” as the ending of the novel shows, Daniel’s “dissertation” is ultimately a work that pushes the boundaries of academic conventions, a walk away from the Way of the Father and towards the Path of the (M)other. While academia may demand work written under a hermeneutics of suspicion from an objective and impersonal point of view, as Daniel learns, doing so enables yet another institution to silence his voice. In this sense, academia becomes symbolic of the larger institutions that work to silence Daniel throughout the novel – institutions that, as Susan notes, “are still fucking us” (Doctorow 19).

Though he hopes they can do so together, Daniel cannot wait for his sister to emerge from her starfish state to tell their family story. Sadly, he alone can reclaim the Isaacson’s from

institutional erasure as he writes his dissertation: “Daniel realizes that allying himself with Susan would lead him down the same path” towards self-destruction (Totter 90). Despite the evidence that it will lead to her demise, she remains committed to the political. Daniel, however, has always known that the personal is important because “an investigation of the past and an attempt to view it ... is the only way to arrive at an ... understanding of the self and of the world as it is constituted in the present” (Lucking 39). This knowledge alone, however, is not enough. Daniel must overcome the problem of how to write a story that does not endorse the paternally prescribed ideologies that seek to bind him to his identity as an Isaacson. In other words, Daniel must write a book that is truly his own rather than that dictated by his father, the History department, or his supervisor because, as Derrida suggests, “The subject is absolutely indispensable” (43). Indeed, to write his own book, Daniel must embrace the idea that “I don’t destroy the subject; I situate it.” (Derrida 43). To situate the subject, according to Linda Hutcheon, is “to acknowledge the ideology of the subject and to suggest alternative notions of subjectivity” (159). The latter is precisely what Rochelle models for Daniel. She understands that it is necessary to recognize internalizations of socially prescribed notions of identity whether by the state or the Party, to situate the subject. The narration of personal history is, thus, necessary to resist the erasure which occurs under the Way of the Father. Daniel may not be able to save his family from being sentenced by the state, but he can save them from being silenced by it.

Though Daniel begins his narrative by applying the academically sanctioned hermeneutics of suspicion to ostensibly uncover the truth about his parents’ guilt, he soon learns that in doing so, he threatens to replicate the paternal way modelled for him by his father. However, while throughout much of his narrative, Daniel continues to long for his father’s seeming ability to “Put it all together,” he also recognizes that his father’s suspicious approach to the other amounts

to “dangerous information put in my head by my reckless father” (Doctorow 46-47). Though he loves his father, he also sees that his father’s paranoid drive to suspect everything and trust no one leads to a fear of the other that is debilitating—so much so that it leaves Daniel feeling like “I was marked. Because *they* had a lot more power than *we* had” (Doctorow 46). Rather than modelling an adaptive approach to the other, his father instills in him a sense of fear that only serves to stifle the sense of agency so desperately needed by Daniel if he is to overcome the challenges facing him once his parents are gone. Perhaps most disturbing is that his father’s suspicious approach to others produces feelings of alienation in Daniel, which only serves to enable the very prescriptive paranoid approach that has torn his family apart in the first place.

As such, Daniel must accept, as his mother does, that neither his father nor his sister has the insight needed to enact an effective mode of resistance against the prescriptions made by any paternal o/Other. Like Rochelle, Daniel needs to understand that his father and sister “find...security in an illusory political process—and exulting in an alleged democratic system that is more a representation of democracy” than an actual democracy (Pratt 20). In “invest[ing] so heavily into leftist politics that they abandon the family,” Paul and Susan “serve as a warning to Daniel against abandoning the family for politics” (Totter 88-89). To heed this warning means that Daniel must confront the two things he fears most: his capacity to feel love and his capacity to build empathic connections with other people. As the matriarchs in his family show him, moving outside of patriarchal models of fear is possible, *but* it requires a willingness to inhabit a space of affect—the precise opposite of the emotional anesthesia that prescriptive paranoia calls for via the Way of the Father. Only once Daniel breaks through what he identifies as his “calloused capacity to feel powerful undifferentiated emotions” can he find salvation in the embrace of the other – even, or perhaps especially, those others who he perceives to have

trespassed against him (Doctorow 84). In other words, Daniel must find a way to inhabit a “position of forgiveness rather than vengeance;” of compassion rather than suspicion if he is to heal (Totter 90). It is, perhaps here, that Doctorow’s novel presents its strongest critique of prescriptive paranoia by portraying the powerful capacity of personal story to reconnect the subject with their heart should they choose to walk the Path of the (M)other.

As I have already noted, Daniel is imprisoned between the narratives of many “Fathers,” including his own father, his dissertation supervisor, as well as institutional Fathers like the academy, the nation, and the New Left Party. One of the main reasons Doctorow’s novel is so powerful then is that, regardless of whether these paternalistic others are individual or institutional, the prescriptions are essentially the same: suppress the personal, fear the other, and contain affect. Through its critique of these prescriptions, the novel exposes the mechanisms of control used to ensure that individual subjects behave in ways that serve the paternal drive to protect the political and marginalize the familial.

In so doing, Doctorow exposes the double bind of paranoia. On the one hand, paranoia offers a mode of interpretation – albeit a poor one – to bring order to the chaotic experience of the post-World War II world. However, on the other, it is also disseminated as a national prescription that is used against these same individuals. Daniel’s father is a perfect example of how an individual can both adopt a suspicious approach towards others while concomitantly being othered by this same approach. The result is that paranoia functions on two levels: personal and national. Consequently, *The Book of Daniel* highlights just how insidious (prescriptive) paranoia can be: “From below it is a popular movement within a population sensing it is being manipulated and controlled; from above it is a mind-set encouraged by national political leadership and the mass media” (Pratt 9). It is this bind that Daniel finds himself in when we first

meet him in the opening pages of the text, struggling to find a way to approach the traumas of his past while fearing what will happen in the future.

To be sure, Daniel is, on many levels, justified in viewing his experiences through the lens of paranoia. For one thing, his father teaches him to trust no one. In addition, as the trials of the Isaacsons show, “it is crucial to recognize that all eyes...are on the Isaacsons” (Morgenstern 79). In many respects, Daniel’s experiences as a child serve to support the notion that he must be on guard to prepare for an attack, to defend himself by fearing the other. He witnesses the failure of the Left and the American justice system to protect his family; his “trauma testifies to the failure of the legal system to dispense justice” (DeRosa 473). Even as an adult attempting to make sense of his parents’ trial and execution, he is repeatedly confronted with the fact that “between the FBI and the CP [his] folks never had a chance” (Doctorow 228). Taken together then, it is not unsurprising that though he witnesses and directly experiences the horrific consequences of prescriptive paranoia and mass hysteria, he also, at least initially, succumbs to adopting the same stance in response. Prescriptive paranoia is, after all, metastatic in nature.

Tellingly, it is at the intersections between suspicion and trust, prescription, and resistance that Daniel’s struggle takes place. The major crisis for Daniel comes from his inability to understand, at least for much of his narrative, that the adoption of a suspicious lens leads to “knowledge” that is purely academic. While it may serve institutional requirements for Daniel’s doctoral research, such knowledge is unhelpful and harmful – an ouroboric exercise that keeps him in a sadomasochistic state of paralysis. Rather than helping him to make sense of his past, Daniel’s assimilation into a system of (scholarly) suspicion and state-fuelled paranoia only serves to isolate him further from himself and everyone he loves. Not only this but, once internalized and normalized, adopting such a lens facilitates and perpetuates the continual growth

of both prescriptive paranoia as well as its companion, *pathological passivity*. In order to avoid the fate that befalls his father and sister, who are eventually consumed by their dogmatic commitment to academic analysis, Daniel must learn that the normalization of a hermeneutics of suspicion, along with the internalization of the prescriptive paranoia infecting individual and collective subjects around him, has dire consequences, not the least of which is the predilection to continue looking for enemies where none exist.

Daniel's search for such enemies only serves to deepen his trauma and extend the grief he experienced during the trial and subsequent execution of his parents by the state. It also leaves him without a sense of agency and power against those who seek to control him. Though he struggles to resist being erased by various institutional forces, he is fearful that because "I live in [a] constant and degrading relationship to the society that has destroyed my mother and father...I am deprived of the chance of resisting my government" (Doctorow 84). What he fails to recognize, however, is that his internalization of prescriptive paranoia, "Whether correct or delusional...has self-fulfilling tendencies" (Pratt 15). So long as he believes that he cannot resist institutional prescriptions, he will remain a pawn for various patriarchal institutions such as the academy and the state. Therefore, while Daniel's paranoia may well be "a reasonable reaction and a 'rational' response to conditions of objective powerlessness," as his narrative effectively underscores, paranoia, especially that prescribed by the state, "is not a particularly adaptive" or helpful response in times of chaos and trauma (Pratt 15). Ultimately, Daniel must reject institutional prescriptions in favour of a model that is more adaptive for himself, as well as everyone connected to him. Failing to do keeps Daniel trapped in the sadomasochistic cycle of violence, fear, and grief for the first three books of the novel.

As such, while understandable, the repercussions of adopting a paranoid lens are many. One significant repercussion is that through such a lens, “The distinction between the private and the public thus becomes intensified and irrelevant” (Morgenstern 79). In other words, the personal is made insignificant. Daniel is keenly aware of this mechanism, noting that his family is pushed “to the edges of its own domesticity” (Doctorow 136). As he learns from his mother, prescriptive paranoia works to break the bonds which form within a familial space, thereby overwriting the personal with the political. The repercussion Daniel witnesses is that “While our life is shrinking, another existence, another dimension, expands its image and amplifies its voices” (Doctorow 136). Not only are the Isaacsons erased in this new dimension, but this eradication of the familial is also twisted under the guise of protection for the greater good. Paul and Rochelle serve as scapegoats for a state that seeks to control its population; by projecting fear onto the Isaacsons, the state can maintain political control. Though Paul never figures this out, Daniel’s mother sees precisely how they are being used. As she grimly remarks to Daniel, for each new headline such as “Our troops are being captured and killed,” “We shall bear the brunt” (Doctorow 136). Rochelle understands exactly how images are manipulated and distorted by the state. Said images are used as instruments of control that work to silence the personal and give voice to the political.

In the process of completing his doctoral requirements, Daniel comes to understand how the (institutional) Other uses language and images to perpetuate the vicious cycle that both requires and creates an enemy. As he learns from his mother, the state and media are willing to distort the truth in order to create the enemies that bring the nation together. She correctly predicts that she, too, will be transformed into an image of terror. The latter is precisely what Daniel documents as he looks over the file of information that he has collected as part of his

dissertation research: “The picture I save of my mother shows her walking down the front steps of our house, holding her arm up to shield her face from the camera. Or is her arm held out in the threatening gesture the caption claims?” (Doctorow 136). Through the mechanism of prescriptive paranoia, Rochelle’s fear for herself and her family is twisted into an object of fear for the nation. She becomes a convenient mechanism of control during the cold war crisis. In response, when Daniel states that “I worry about images,” it is because he knows that “they are essentially instruments of torture” (Doctorow 83-84). Daniel’s understanding of the cognitive dissonance occurring as a result of prescriptive paranoia is a critical part of his character development.

Walking a path to a “new Rochelle” thus requires that Daniel learn how to reject the usual prescriptions for his dissertation. However, if he wishes to succeed in his “rejection of the Cold War narrative that has seemingly scripted his life,” he must continue to “seek complete ownership of his narrative,” he must seek to script his ownlife (Gill 483). In other words, he must walk away from writing a paternal dissertation so that he can write a familial one. Doing so will help him avoid the fate of his sister and father, who “permit themselves to be used,” thus, being conscripted into various Cold War narratives (Doctorow 232).

A significant part of the problem with adopting an academic approach to reclaiming Daniel’s family’s history, the novel suggests, is that to do so, one must accept the academy’s approach to knowledge production. Namely, he must adopt the “academic genre of suspicious reading” (Felski “Suspicious Minds” 216). Implied in each of the critical theory approaches which Daniel adopts, “apply[ing] a hermeneutics of suspicion is...widely understood as a mandatory injunction rather than a possibility among other possibilities” (Sedgwick 125). Even more concerning is that “the methodological centrality of suspicion to current critical practice has involved a concomitant privileging of the concept of paranoia” (Sedgwick 125). In

privileging suspicion and paranoia, Daniel's adoption of an academic approach threatens to keep him bound to the paternal scripts that have been written for him. As long as Daniel follows the prescriptions to read suspiciously, he is complacent with the systems that have destroyed his family. Indeed, adopting a suspicious approach sustains the very power dynamics between subject and other that have led to the vilification and execution of his parents. It also fuels Daniel's inability to feel emotion or inhabit a space of forgiveness because "Suspicious reading inscribes itself in the psyche as a particular mode of thought and feeling, a mind-set equipped with distinct qualities: distance rather than closeness; guardedness rather than openness; aggression rather than submission; superiority rather than reverence" (Felski "Suspicious Minds" 222). To write his dissertation by the rules outlined by either his supervisor or the university then extends the risk that Daniel will only duplicate the same self-destructive and obsessive focus on analysis as his father and sister before him. The prescribed model of academic research will only serve the paternal project to keep Daniel isolated, numb, and paranoid.

In Books One through Three, we have a protagonist, Daniel, who imagines the sadomasochistic behaviours enacted by the state against his parents. Daniel responds to this sadomasochism by reflecting similar behaviours as evidenced by the abuse his wife endures at his hands: he has yet to learn that giving into prescriptive paranoia fuels the contagion and leads to the replication of the same behaviours under which you suffer. Consequently, for most of the novel, Daniel's response illustrates his naïve belief that maintaining the divide between himself and the other—whether his wife, son or Mindish—will protect him. This is the Way of the Father.

With the latter point, Doctorow's critique is at its most salient because by demonstrating the ultimately self-destructive effects of Daniel's choice to adopt the political prescriptive

paranoia, the novel highlights the need to adopt another lens through which to approach the other. As his troubled narration demonstrates, Daniel is keenly aware that giving in to his sadistic impulses makes it difficult to overcome his own alienation. For example, in a salient address to the reader – who comes to represent a potential community who he can connect with – Daniel anticipates the responses to his abusive behaviour by asking: “if the first glimpse people have of me is this, how do I establish sympathy?” (Doctorow 16). What Daniel comes to understand is that “establishing sympathy” is necessary to avoid the madness that ultimately consumes his sister, Susan. As intimated in the title of the novel, without a sympathetic audience, without community, Daniel cannot benefit from the healing potential offered by writing his book. However, learning how to establish a connection with the other (in this case the reader), must be done in a way that still allows for a space for his/story as it really happened, and not just what his audience wants to hear. To do otherwise would be to feed the hermeneutic of suspicion.

As such, if Daniel is to find any kind of “solace in the pages of his own writing” for himself or his family, he must find another approach to understanding his past (Gill 483). It is, thus, a significant epiphany for Daniel when he imagines posing the following question to his supervisor: “Under what circumstances do we suspend criticism?” (Doctorow 208). Daniel, of course, already knows the answer to this question because his mother has given it to him: we suspend criticism when it threatens to keep us imprisoned in paternally prescribed narratives. Though he begins the text frantically attempting to provide an objective, analytical account of the Isaacsons and the cold war to make sense of his past, he ultimately realizes that an academic approach does not serve him or his family. It merely extends his entrapment in the narratives of others—in this case, the academy and his supervisor. As such, Daniel’s growing doubts about the value of writing a dissertation in History foreshadow his complete rejection of the academy at

the end of the text. As Sam Girgus compellingly argues, “the education Daniel requires cannot be gained at Columbia...Daniel requires lessons not of the mind but of the power of love” (Girgus 85). Though the academy works to invalidate his own experiences, Daniel’s task is to speak his story. His conclusions align with scholar Rita Felski who notes that while “scholars tend to bristle at any perceived personalization of their academic work...To acknowledge the affective dimensions of argument...[does] not necessarily...invalidate its intellectual or analytical components” (Felski “Suspicious Minds” 219). Daniel’s book (and Doctorow’s novel) presents an alternative to that prescribed by the academy. It is a thesis--in the etymological sense—a proposition for a *hybrid history*: one that rejects the privileging of analysis over affect, objectivity over subjectivity, distance over connection.

So, because he learns it from his mother, Daniel chooses to write the present book rather than write a solely academic and objective doctoral dissertation. This work narrates the struggle to break free from the grips of prescriptive paranoia. Daniel’s narrative shifts between the third and first-person symbolize his struggle to break free from the rules and conventions of dissertation writing. His struggle with writing from a third-person objective stance becomes apparent in the shifting perspectives of the narration. While Daniel at first internalizes the social, cultural, and academic pressures to remain objective by writing from the third-person perspective, his narrative keeps slipping into the first-person perspective. Though Daniel corrects himself in the beginning of the text, as the narrative continues, Daniel comes to recognize that the pressure to absent oneself from history results in his complicit conformity with his own self-erasure. As Daniel knows, suppressing the voice of the individual leads to objectification and, ultimately, torture and extermination. Daniel then must learn how to situate himself in his own history and resist the paternal dismissal of his story. That he ultimately chooses to write

primarily in the first person foreshadows what will be a redemptive ending. This will not, however, be easy.

Daniel must deal with great loss: his family has been erased and exterminated through national discourse, scapegoated by the Way of the Father. Thus, throughout his narratives, Daniel worries about the power of language to objectify and transform the subject into anti (subject) matter, thereby providing the justification and vehicle for torture and extermination. Not surprisingly, then, Daniel worries about the consequences of translating the horrors of the past into language. He also fears the dangers of replicating the torturous effects of language that have been enacted against his family. In addition, he is concerned that to speak of his loss will result in reduction. However, Daniel knows that to escape the myths that have been written for him, he must write his own story. As poet and theorist Helene Cixous states, we must take on “the great battle with language...to speak in spite of language; to speak though language has already said everything” (“Foreword” xvi). While much of Cixous’s work aims to elucidate the problems for women who attempt to articulate their subjectivity from within a masculine language system, her assertion that language must and can be engaged with works very well here. Indeed, as she states, writing “is an effort for rehabilitation or for salvation of what risks being lost or debased” (*Rootprints* 98). Echoing the language of Daniel’s grandmother, Cixous here points to the power of language to reclaim his family through story. However, to survive in a paranoid state, one must first learn how to see differently. Seeing differently is done through writing differently. Just as Doctorow’s novel validates the personal by reinscribing Historical accounts of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg through the eyes of their son, so too does Daniel’s book validate the importance of his family’s story.

This awareness, achieved through the act of storytelling, enables Daniel to ultimately reject prescriptive paranoia, giving way to the possibility for more ethical subject-other relations (outside of paranoid patriarchal norms) that heal rather than harm him. In this manner, he ultimately refuses to see the other through a lens of fear even when prescribed during so-called times of terror. Instead, Daniel counters such fear by stating that, “In times of crisis I am always sensitive to the people on the periphery” (Doctorow 164). Though it takes him until the final book of the text to understand the importance of learning to relate to others, he comes to understand the inextricable link between resistance and responsibility to the other. In so doing, the novel offers a powerful imaginative revisioning of a subject-other relation that does not rely on the vilification of the other, ultimately providing a compelling counter to the notion that, in times of crisis, the only response is to seek out an other to blame.

In an interesting twist that further underscores the possibility of finding alternative spaces to that prescribed by the many fathers in his life, Daniel makes a journey to Disneyland in the fourth and final book of the novel. Describing his entrance into Disneyland “like [that of] a foreigner going through customs,” it is both ironic and significant that it is arguably in the home of complacency itself that Daniel takes the most important step towards walking the Path of the (M)other (Doctorow 306). That he is walking this path is underscored when Daniel notes that Disneyland is “shaped like a womb” (Doctorow 301). Here, Daniel will experience the threefold aspects of the Path of the (M)other – ownlife, empathetic connection, and acting to love the other.

Daniel has come to the park to search for Selig Mindish, the man he blames for his parents' death. Despite his mother's directives to pity rather than fear the Mindishes of the world, Daniel has been both fueled by and haunted by his fear and hatred of Mindish. He has yet to learn that

this very rage and fear has been keeping him imprisoned in narratives of prescriptive paranoia. Disneyland, then, is portrayed as a kind of underworld – one from which Daniel will be reborn. That Disneyland symbolizes his final move towards compassion, forgiveness, and redemption is evident in two ways. First, his trip to Disneyland occurs in the final part of the novel entitled Christmas—a holiday linked with family. Second, his visit is symbolically depicted as a journey that has him confronting the core traumas at the heart of the matters which have plagued him throughout the novel: images, fear of the other, the execution of his parents and the rejection of his own heart.

Disneyland is, perhaps, the ultimate image of imitation in the text: a place that Daniel notes offers a “radical process of reduction...with regard to the nature of historical reality” (Doctorow 304). For Daniel, Disneyland is a microcosm of larger American society, reflecting the same commitment to the prescriptive paranoia of other paternal institutions throughout the text. Indeed, Disneyland’s project is to submit patrons to “a process of symbolic manipulation,” which stupefies them and encourages them to experience culture, history, and literature through sanitized adaptations (Doctorow 304). In this way, it does not deviate much from Daniel’s earlier depictions of the media or the state. He astutely observes that “What Disneyland proposes is a technique of abbreviated shorthand culture for the masses, a mindless thrill” (Doctorow 305). His dark prediction is that “In a forthcoming time of highly governed masses...this technique may be extremely useful both as a substitute for education and eventually, as a substitute for experience” (Doctorow 305). His disturbing conclusion is that Disneyland’s “real achievement” is its “handling of crowds” which evinces methods of control so complete that it elicits complete obedience; as Daniel sees it, this is a stronghold of the Way of the Father (Doctorow 305). Indeed, Daniel notes grimly that Disney’s manipulation of the collective would “light admiration

in the eyes of an SS transport officer” (Doctorow 305-6). Disneyland thus exemplifies the worst aspects of the nation, figuring as a replica of America in the novel. It is a place that benefits from the exploitation of people like the Isaacsons, a place where minorities are excluded/marginalized (in the park’s presentations, if not its customers), and their struggles are commodified into various forms of entertainment, from rides to souvenirs. It is also, Daniel notes, a space where crowds willingly submit to security and surveillance methods sold by the park in exchange for simulations that allow vicarious engagement in history and culture. Ultimately, it is a training ground for complicit conformity, presenting easy rides for navigating the past and the future. There is no ownlife in a “disneyfied” space, only an endless series of anodyne and sanitized experiences that resist human connection, lest the truth behind Disney myths comes out.

Therefore, for Daniel, a self-identified foreigner in a Baudrillardian hyperreal space,<sup>49</sup> Disneyland must, improbably, become a training ground for something else entirely. It is here that Daniel will determine if he can find the path to the maternal within the house of the Father. Described as wearing the same “prison shirt” that he dons in the novel's opening, Daniel’s journey into Disneyland thus functions as a simulated test for Daniel (Doctorow 277). And, it is here, in the fourth and final book of the novel, as he finally confronts Mindish, that he experiences a critical epiphany. Though at various moments throughout the narrative, Daniel appears to understand the powerful potential of what Rochelle had attempted to teach him, as his continuing abusive behaviour towards his family suggests, it has only been at the level of the mind. For Daniel to truly break free from his imprisonment in the narratives of others, Daniel

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<sup>49</sup> Baudrillard’s notion of a “hyperreality” is closely aligned with his concept of “simulacrum.” For Baudrillard, the postmodern world is one where reality has been replaced by “images” making it difficult for the subject to identify what is real and what is not. This idea is reflected in Doctorow’s depiction of Disneyland. Refer to “Jean Baudrillard” in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* or refer to Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* for more detail.

must learn to apply Rochelle's lessons at the level of the heart. Though his specific Path of the (M)other differs from that of Winston's journey in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the framework of both remains congruent. Surrounded by excess and anesthesia, Daniel must become his own minority of one.

When Daniel first meets Mindish in Disneyland, Mindish is described as a shadow of his former self, a fragile and disorientated older man. Mindish has clearly succumbed to the machinations of prescriptive paranoia. In the terms of the text, he has become a starfish, spending his days riding the cars in Autopia, "a tracked ride that offers the illusion of steering to the person behind the wheel" (Doctorow 307). That this ride is in Tomorrowland serves to highlight further Mindish's entrapment in the prescribed texts of others. While Daniel is trapped by his past, Mindish is trapped by a simulated future; in either case, both are trapped by the illusion that they have agency and mobility, even as their paths are literally and figuratively on rails like the rides in Autopia. It is significant then that the encounter between Daniel and Mindish offers the potential to derail these narratives, and in so doing, reveals space outside the paranoid subject position that keeps them imprisoned in the past or the future.

Daniel has fantasized about confronting Mindish in order to exact vengeance for the death of his parents throughout the narrative, despite his mother's directive to be compassionate and forgiving. Indeed, each time Daniel speaks of Mindish, his tone is underpinned by either rage or emotional anesthesia. Yet, when he finally confronts Mindish, Daniel is conflicted; he is both afraid of approaching him and coldly analytical. He does not yet recognize that in ignoring his mother's call, he only serves to keep himself imprisoned in the "us vs. them" mentality embedded in the Way of the Father. This imprisonment is apparent when in response to his first sighting of Mindish in Tomorrowland, Daniel's reaction is that "I found myself needing more air

than I had” (Doctorow 307). Even as his body warns him of the suffocation embedded in his unwillingness to let go of his hatred and inertia, Daniel’s overriding response is to resist an empathic connection and maintain his distance from Mindish. When Mindish openly displays his emotion upon finally recognizing Daniel, Daniel’s initial response is that “I was sickened to see water well from the congested yellow corners of his eyes” (Doctorow 309). Echoing his earlier reactions to others who show him love, Daniel’s instinctive response is to retreat into some form of angry analysis, often to justify his own poor treatment of the other. Mindish, however, does not respond in kind even though he shares many of the same burdens as Daniel. On the contrary, Mindish does what Daniel has yet to do: he chooses to emerge from his starfish state to bridge the divide between him and Daniel. Put another way, Mindish chooses to act by extending love towards an other. Prompted by Daniel’s reference to himself by his childhood moniker, “Danny,” Mindish’s moment of recognition is described through a symbolic simile: “His head stirred like a turtle’s head coming out of its shell” (309).

Though now exposed and vulnerable, as he sheds his shell of fear, Mindish takes the step that Daniel has feared to take throughout the text: he shows Daniel how to build an empathic connection with the other. Though Daniel is often portrayed as a cruel adult, Mindish only sees Daniel as a little boy. Symbolically emulating the maternal approach previously linked with Rochelle and Daniel’s grandmother, Mindish “raised his large, clumsy hands and touched the side of my face. He found the back of my neck and pulled me forward and leaned toward me and touched the top of my head with his palsied lips” (Doctorow 309). Though to this point Mindish has only existed as Daniel’s sworn enemy, this moment transforms their relationship from one defined by the political to one defined by the familial; Mindish channels the caring nature of “Daniel’s mother” (Totter 98). Daniel can now see what his mother sees earlier, namely, that

“Mindish is not a monster but a suffering soul capable of love” (Gordon 90). By choosing to “behave in a grandfatherly way toward Daniel,” Mindish’s embrace becomes transformative; it is a “gesture which transcends all Daniel’s pain and anger,” a step towards the Path of the (M)other (Gordon 90). The result is that both men are set free from the prescribed narratives that they have been locked into, figuratively emerging from their respective shells. As a result, just as this “one moment of recognition...restored [Mindish] to life,” so too does it restore Daniel to life as well (Doctorow 309). A turning moment in Daniel’s narrative, the embrace between Daniel and Mindish, is “a moment of catharsis for Daniel” (Gordon 90). It signifies the moment in the text “when he is able to break free of his trauma and begin to complete his mourning” (Gordon 90). Released from his rage and fear of the other, Daniel is now free to confront the matter of his heart. Echoing what his mother has been teaching him all along, Mindish reminds him of the power of empathic connection. As they both show Daniel, the loving embrace between subject and other carries within it the potential to restore life.

Overwhelmed by his awakened sense of emotion, Daniel is at a loss at how to respond to Mindish’s gift of love, of “a new heart” (Gordon 90). It is unsurprising then that Daniel’s immediate response to Mindish’s embrace is an academic one; in a highly symbolic passage of analysis, he details the medical problems that face heart transplant patients, concluding that he too is at risk of heart rejection if he cannot learn to accept his “new heart.” However, Daniel soon recognizes that scientific analysis will not help him here since “Doctors still have a lot to learn about why we reject our hearts” (Doctorow 309). Instead, Daniel sees the empathic connection that he has with the individual heart transplant patients, ultimately concluding that he too is at risk if he cannot accept his new heart. Like them, Daniel will die if his “body attacks its own heart” (Doctorow 309). However, there is a significant difference between Daniel and heart

transplant patients: he has agency. Daniel can choose to stop attacking his heart so long as he takes the step to move beyond analysis towards affect. The answers for Daniel do not lie with academic discussions of his past; they lie with an embrace of the familial.

Once Daniel accepts Mindish's gift, he discovers that he has broken free of his imprisonment in the narratives of others. No longer describing himself as a prisoner who struggles to breathe, he finally validates the importance of his story. By the end of the novel, Daniel has decided to submit a hybrid dissertation that blends the academic with the emotional, the objective with the personal, analysis with affect. In so doing, he is freed from the state of paralysis that Susan and Paul succumb to. Daniel, then like his mother and grandmother before him, is freed from the paternal narratives that have been prescribed to him because he finally realizes what they always knew; there is a "central relationship between the law, state repression and the organization of violence" (Pepper 479). Furthermore, because he now defines the terms of his story, he is ultimately able to reclaim his parents from History as well – even though it means facing the grief and trauma that he has tried so hard to repress.

Daniel is ultimately successful in reclaiming his heart. In so doing, he fulfils his grandmother's "good boy" vision at the end of the novel, evidenced by his choice to write three different endings for his book. Taken together, the multiple endings offer hope that Daniel's so-called heart transplant has been successful; most importantly, they highlight his ability to triangulate the three areas needed for change: analysis, affect, and action. The first ending, entitled "THE HOUSE," narrates Daniel's decision to revisit his childhood home after returning from Disneyland to New York. Typical of his academic training, he begins this ending with an analysis of the poverty and class issues that continue to plague his old neighbourhood in the Bronx. However, his attention soon turns to watching the children playing on the porch, an

observation that elicits a nostalgic longing to see the inside of his old home. He considers asking the current family to show him but ultimately decides that “I will do nothing. It’s their house now” (Doctorow 315). While, earlier in the text, confrontations with his past led either to a retreat into cold analysis or an outburst of rage, Daniel’s reaction here highlights his transformation and embrace of the importance of empathic connection. Analysis no longer obscures the personal: it simply provides context. Daniel’s decision to do nothing highlights his decision to move on from his past and his recognition that the familial space is a sacred one.

The second ending, entitled “THE FUNERAL,” depicts Daniel’s narration of two separate funerals: that of his parents and of his sister—the latter who has finally succumbed to death by analysis. That Daniel uses the singular to refer to the two funerals is significant because it figuratively links the deaths of his mother, father, and sister. Though in life, this family has been torn apart; in death, Daniel “arranged everything” so that they could be together, ensuring that Susan’s grave is “very near my parents’ graves” (Doctorow 317). By narratively splicing the two funerals together in this second ending, Daniel overwrites the divide that has ripped his family apart. In so doing, Daniel imagines a familial space for the Isaacsons—an especially difficult act because he is the only one left alive.

In any event, echoing his first ending, Daniel is again confronted with his past in this second ending. At first, it appears Daniel will retreat into his Inertia Kid shell as he runs around the cemetery to hire prayer makers to pray for his family. However, as he implores them, again and again, to pray for all those he has lost, we witness another example of how successful Daniel’s heart transplant has been: he reveals that “I think I am going to be able to cry” (Doctorow 318). Here action has met affect; Daniel is finally free of emotional anesthesia and can mourn the loss of his loved ones. In so doing, he follows the Path of the (M)other by

choosing to build empathic connections with others, internalizing the lesson at the heart of his bar mitzvah. Because “Daniel can demonstrate more familial tendencies in his own life,” he can finally break free of patriarchal prescriptions of paranoid subject-other relations (Totter 87). In so doing, Daniel, and the reader, by extension, understand that Doctorow’s text is as much about showing the reader a path of resistance as it is about revising the Rosenberg trials. This is a text that chooses love over fear; family over politics; the personal over History.

As such, I agree with Eileen Totter when she argues that “Doctorow’s text is not a tribute to leftist politics like scholars claim, but rather the family, which alone possess the unique strength to endure the corruptive politics of both the right and left” (87). Daniel’s ability to finally demonstrate emotion as he now openly grieves the loss of his parents and sister indicates that he has been transformed. Daniel is restored to life; now that he walks towards the Path of the (M)other, he can avoid the fate that befalls those who follow the Way of the Father. That Daniel bridges the divide between himself and his once estranged wife as he takes the step to reach out to “hold my wife’s hand” signifies the start of his liberation – a liberation that culminates in the third and final ending of the novel (Doctorow 318).

The final ending, entitled “THE LIBRARY,” returns to the setting depicted in the novel’s opening. Daniel is sitting in the university library, putting the final touches on his dissertation submission. In a metanarrative moment, Daniel decides to title his dissertation “DANIEL’S BOOK” —a work that he notes is much more than academic because it is, as his subtitle underscores “A *Life* Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctoral Degree” (318, emphasis mine). Daniel’s refusal to write a dissertation that fully meets the academy’s requirements is a significant act of resistance. For example, while the novel opens with Daniel struggling to meet the academy’s demands for objective narration—demands which

echo his father's demands for objective analysis as well— here, Daniel makes the final decision to reject these prescriptions. He reclaims his story from the academy and, in so doing, negates the paternal and institutional attempts to erase his voice. To move forward, Daniel must leave the university library and all that it represents: he must stop searching for answers to his past in the house of the Father (i.e. Columbia), choosing to narrate a space for his ownlife rather than giving into the privileging of a hermeneutics of suspicion that so often characterizes the academy.

Daniel takes one final action to free himself from the script that keeps him locked into his tragic past and fearful of a future that is not predetermined. Though Daniel begins this third and final ending by telling us that he had hoped to continue writing his dissertation, he also knows that to remain in the library means to remain locked within the very narratives that have suffocated him all along. As such, it is significant that Daniel's conclusion to the text depicts his ability to respond to the "call away from analysis, towards action" (DeRosa 486). To achieve the latter, Daniel must "recognize in paranoia a distinctively rigid relation to temporality, at once anticipatory and retroactive" (Sedgwick 146). In so doing, Daniel can take the final step towards what he has "glimpse[d as] the lineaments of other possibilities" (Sedgwick 146). Daniel's final act of resistance then is to make a choice that will restore him to the present moment—a space where paranoia cannot, by definition, exist.

Though Daniel arguably already knows what he needs to do to be present, he is reminded by a figure who models the steps that Daniel needs to take. This figure is a fellow student who, unlike Daniel, is outside demonstrating against the academy and all it represents. Telling Daniel that "we're bringing the whole motherfucking university to its knees," the protestor tells Daniel to get out, insisting that he stop writing and leave the library (Doctorow 318). At first, Daniel does not seem to understand that he is finally freed from the strictures of the Symbolic and that

he may leave the house of the Father. However, the protestor's message is clear. In a symbolic response to Daniel's request for more time to write, he tells Daniel: "No wait, man, the time is now...Close the book, man, what's the matter with you, don't you know you're being liberated?" (Doctorow 318). Daniel's decision to finally close the book and immerse himself back into his present time demonstrates his decision to stop living in the past or fearing the future. It also illustrates to the reader that the matter with him has been resolved. The successful recipient of a new heart, Daniel is liberated from the paternal narratives that have bound him as well as from his inertia and fear. Our final glimpse of him is one of hope; for the first time in the text, Daniel smiles. As he moves to exit the library, Daniel's final act restores him to life; unlike Paul and Susan, Winston and Julia, he is not "one of the dead" (Orwell 177).

Through his depiction of Cold War America, Doctorow's novel demonstrates that when we are complicit in "fear-producing mechanisms" such as those embedded in prescriptive paranoia, we become active elements of a system that only serves to destroy us (Massumi ix). To effectively resist any complicit participation in said systems, we need to recognize two things: first, that "the enemy is us" and second, that "analysis, however necessary, is not enough to found a practice of resistance" against prescriptive paranoia (Massumi ix). In response, Doctorow's novel offers a productive alternative that can facilitate such resistance because it addresses the need for a three-pronged approach; namely, resistance against prescriptive paranoia is located at the intersection of analysis, action *and* affect. By following Daniel, a fictionalized representation of one of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg's sons, Doctorow effectively models an approach that opens up possibilities for rejecting prescriptive paranoia and embracing the other in the act of love.

As Daniel's narrative unfolds, we learn that there are serious personal, social, and ethical consequences that arise when subjects engage in Orwellian "Two Minute Hate" rituals; fueled by prescriptive paranoia, the latter is something that we often see Daniel engaging in throughout the text in his physical and psychological abuse of his wife, son, and adoptive parents. One of the most devastating consequences of such rituals is that Daniel ends up wholly cut off from his ability to feel love. By tracing the deleterious effects that the latter has on Daniel, the radical call to action which Doctorow's text compellingly makes is that we must reconnect with our hearts. In so doing, we can break the cycle of complicit conformity and fear of the other that threatens to destroy our personhood, and by extension, keep us imprisoned in the narratives of others—complicit pawns in a cyclical game where we have little control. As we saw in the previous chapter, Winston is ultimately unable to break free from the Party's paranoid line; he is so cut off from his emotions by the end of the novel that he willingly sacrifices Julia, ultimately losing himself in the process. Daniel inhabits a similar position at the opening of Doctorow's novel. However, Daniel ultimately achieves something that Winston does not because he successfully navigates a path beyond prescribed thinking. In so doing, he finds a means of answering the important question that has faced Winston, Julia as well as the Isaacson family: "how, now, does one resist?" (Massumi ix). Resistance, *The Book of Daniel* argues, is born from the possibility of moving outside of institutionalized modes of knowing that have normalized a hermeneutics of suspicion.

Significantly then, the novel exposes the horrific repercussions facing any subject who refuses to see how they are, if not culpable for, at least complacent about their dis-eased state. To put it in Orwellian terms, Doctorow's novel challenges us to refuse the "deliberate drowning of consciousness" which so many citizens engaged in during the Cold War and which they continue

to engage in today (Orwell 17). In so doing, *The Book of Daniel* effectively challenges the erroneous belief that “it [i]s impossible to do otherwise” (Orwell 17). Significantly, through Daniel’s narrative, we find ourselves implicated at the site of an existential confrontation with our own culpability for and complacency within a paranoid system. “If fear is a power mechanism for the perpetuation of domination,” as Doctorow’s novel compellingly suggests, and “if we are unable to separate our selves from our fear,” then our “participation in the capitalist culture of fear [produces] a complicity with our own and other’s oppression” (Massumi ix). We are, like Daniel, responsible for allowing ourselves to give in to the fear of the other and thus, to be used by the Way of the Father despite our knowledge that it perpetuates hatred and breeds division.

It is this complicit conformity that Doctorow’s novel exposes so well because, throughout the narrative, the reader is repeatedly confronted with the repercussions of continuing to buy into subject-other relations predicated on prescriptive paranoia. While a reader may respond in horror to Daniel’s many cruel and sadomasochistic behaviours towards others—even those he professes to love—as Daniel reminds us in one of the multiple shifts to second-person narrative, we are in no position to judge him. Consequently, reading this text is a reflective act that allows readers to see how they, like Daniel, are supplicants to a system that only serves to disconnect them from their hearts and ultimately leaves them unable to engage in meaningful subject-other relations. Daniel pointedly asks readers: “Who are you anyway? Who told you you could read this?” (Doctorow 72). We are, this text accuses us, no less guilty of existing in a state of emotional anesthesia towards others than Daniel is – an accusation that will take on even darker tones in my chapter on Brand’s *Inventory*.

As if emphasizing the text's ability to confront us with our implication into said binary systems, which seek to divide "us" from "them," Daniel tells us that, "reader, I am reading you" (66). Though the latter may first appear to be only accusatory in tone, it is followed by Daniel's assurance that, far from an act of division, his direct address is meant to cross the chasm between reader and read; judger and judged, for "together, [Daniel tells us], we may rend our clothes in mourning" (Doctorow 66). This powerful use of second-person highlights the connection between reader and read, subject and other, and foreshadows what the text will come to emphasize as necessary to overcome the destructive effects of prescriptive paranoia: empathic connection.

So, while the first three books of Daniel's narrative seem to support "a general consensus that we cannot, in fact, separate ourselves from fear," the text comes to the significant and compelling conclusion that despite said fear, "it is necessary to reinvent resistance" (Masumi ix). Consequently, not only does *The Book of Daniel* challenge us to see that we are ultimately responsible for our own cure and salvation, but it also persuasively argues, in its final pages, that there are ways of knowing outside of those prescribed to us. In so doing, it shows us that resistance against prescriptions of fear and paranoia is not futile after all. By challenging readers to analyze the destructive effects that come from prescriptive paranoia, whether internalized at an individual or collective level, the novel imagines possibilities for change and healing outside of state prescribed paranoia. And, it does so by imagining the possibilities open to those who choose to walk the Path of the (M)other.

By refusing to live in a mode of anticipation and fear, *The Book of Daniel* opens a space for hope. In so doing, Doctorow's novel makes clear that even during times of crisis, the individual can make a difference. We are ultimately responsible to act, to *reject prescriptive*

*paranoia*, to rise above our own traumas, to forgive those who trespass against us, and to embrace the other in love. The novel's final line is a revelation of biblical proportions: "*Go thy way Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end*" (Doctorow 319). An apocalyptic biblical allusion, the final line of Doctorow's book is one that comes after Daniel has already left the library; he has been released from the book, and as the reader finishes this sentence, so too are we. The final message is clear: Daniel is no longer imprisoned by narratives of the end times; Daniel is free to live in the present. At the end of Doctorow's novel, Daniel not only determines the terms of his own story, but he is also finally able to enter a space of reconciliation: a space that, while devastating as he mourns the loss of his parents and sister, is ultimately defined by an acceptance of the heart, community, and the embrace of the other.

We too are implicated here at the end of the text for what "*Daniel* reveals is that the revolutionary power of thought lies in allowing oneself to be shocked by that which it engages" – something which Doctorow's text shares with Brand's *Inventory* (Gill 495). As such, while our "reading [this or any book] is fundamentally a risky endeavour," it is a potentially powerful one as well (Gill 495). As the novel tries to teach us, redemption, change, and learning as well as our ability to reject the destructive effects of prescriptive paranoia can only come from our willingness to face our personal histories – even those stories of suffering. We must engage with history on a personal level rather than remain distanced "observers" and academics. As an alternative, the novel models adaptive ways to embrace the other by showing us a path based on empathy, community, and forgiveness. In contrast to the state-prescribed relationship between subject and other, which is based on suspicion and fear, such an embrace lies in the ability of the subject to see beyond the destructive effects of the predominantly paranoid lenses through which they view the world and everyone in it.

Like all of the primary texts at the heart of my project, Doctorow's novel is deeply concerned about the effects of prescriptive paranoia, especially in terms of how it negates the subject and fosters a paranoid fear of the other. However, unlike *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Book of Daniel* ultimately ends in redemption for the subject. Such redemption is found in an embrace of the other which is based on forgiveness, self-awareness, and the ability to feel on the Path of the (M)other. While Daniel grapples with his internalization of prescriptive paranoia for much of the novel, he ultimately becomes an important symbol of hope for the reader. The novel foreshadows this early on by referring to "Daniel [as] a Beacon of Faith in a Time of Persecution" (Doctorow 15). Significantly, the novel serves as an effective model for alternative responses to those that internalize a hermeneutics of suspicion and prescriptive paranoia. In so doing, Doctorow's text is significant because it supports Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's optimistic argument that there is "a possibility of unpacking, of disentangling from their impacted and overdetermined historical baggage that many of us carry around under the label such as 'the hermeneutics of suspicion'" and prescriptive paranoia (Sedgwick 124). *The Book of Daniel* works to expose the dissemination of prescriptive paranoia as a limited and problematic lens through which to view the world. Thus, Doctorow's novel demonstrates that rather than keeping America, or any place, safe from the outside world, prescriptive paranoia is an illness that paralyzes and threatens to destroy the individual, the family, and the collective, bringing with it more harm than good. As Brand will show in my final chapters, the Way of the Father leads only to cynicism and death. It is in the embrace of the Mother/cousinhood/familial that we are able to find new life in the present.

## Chapter Four: Shattering the Suspicious Subject Model or, How Dionne Brand's

### *Inventory Takes Down the Way of More Fathers*

#### Introduction

Taken together, my previous three chapters can be understood as a type of theoretical contact-tracing, analytical attempts at identifying variants of concern emerging from a privileging of a hermeneutics of suspicion in the earlier half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each of my primary texts highlights the consequences of following the Way of the Father, doing so by warning that the internalization and normalization of the characteristics of this Way (i.e. fear of the other, complicit conformity, and emotional anesthesia) continues to produce ripples of social and ecological devastation. It is not, however, inevitable that we continue to follow the Way of the Father. If we heed the warnings in Orwell's and Doctorow's imagined wastelands, we can choose a path other than the destructive one emerging from our complicity with prescriptive paranoia.

Recall that, though each only walks this Path to varying degrees, for both Winston and Daniel, the Path of the (M)other offers the possibility of getting to the matter of their hearts. In the absence of the (M)other, both characters feel a sense of longing that threatens to destroy them. Though the Way of the Father offers a "cure" for this longing, as my previous chapters have demonstrated, such a cure robs the individual of that which makes life worthwhile, human connection. Each of the characteristics making up the Way of the Father has produced a deep chasm between subject and other which is difficult to bridge. Of course, this difficulty is part of the point. As Orwell's and Doctorow's texts depict, isolation produces compliant subjects.

In contrast, the potential for change that comes from bridging such a chasm between

subject and other emerges on the Path of the (M)other. As Julia, Winston's mother, and Rochelle model for Winston and Daniel (and by extension, for us), only through connection with others can we have any hope of effecting change, for ourselves, for others, and for the planet. It is via the three principles of the Path of the (M)other (i.e., ownlife, empathic connection, and the act of loving the other) that we may "kickstart a conversation about alternatives" from an "affective stance...rather than...disembodied skepticism" (Felski *Limits* 18). Such alternatives are possible if we learn to "subvert the enlightenment ideology upon which Freud's work is based" (Stockholder 362). To challenge such ideology, the suspicious subject model which emerges under the Way of the Father must be shattered.

To review, in my first chapter, I consider Father Freud's hermeneutics of suspicion as a possible source for prescriptive paranoia. By demonstrating Freud's influence as a "master of suspicion," I demonstrate how the transmission of suspicion, orthodoxy, and detachment have morphed into variants of concern. Understanding the link between his clinical practice and the three characteristics at the heart of the Way of the Father helps to establish how and why prescriptive paranoia transmits in a postwar world. Tracing the mutation of Freudian models of suspicion into the contagion of fear that continues to infect us is a necessary first step to bringing the Way of the Father down, to invoke an Orwellian phrase.

However, as the ending of Doctorow's novel suggests, we must go further if we are to find an alternate mode of knowing that can be decoupled from suspicion, fear, and detachment. The ending of Doctorow's novel depicts Daniel's move to break free from the grip of the Way of the Father. As he leaves the library at the end, Daniel makes the conscious decision to break free

from the prescriptive paranoia that has destroyed his entire family.<sup>50</sup> As Daniel begins to overcome his emotional anesthesia at the end of the novel (i.e. by reaching for his wife's hand and allowing himself to mourn the death of his sister), there is a suggestion that he is making tentative strides towards the Path of the (M)other. However, Daniel's narrative ends there. Having warned us about what happens to the subject (and the other) under the Way of the Father, Orwell's and Doctorow's narratives stop short of fully exploring the nature of subject-other relations beyond the Way of the Father. Winston's narrative ends with his betrayal of the other, leading to his final acceptance of the Father; in the end, his resistance to the Way of the Father has been reduced to acceptance enabled by alcoholism. Daniel's ending is more optimistic; he leaves the ministry of the Father (i.e. the academy) and submits a dissertation that does not fully comply with the Father's rules, instead choosing to assert the significance of his ownlife.

But neither text goes far enough to shatter the suspicious subject produced under the Way of the Father. This is where Dionne Brand's poem *Inventory* intervenes. Like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Book of Daniel*, *Inventory* also confronts readers with another wasteland. It does so by presenting them with a terrifying and grim inventory of the death and destruction occurring after 9/11. However, unlike *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Book of Daniel*, it also goes a few steps farther in its critique of the subject model, which emerges in the wake of the enlightenment ideology normalized under the Way of the Father. In presenting readers with an inventory of horrors of their making, *Inventory* forces them to confront that which they frequently prefer to ignore. In other words, to read this text is to come face-to-face with the unknown strangers who we have been trained to fear. It is also to confront our willingness to turn away from their suffering. In so doing, the poem critiques our proclivity for both absolving ourselves of our

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<sup>50</sup> It also destroys Winston's family as well.

responsibility to each other and ignoring that we are all connected *cousins*, to invoke Brand's important refiguration of our relationship to one another (discussed in the next chapter).

To overcome the fear, complicity, and apathy of the subject who follows the Way of the Father, I return once again to contact-tracing, but this time to understand why we avert our eyes when we are confronted with an other who terrifies us (even though we do not know them). By looking back to traditional models of the sublime (see below), I identify more influences (just as I did with Freud) that have shaped not only our defensive responses to the other but also our tendency for turning away. The latter is the primary focus of this chapter. Understanding how Brand's poem intervenes into such subject-other models then opens the door for the focus of my next and final chapter, where I explore how her work reimagines interhuman relations based on the ethics of care at the root of the Path of the (M)other.

*Inventory's* intervention is significant. Through her poem, Brand confronts the reading subject with a linguistically sublime text, employing a figuratively terrifying aesthetics that simultaneously assaults *and* reaches out to them. Though it may be challenging to face the horrific consequences that have been produced by our complicity with the Way of the Father, not facing them will only lead to our own destruction. This chapter, therefore, examines the connection between aesthetics and subjectivity, focusing specifically on sublimity and subjectivity as theorized in the Enlightenment period. In so doing, it provides the historical context for the alternate subject-other model proposed in my final chapter on *Inventory*. But, to understand the nature of the subject's propensity to turn away from a suffering other, we must again turn to a number of Fathers, so to speak. To trace how the subject's confrontation with a terrifying other has been traditionally understood, we can turn to two *masters of the sublime*

model (to follow Ricœur's productive figure): Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant.<sup>51</sup> From brief examinations of Burke's and Kant's theorizations of the sublime comes some understanding of the impact and consequences emerging from privileging the rationality and detachment associated with the Enlightenment subject.

On the one hand, Burke's and Kant's theorizations for approaching Brand's sublime aesthetics have several productive elements. Burke, for example, highlights how poetry can be used as a tool to present magnitude to a reading subject, unleashing the power of affect to overturn complacency. To employ the power of sublime rhetoric supports *Inventory's* project to elicit the reader's emotion necessary to counter what the speaker of the poem identifies as a desensitized Western subject. Kant, too speaks to the transformative power located at the site of the subject's confrontation with the sublime other, highlighting how fear can be overcome through a subject's capacity for reason. However, on the other hand, ultimately, both Burkean and Kantian models privilege a (masculine) dispassionate and "reasonable" response to the other, distancing the paranoid subject from any image or interpretation that might inspire actual change.

So, this chapter outlines both the problematic normalization of the subject who turns away in Burke's and Kant's theorizations of the sublime as well as *Inventory's* critique of such (and from there, to Brand's refiguration of such subject-other models in Chapter Five). To explore said critique, I consider an earlier variation of sublime theory. Written around 100 CE, *On the Sublime* is generally attributed to Longinus (though little is known about the writer).

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<sup>51</sup> While I will offer some context for these two thinkers of the sublime as it relates to Brand's own version of the sublime (i.e. a more contemporary sublime), it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive and in-depth survey of all theories of the sublime. Given the multi-dimensional characteristics of the sublime whether rhetorical, aesthetic, or ethical, reflections on the sublime have a long history and continue to inspire critical debate. I refer you to the many comprehensive publications on the sublime; to name but a few, see Robert Doran's *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (2015), Paul Crowther's *The Kantian Sublime* (1989), Kenneth Holmqvist and Jaroslaw Pluciennik's "A Short Guide to the Theory of the Sublime" (2002).

Another so-called *master of the sublime*, Longinus' work imagines subjectivity in ways that may be productive for approaching and engaging with the terrifying aesthetics of *Inventory*.

Longinus' work depicts a sublime relation between subject and other that, while threatening to the subject, offers the potential to be imaginatively productive in terms of undoing the suspicious subject normalized via the Way of the Father. More specifically, for Longinus, art carries the potential for piercing through the emotional anesthesia of the reading subject via a *rhetorical blow*. In a Longinian sublime model, there exists the linguistic potential for the transformative impact that Brand's *Inventory* can make on a reading subject.

#### Literary Review

At first glance, Dionne Brand's poem, *Inventory*, may not be viewed as a promising candidate for being a transformative epic. Not surprisingly, the listing of human brutality combined with the poem's ostensible lack of hope or possibility of salvation generates a significant amount of reader resistance. As Diana Brydon remarks, the poem is, on many levels, difficult to approach because it is "entirely bleak" (996). Making the text even harsher, though arguably more powerful, is its vehement insistence on implicating each and every reader in the list of horrors. Worse, while the reader may feel as though they are performing a kind of penance upon engaging with this text,<sup>52</sup> the ending will provide neither absolution nor catharsis. The speaker of the poem concludes: "I have nothing soothing to tell you" (Brand 100). To the bitter end, this poem (like Orwell's novel) presents an apocalyptic vision that leaves readers with the horrific realization that they can no longer maintain the illusion of distance between themselves and the tragic events occurring on the planet. Everyone is culpable.

Perhaps this unforgiving aspect of the text explains why this poem is often overlooked in

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<sup>52</sup> -- a response that is also likely when reading either *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or *The Book of Daniel*.

discussions of Canadian poetry. Indeed, even the multiply figured speaker of the poem recognizes the poem's bleak nature in part VII when she states: "On reading this someone will say / God, is there no happiness then" (Brand 89). This line anticipates resistant readers who struggle to face not just the horrors that the poem lists but their own culpability for such horrors as well. This self-reflexive moment also highlights the overwhelming pessimism of the poem and leaves readers to find a way to approach the text.

Though not the first Canadian work to address the traumatic events during and following 9/11, Brand's *Inventory* is significant because it not only focuses on the ethics of representing suffering but also, through its form and content, highlights the ethics of reading suffering.<sup>53</sup> In this way, the text is located at the intersection between an ethics of representation and an ethics of performance. While the speaker of the poem despairs and even accuses the reader of being complacent in the face of global horrors, the poem also calls upon the reader to act.

Faced with a text that will not soften the linguistic and literal shocks that it delivers, the reader must make a difficult choice to continue reading or continue to be complacent with the Way of the Father. However, as the text and recent history both attest, avoiding the material reality of our post 9/11 world was not (and is still not) the answer. The poem itself disallows any kind of Kantian-like "disinterested interest"<sup>54</sup> of aesthetic contemplation. Instead, it demands that the reading subject re-theorize and rebuild themselves in a way that opens up the possibility for relations to other subjects built on an ethics of care – a way that is possible, as I have argued, via the Path of the (M)other. Like the embrace of the (M)other, the act of reading is itself already

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<sup>53</sup> One earlier response is Margaret Atwood's dystopic novel, *Oryx and Crake* (2003). For a discussion of Atwood's novel as a post 9/11 work see Sutherland and Swan's article "Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*: Canadian Post 9/11 Worries".

<sup>54</sup> As Kant outlines in his work *Critique of Judgement*, "a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste" (*Critique* §2).

one of resistance. That the text is bleak is part of its utility. If anything, we are being called to face a burden that is ultimately of our own making: “happiness is not the point” of this text but is rather “an accusation in our time” (Brand 100). In a world beset by war, dis-ease, global warming, and tragedy, such *happiness* is irresponsible, enabled because of our complicit conformity with the emotional anesthesia produced by following the Way of the Father.

So, while far from being a “light read,” the work is important. It offers extraordinary insight into modes of being in the world that do not follow the Way of the Father. It does so through various literary elements from diction to imagery, each of which attempts to pierce through the emotional anesthesia of the reading subject. Such modes do not duplicate the destructive nature of current modes of subjectivity which have been prevalent since the dominance of the Enlightenment in Western culture. Through its inventory of horrors, the text undercuts accepted notions of Western subjectivity as modelled by the Way of the Father. In so doing, it models possibilities for different and arguably more ethical ways of writing, reading, and being in the world. *Inventory* not only critiques Western apathy towards the horrors of a post-9/11 world but also imagines an alternative to the paranoid responses that have punctuated Western national, historical, political, and cultural responses to post-World War II terror – responses that continue today as the world grapples with global warming, a pandemic, and the aftermath of the Trump presidency. The speakers of the poem argue that positive change can only come once subjects confront those whom they fear in an ethical manner. In other words, we must stop turning away from that which terrifies us. But, to do so, we must redefine traditional notions that normalize our propensity to turn away; only then can we stop the “self-slaughter hunched in [our] veins” (Brand 86).

*Inventory* offers a non-paranoid response to terror and terrorism, which effectively

critiques both the use of fear to justify the promotion of war and violence as well as the use of fear to validate the continuing violation of individual rights and freedoms since 9/11. One of the main reasons Brand's poem is productive in establishing a mode of resistance to the Way of the Father is because it offers a model for committed literature. In so doing, *Inventory* responds to questions of the value of literature when faced with a crisis. The value of literature in the face of catastrophic events like 9/11 is perhaps most famously challenged by Theodor W. Adorno's dictum: "It is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz" (*Prisms* 34). However, while this dictum is often taken to be a sweeping indictment against all post-World War II artistic representations of human suffering, Adorno's point was far more complex. What Adorno was concerned about was not whether art had any place in the representation of human suffering but rather whether any art form could represent suffering ethically. Thus, while writing poetry after Auschwitz is 'barbaric,' as Adorno also writes:

The abundance of real suffering tolerates no forgetting...Yet this suffering, what Hegel called consciousness of adversity, also demands the continued existence of art while it prohibits it; it is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it. The most important artists of the age have realized this. ("Commitment" 8)

Another way to put this is that Adorno is talking about the need for art that is committed to confronting the horrors of human experience. Adorno's recognition of the irreconcilable and paradoxical relationship between art and catastrophe is significant because it highlights the ethical problems of aesthetically representing horrific events. This concern preoccupies many of Brand's post-9/11 works, especially *Inventory*. Like Adorno, the speaker in *Inventory* points to the problem of both reconciling and addressing the seeming contradiction between beautiful art

and the suffering and horror that it represents. As such, Brand's poem is, in the words of Adorno, committed literature. For example, while the poem is an inventory of beautiful language, it is also an inventory of death – a paradox that the speaker obviously finds disturbing when she asks: “why / does she observe the budding of that consonant” in her listing of deaths in Baghdad (Brand 38). Both Adorno and Brand question whether art can represent the unrepresentable without reduction and containment. To write ethically about the horrific requires a language that does not reduce or contain what is being depicted.

This latter problem resonates deeply with *Inventory* – a text which, in attempting to count the dead civilians (which no officials wish to account for in the war on terror), is at the same time very aware of its own inability to offer these civilians any kind of justice. While the speaker of the poem “hears what is never shown,” she is also aware of her limited ability to bear witness to all “the details” because “she’ll never be able to write them in time” (Brand 28). Like in Adorno's, in Brand's work, the dialectic between necessary art and forbidden art is never synthesized. Rather, art is both necessary in the face of suffering *and* barbaric. The tension produced by this dialectic is particularly important because it shows how aesthetics must be considered alongside ethics, not just for the writer who attempts to represent the horrific but also for the reader who attempts to face it.

Thus, while Elaine Martin writes in her article “Re-reading Adorno: The ‘after-Auschwitz’ Aporia,” that “Because representation necessarily mediates between a subject...and its reader, there is inevitably a moral peril involved in its artistic rendering,” there is also a ‘moral peril’ in confronting and reading said representation (I). The moral dilemma of representation, as both Brand and Adorno show, is two-pronged. On the one hand, it is important to consider how to represent horror ethically. However, on the other, it is also important to

consider whether such representations can result in something other than a desensitized and complacent reading subject.

Brand's work thus stands as an example of the necessity of committed art. In other words, *Inventory* effectively challenges devaluations of literature because it offers insight into the socially and culturally constructed nature of normative notions of (suspicious) subjectivity – notions that have been, for too long, modelled and prescribed by Way of the Father. Such prescribed subjectivities are ultimately destructive to both self and other. Though it may be difficult to both represent and read about human suffering and brutality, whether in the works of Orwell, Doctorow, or Brand, as Adorno rightly states, art has the potential to render suffering without betrayal. In the case of Brand's *Inventory*, readers are confronted with a radical text which, by opening a door between them and the “ravaged world” in which they live, shows how and why they must confront other national and individual subjects ethically (Brand 11). The (normalized) response to defend subjects from a threatening other has not protected them from anything at all. Brand's text calls on readers to consider their subject positions as distant observers of barbarity and *act*.

This call to action necessitates that the reading subject challenge the so-called enlightened (i.e., suspicious and rational) subject which emerges from the Way of the Father. To challenge the privileging of such a subject, it is necessary to recognize how subjects have contributed to the ravaged world today. The latter is not easy. On the one hand, the speaker knows that it is very difficult for the reading subject to have any meaningful sense of themselves: subjectivity is shaped by various social and historical factors to which they may be blind. The limitations and consequences of historical and social contexts may only be visible from a backwards glance – a point made by the lamenting speaker of the poem. On the other hand,

looking backwards, as the speaker does, is necessary if readers are to be empowered to become angels of the future. An ethics of representation must give way to an ethics of performance if meaningful change is to occur.

Therefore, the poem's narrator underscores that the listed events are not simply about the past but also about history as part of an ongoing and never-ending temporality of "now moments" that occur across space and time. For example, while the poem lists the many deaths occurring "far from where it happened," in places such as Hillah and Adhaim, as the speaker also notes, the war is occurring everywhere, including Toronto, Missouri, Madison, and Buffalo (Brand 22 - 23). The result is that this text demands a different kind of reading and analysis. By tasking the reader with confronting the horrific events that are happening everywhere in every moment, they are called to face who and what they may fear. Understandably, confronting such an overwhelming inventory of horrors is not easy. Put another way, *Inventory's* representation of the magnitude of horror and violence produces a sublime experience for the reader. However, this experience is not one that fully adheres to either traditional theorizations of the sublime (Burke, Kant) or, as Chapter Five will discuss, contemporary feminist revisions (Freeman, Zylinska) of such understandings either. In other words, this text rejects the Way of the Father but directs us to a Path that is in line with but also beyond that of the (M)other as well.

Like all the literary texts studied in this project, *Inventory* reimagines alternative human responses to catastrophic events, echoing Nobel Stanford scholar Paul Romer's famous statement that "a crisis is a terrible thing to waste" (qtd. in Manzo). In so doing, the text seeks to harness the potential for a productive rather than destructive response to horror and crisis. Of course, Brand is not the first to attempt to theorize a subject's response to the horrific. Aesthetics, and in particular, various theories of the sublime, have long considered the relationship and possible

modes of mediation between a subject and a (threatening) other.

Despite the variations between such theories, the term sublime generally refers to that which exceeds logic and language. As Philip Shaw states, “the sublime marks the limits of reason and expression together with a sense of what might lie beyond these limits” (2). While the sublime has not necessarily been at the forefront of recent academic theoretical debates, it is a “Useful concept when it comes to describing the fears, anxieties and fascinations connected with the technological age” (Zylinska 2) and, I argue, with 9/11 in particular. Overall, the sublime is a helpful concept to describe the troubled response to any crisis.

### Sublime Background

Canonical theorizations of the sublime provide both points and counterpoints to *Inventory's* revision and recuperation of sublime discourse.<sup>55</sup> Two aspects of the traditional sublime models are especially productive for theorizing an approach to the horror depicted in *Inventory*: the theorization of the power of violent discourse (Longinus) as well as the emphasis on affect over reason in the employment of sublime language (Burke). Both offer ways for mediating between the reading subject and the work’s alienating and terrifying aesthetics: in other words, in articulating possible approaches to the sublime, they imagine entrance points to the text, opening (like the many doorways that figure throughout Brand’s work) a doorway between subject and other.

While the term sublime initially appears in the first century CE with Longinus’s Greek rhetorical handbook *On the Sublime*, I begin by examining the tradition of the sublime through

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<sup>55</sup> For more comprehensive coverage of traditional theorizations of the sublime consult the works of Freeman, Shaw and De Bolla.

empiricist Edmund Burke's work, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). His work provides a source from which our contact tracing can begin, outlining as it does a subject-other model which normalizes the act of looking away. In this work, Burke addresses the power of language to produce an affective response in a subject. Burke is fascinated by human emotion and psychology, privileging the power of affect over that of reason. So, it is not knowledge that evokes powerful human reactions but rather, "It is our *ignorance* of things that causes all our admiration and excites our passions" (Burke 78, emphasis added). The sublime is both "productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" and that which we cannot know (Burke 51). This latter point is one of the most significant tensions and paradoxes at the heart of Burke's text. Like other theorists of the sublime, his work attempts to define that which escapes definition, a problematic paradox that is never satisfactorily resolved.

While the power of the sublime object is contingent on the subject's ignorance of it, Burke also argues that language can depict the enigmatic nature of the sublime object. He intimates that any representation of the sublime happens without repressing its excess, echoing Adorno's contention that it is only through committed art that excessive events can be ethically represented (whether the Holocaust or 9/11). As Burke states, "the most lively and spirited verbal description I can give raises a very obscure and imperfect *idea* of ... objects" (76, emphasis in original). However, while Adorno speaks of art in general, Burke elevates poetry above other art forms as the medium which can best describe the sublime object, a point which has obvious resonance with my final two chapters' focus on Brand's *Inventory*. Language, and more specifically, poetry is more powerful in the expression of the sublime because "poetry, with all its obscurity, has a more general, as well more powerful dominion over the passions, than...other

art” (Burke 78-79). Though somewhat reductive and circular, Burke’s suggestion that to describe obscure objects only obscure language will do, is useful when considering the possibility for theorizing the productive potential of a sublime aesthetics that can speak of horror ethically, powerfully, and without reduction.

Burke does not unpack the problem of how to describe the sublime object, instead making rather broad claims regarding the greatness of such objects or pointing out that “To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems, in general, to be necessary” (74). Consequently, while later theorists such as Kant will more fully consider the nature of the sublime, for Burke, the focus of the subject’s encounter with the sublime is not so much on the obscure object that is faced but rather the emotional reaction which such a confrontation can produce in a subject. As such, his emphasis remains on the ability of sublime language “to raise a stronger *emotion* by the description” of the sublime object (Burke 79). Therefore, a confrontation with the sublime is productive because confronting excess leads to an emotional awakening. Taken from this perspective, such a confrontation already presents possibilities for *Inventory* to break through any sense of emotional anesthesia.

Burke’s model moves beyond the sublime as a rhetorical model to probe the psychological reactions of the subject to the sublime. This shift to a subject-centred sublime model is significant because it reflects how his work contributes not only to eighteenth-century debates on the intersection between the sublime and art but also to “debates that shape[d]...the newly emergent, modern discourse of subjectivity” (Zylinska 18). Burke’s sublime model, then, is not only productive for examining the rhetorical power of *Inventory* but also provides a starting point to consider how relations between subject and sublime object – in this case,

Brand's poem – have been represented traditionally and problematically in canonical models of the sublime.

Burke begins his discussion of the relation between subject and sublime as one defined by fear: “terror is, in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime” (Burke 73). When overwhelmed by the sublime, the subject is unable to reason or act. For Burke, this mental and physical paralysis is a result of the fear produced from a subject's encounter with the sublime: “No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear” (Burke 72). Reason cannot contain excess since the subject never overcomes that which exceeds the boundaries of reason and knowledge. Indeed, as he notes, “the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor, by consequence, reason on that object which employs it” (Burke 72). This latter point is important since the subject's inability to overcome the sublime object ostensibly avoids Adorno's and Brand's ethical concerns about the artistic portrayal of human brutality as potentially reductive. Further, it is also in significant contrast to Kant, who, though recognizing a similar kind of fear in the subject's response to the sublime, will focus on the power of reason to contain and overcome it ultimately. For Burke, however, the subject does not overcome the excess produced by the confrontation with the object through reason but rather through distance. That is to say, a subject's encounter with the sublime must end in the very removal of that which facilitated the subject's ability to feel emotion in the first place. So, to ensure the safety of the subject means to exit the area of the sublime thing.

Unlike Kant and Longinus (see below), whose models result in an altered subject (because their encounter elicits the potential for thinking differently), the subject must return to his pre-sublime state for Burke. The result is that “the sublime does not describe the moment of

the arrival of danger, but rather the permanent withdrawal, or deferral of this danger” (Zylinska 18). To experience the eventual elevation that comes from facing the sublime, the subject’s encounter with terror must inherently also hold the promise of a return to safety. There is a balance that must be maintained between the terror that the subject feels and the ultimate release from such terror. This balancing between terror and safety comes from Burke’s distinction between positive pleasure and relative pleasure. Humans, argues the philosopher, are generally in a neutral state and not ruled by any particular feeling. As Paul Crowther states in his succinct summary, for Burke,

pleasure and pain are (logically) independent of one another. That is to say, pleasure is not simply the absence or diminution of pain, and vice versa.... Most of the time, we are in a state of ‘indifference’ (or ‘tranquillity’) where neither pleasure nor pain preponderate. Given this, it is clearly possible...to move from a state of indifference to a state of pleasure without the mediation of pain, and vice versa. These unmediated states are termed by Burke ‘positive pleasure’ and ‘positive pain,’ respectively.” (116)

Burke’s theorization that (positive) pain and pleasure are two independent sensations is crucial because it will lead him to articulate how the sublime works to evoke a paradoxical combination of (relative) pain and pleasure. Unlike Burke’s articulation of positive pleasure, which is entirely independent from pain, when faced with the sublime, the subject can only feel pleasure when the object causing pain is removed.

Burke terms this sensation as a feeling of *delight*: “I make use of the word *delight* to express the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger” (Burke 49). To be delightful, the sublime must be viewed from a distance that guarantees the subject’s safety. Specifically, the delight and elevation that comes from a subject’s encounter with the sublime

can only be experienced when the subject is no longer terrorized. As Burke states, “When danger or pain presses too nearly, it is incapable of giving any delight, and is simply terrible; but at certain *distances*, and with certain modifications, it may be, and it is delightful, as we every day experience” (59, emphasis added). The sublime experience then, is one where excess is mediated in order to ensure the safety, unity, and privileged position of the subject. In other words, “the self needs to experience great terror in order to be plucked out of the indifference of existence...but the sublime is ultimately the experience of overcoming this terror and thus celebrating one’s invincibility in the face of what *seemed* to be a greater power” (Zylinska 19). To confront the terror produced by the other then is not about facing one’s culpability or one’s emotional anesthesia, but rather to support the perception of the subject as capable of overcoming their fear. That doing so is achieved by turning away and distancing is not addressed; this is where doublethink is “helpful.”

The Burkean relation between the subject and object then ends in a relation of mastery where the subject ultimately runs away from that which he first feared. Through flight, the subject facilitates his ability to overcome the fear from his encounter with the sublime. The result is that excess is controlled so that it never really threatens the distanced and, by implication, complacent and unaffected subject. Burke concludes that “the sublime is an idea belonging to self-preservation” (110): the other then is present to titillate and reaffirm the mastery of the rational subject over the threatening other. While the sublime object is important because it allows the subject to experience emotions which move them from their general “state of indifference,” such encounters are only “delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances” (Burke 43 and 66). Though the implications of

this subject-other relation are no doubt already disturbing, this relation of domination becomes even more disturbing when considering Burke's masculinization of the sublime.

Burke makes a clear distinction between the sublime and the beautiful – a division that will have problematic implications due to the engendering of the sublime as masculine and the beautiful as feminine. In doing so, he ultimately arrives at theorizations that attempt to articulate how power is located with the masculinized sublime. In contrast to the sublime (which is associated with the most powerful feelings arising from terror, fear, and delight), the beautiful is associated with the less powerful feeling of love. This hierarchy is further supported by Burke's articulation that "sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small" (157). The sublime is linked with pain, mastery and greatness, the beautiful with pleasure, submission and smallness. As such, these "aesthetic categories are determined and shaped by prevailing assumptions about sexual difference...assumptions about gender that give rise to the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime" (Freeman 48).

For Burke then, the sublime is associated with traits that "always include intimations of power, majesty, and brute male force" (Freeman 48). In contrast, beauty is linked with traits that Burke likens to feminine characteristics such as smoothness, delicacy, smallness, and weakness. In one particularly bizarre and morbidly humorous passage, Burke goes as far as to suggest that the object which represents the pinnacle of beauty is the woman who knows how to wield her weakness. Thus, beauty

where it is highest, in the female sex, almost always carries with it an idea of weakness and imperfection. Women are very sensible of this; for which reason they learn to lisp, to totter in their walk, to counterfeit weakness, and even sickness. In all this they are guided by nature. Beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty. (Burke 137)

The absurdity of this passage notwithstanding, it is important to take note of the problematic combination of a discourse of mastery with a disturbing fetishization of the female body. Significantly, the latter leads to a blurring of the boundaries between the beautiful and the sublime so much that in various parts of Burke's *Enquiry*, the "feminine body, [which] is supposedly the symbol of the beautiful, instead produces the effects of the sublime" (Freeman 50). The implications of a body that is both feminine and located as a place of excess are far-reaching, leading contemporary critics like Freeman to convincingly argue that traditional notions of the sublime can be read "as an allegory of the construction of the patriarchal (but not necessarily male) subject, a self that maintains its borders by subordinating difference and by appropriating rather than identifying with that which presents itself as other" (Freeman 4). So, while Burkean concepts of the relation between the subject and the sublime are useful in terms of the connections being made between terror and excess, ultimately, the relationship that is outlined between subject and object reflects all of the nightmarish qualities of the Way of the Father which I have been discussing throughout this project. The model articulates a hierarchal and patriarchal rhetoric of mastery and domination between subject and object, justifying and normalizing the fear of the other, the complicit conformity, and the emotional anesthesia of the (Western) subject.

#### Kant's Corollary

Immanuel Kant, who builds on and also critiques Burke's sublime model, provides another perspective on the problem of defining that which is undefinable. In some ways, Kant's theorization of the sublime mirrors that of Burke. Most importantly, for my purposes here, Kant's philosophical musings on the sublime replicate a similar dualism between the beautiful and the sublime. Specifically, the sublime is linked with strength, greatness, and the masculine;

the beautiful with the frail, small and the feminine. As such, both Kant and Burke draw on and add to a body of Western philosophy that underscores dualities implicated by a politics of sexual difference that privilege a universal white, upper class, male subject. The latter point is especially significant given Kant's articulation of the sublime as an experience that essentially facilitates a subject's moral elevation, which is then denied to the non-white, non-elite, non-male subject.

By addressing Kant's notion that the possibility for a subject's moral elevation is an exclusive possibility only open to white males, I do not mean to suggest that Kant completely negates the possibility for women to reach, if not a moral elevation, then at least some state of cultivation or education. As Kant notes, "The fair sex has just as much understanding as the male" (*Observations* 36). However, Kant further notes that there is a central difference between male and female understanding. Specifically, women have what he suggests is "a *beautiful understanding*, whereas ours should be a *deep understanding*, an expression that signifies identity with the sublime" (*Observations* 36). In other words, the rational subject who is figured in the sublime encounter is gendered as male.

Though to some extent, Kant's theorizations here anticipate much later feminist moral philosophers who speak to a distinctly feminine ethics of care which I have identified as part of the Path of the (M)other, they also exclude women and BIPOC from participating in the sublime. In particular, as the latter part of Kant's "beautiful understanding" quote suggests, the sublime is an experience that is not linked with notions of female identity. While such explicit connections between female and the beautiful and male and the sublime are not as readily found in *Critique of Judgement*, as many feminist theorists from Barbara Claire Freeman to Christine Battersby have persuasively noted, they continue to inform Kant's later works. Indeed, they even appear

explicitly in his lectures and notes such that it becomes clear that the collective “our” which appears in his early work continues to be exclusive of women, not to mention anyone uneducated, lower class and not white.<sup>56</sup> Though Kant does suggest that women contain the possibility for beautiful understanding and virtue, as Nancy J. Hirschmann wryly notes, “what Kant gives with one hand, in proclaiming the universality of reason and the need for individuals to determine the categorical imperative for themselves, he takes away with the other, in strictly limiting political participation to the same elite group of propertied white men” (188). While Kant’s moral philosophy offers some great insight into the duties of the individual by making such statements as “The legislative authority can belong only to the united will of the people” (*Practical Philosophy* 457), he also goes further to articulate that the only individuals who can participate in society (i.e. vote) are those whom he defines as active citizens. Such citizens exclude entire swaths of the population, including women, the lower class, and visible minorities. In Kant’s own words, passive citizens include: “an apprentice in the service of a merchant or artisan; a domestic servant (as distinguished from a civil servant); a minor ...; all women and, in general, anyone whose preservation in existence...depends not on his management of his own business but on arrangements made by another (except the state)” (*Practical Philosophy* 458). As Kant reasons in his work, *Practical Philosophy*, since none of the following have the “quality of being independent...All these people lack civil personality” (458). Thus, while on the one hand, Kant outlines such important rights as freedom and civil equality, the very fact that he excludes so many individuals serves to contradict the very ideals which he

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<sup>56</sup> For a more detailed account tracing Kant’s continued perception of women and other minorities as outside of the scope of the elevated subject position, see Battersby.

claims to be promoting. Clearly, when he speaks of the will of the people, it would be more accurate to say that he speaks of the Way of the Father.

The result is that any claims to a universal subject in Kant's works are highly problematic since they necessarily exclude all but "the man who has been 'prepared by culture' for a receptivity to 'moral ideas,' and who has been educated into confidence in the power of his own ego" (Battersby 60). Indeed, by his own definition, passive individuals are not even really members of the state: "the concept of a passive citizen seems to contradict the concept of citizen as such" (Kant *Practical Philosophy* 126). This latter point has significant implications for Kant's theories of the sublime. Specifically, like Burke, Kant positions the sublime other as that which validates the supremacy and integrity of a subject who is male, educated, upper class, and white.

One crucial difference between Kant and Burke is in how they theorize the subject's response to the sublime other. For Burke, the subject's preservation is assured by distance. However, for Kant, it is the mind's ability to overcome the sublime through reason that assures self-preservation: "Rather than emphasize the withdrawal of danger resulting in the individual's survival, Kant points to the control that the human mind can exert over alterity. The mind's supremacy manifests itself in its ability to always think the infinity which imagination fails to grasp" (Zylinska 19). The Kantian model then collapses the distance of the Burkean encounter since, for Kant, the sublime experience has more to do with how the subject perceives the other than the other itself. As Kant explains, "Sublimity, therefore, does not reside in any of the things of nature, but only in our own mind, in so far as we may become conscious of our superiority over nature within, and thus also over nature without" (*Critique* 94). In other words, there is no sublime object, *per se*. Rather, "true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the judging

subject, and not in the object” (*Critique* 86). The sublime resides in the subject’s perception alone; more specifically, the sublime is located at the moment when the subject becomes aware of his own superiority over the other – whether a natural other or a man-made other.<sup>57</sup> Kant goes so far as to state that the object “cannot be contained in any sensuous form,” which, as Brand’s text will expose (and which I will discuss in the next chapter), enables the erasure of the body of the suffering other entirely (*Critique* 76). The object then becomes a catalyst for the subject and is something that “lends itself to the presentation of the sublimity discoverable in the mind” (*Critique* 76). In contrast to Burke, the collapse of the distance between subject and object leads to the possibility of a relation that is not predicated on distance and the concomitant dis- and self-interest and complacency of the subject seen in Burke’s model. The subject does not flee but rather must confront the sublime because it is only through this confrontation that the subject can attain an elevated state of morality. Consequently, Kant’s model insists that fleeing from horror cannot lead to positive change for the subject, a point which Brand underscores throughout *Inventory*. However, while distance is collapsed in this model, the result ultimately replicates the hierarchal structure articulated in Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry*. While for Burke, it is distance that provides the mediation between subject and object, for Kant, mediation comes from reason and logic – something which incidentally is not even possible for the so-called passive (female) subject.

For Kant, then, the ultimate purpose of coming into contact with the sublime is to

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<sup>57</sup> While Kant generally refers to sublime objects as those found in nature, he also recognizes that objects outside of the natural world can produce a sublime moment. For example, in *Critique of Judgement* he notes that the pyramids of Egypt are capable of producing the same kind of awe as natural objects. However, as he asserts repeatedly in speaking of the mathematically sublime, it is not the object that is sublime. The sublime object is that which facilitates a sublime moment by its excessive and limitless nature. Consequently, any object that produces the sublime experience can be constituted a sublime object (i.e. a work of art). The legitimacy of the object’s existence (for itself) is irrelevant in such a model.

facilitate the subject's ability to achieve an elevated state of morality. Such a state is only possible when the subject recognizes their superiority over the sublime object through their ability to reason. This outcome may at first seem like a positive celebration of the human capacity for reason. However, it is highly exclusive in nature. Kant may not explicitly exclude dependent subjects in *Critique of Judgement* in the same blatant manner that he does in earlier works; however, that such subjects are excluded is abundantly clear. In *Critique of Judgement*, Kant defines a rational subject as one who is able to control excess and preserve subjectivity as a result of their cultivation and education. Specifically, he argues that

without the development of moral ideas, that which, thanks to preparatory culture, we call sublime, merely strikes the untutored individual as terrifying. He will see in the evidences which the ravages of nature give of her dominion, and in the vast scale of her might, compared with which his own is diminished to insignificance. (*Critique* 95)

Without education and cultivation, then, the subject risks being dominated and reduced by the sublime object. The disturbing implication is that while for a white, educated male, an encounter with the sublime leads to a confirmation of their superior place in the world, for any other subject, such an encounter leads to a confirmation of their inferiority and lack of power. In other words, what raises one subject to a state of morality, places all others under erasure. The result is a hierarchal sublime model that raises white males above everyone else. Incidentally, this point is only further emphasized by his depiction of the other (nature) as feminine.

Kant's articulation then of the cultivated subject speaks to a paradoxical problem of the moral elevation of a subject which by his own definition excludes anyone whom he deems dependent or passive. Morality is, in this case, a state reached by a small part of the population. This troubling problem is further complicated by Kant's portrayal of the imagination as an

inferior mode of understanding and representing excess. Given that the goal of the sublime moment is to experience the superiority of reason, it is not surprising that to do so, the sublime moment results in “do[ing] violence, as it were, to the imagination” (Kant *Critique* 76). Furthermore, though Kant does not explicitly link the beautiful and sublime with female and male respectively in *Critique of Judgement*, the same connections between the beautiful and the imagination and the sublime and reason remain. As Kant explains, in “the aesthetic judgement in its judgement of the beautiful refers the imagination in its free play to the *understanding*...[whereas] judging of thing as sublime refers that faculty [of judging] to reason” (*Critique* 86). The hierarchal structure of Kant’s theory is clear: without culture, the individual is unable to assert his mastery over excess, and thus, in contrast to Burke, Kant privileges reason rather than affect or, in Kantian terms, imagination.

So, taken together, Kant does not claim that the imagination is unimportant, but just that it is not as deep or as capable as reason. When an individual comes into contact with the sublime, we are “pushed to the point at which our faculty of imagination breaks down in presenting the concept of magnitude, and proves unequal to the task” (Kant *Critique* 84). Given that, like Burke, Kant is concerned with the preservation of the individual when faced with magnitude, it is important to him that the subject finds a way to contain excess. Thus, while the imagination may be the first to encounter magnitude, “the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of the magnitude of the object” leads the individual to “carry our concept of nature to a supersensible substrate” (*Critique* 85-6). The imagination fails to make sense of the excess before it, and in order to resist what Kant cites as the propensity for excess to diminish the individual, “reason must triumph over senses, thus claiming the self’s power over the insurmountable and the unlimited” (Zylinska 19). Thus, the ability of man to contain excess

through reason becomes the justification he uses to underscore the superiority and integrity of the cultivated subject: “The mere ability of even to think it as *a whole* indicates a faculty of mind transcending every standard of the senses” (Kant *Critique* 85). Reason then contains any excess presented to the subject as he confronts the sublime.

Consequently, like Burke, an ostensibly successful encounter with the sublime is posited as resulting in a victorious elevation for the masculine subject. Such a feat is achieved through the negation of both the imagination and the sensuous; the latter are inferior, associated as they are with the (M)other. Indeed, in his sublime model, the focus is entirely located at the site of the individual so much that “instead of the object, it is rather the disposition of the mind in estimating it that we have to judge as *sublime*” (Kant *Critique* 84). Like those who do not fit the definition of the universal male subject, the sublime other is inconsequential. Its only role is to facilitate the subject’s realization of its “pre-eminence above nature” because “external nature is not aesthetically judged as sublime in so far as it arouses fear, but rather because it summons ... the mind [to] come to feel the sublimity of its own vocation even over nature” (Kant *Critique* 92).

The enormous ethical implications of separating the sublime from the sensuous or the material are one of the main concerns taken up by Brand in *Inventory* because it puts particular bodies under erasure. Like Burke’s, Kant’s model ultimately promotes the Way of the Father. The idea of the so-called victory of the subject is even more troubling given Kant’s location of the imagination in the body. In particular, the problem with imagination, Kant argues, is that it is a *sensuous standard* or, as he notes, it “makes our state of contentment dependent upon physical conditions” (*Critique* 99). Thus, while the imagination is “an instrument of reason,” it ultimately fails because it can only be “a representation of the object as subjectively purposive” (Kant

*Critique* 99-100). In other words, the imagination cannot measure infinity or magnitude. The sublime then is an experience whereby the subject is able to “[ind] in our rational faculty another non-sensuous standard, one which has that infinity under itself under it as a unit, and in comparison with which everything in nature is small, and so found in our minds a pre-eminence over nature even in its immeasurability” (Kant *Critique* 91-92). But, what Brand’s work highlights is that it is only by exactly this *sensuous standard* that we can overcome what prescriptive paranoia has done to human society worldwide. To ignore the material leads only to more suffering.

#### Brand vs. Kant

Brand’s text challenges the Kantian notion that reason is a moral response to the sublime. Instead, the poem argues, overcoming the passivity and complacency of the subject when faced with the sublime is only possible if the reader challenges their faith in Kantian-like responses to magnitude. As part III of the poem depicts, the response to images of death resulting from the war on terror should not be blind acceptance or logic. Instead, like the speaker who spends “One year...at the television weeping,” an encounter with the sublime can affect us if we let it (Brand 21). In passages like this one, the speaker becomes a model for the reading subject who is also asked to respond to human atrocity with emotion rather than reason, suspicion, or emotional anesthesia. The age of reason has not led to a reasonable world, the speaker of the poem demonstrates in her inventory of death and violence. Furthermore, not only does the speaker weep in response to the magnitude of the horror that she witnesses, she goes one step further because the only way to counter the complacency and fact that “they’re numb over there, and all around her” is to “gather the nerve endings ..... for when they’re needed” (Brand 30). To counter the lack of emotion in “enlightened” reading subjects, *Inventory* becomes a figurative

repository of the emotions and intimacies which the poem cites is missing from the Way of the Father (i.e. normative patriarchal notions of Western subjectivity). Its imaginative inventory of material horrors is thus punctuated with an inventory of the human capacity to feel. The latter acts to counter the complicit conformity and emotional anesthesia of those all around it who follow the Way of the Father (whether that “Father” is Freud, Burke, or Kant). *Inventory* is, thus, a catalogue of horrors as well as a catalogue of the possible ways to respond to said horrors. In documenting both, it highlights and demonstrates the significant potential for human emotion, or, to put it in the same terms as I have been using throughout this project, it highlights and models a way to the Path of the (M)other.

Not only does the poem work to model (M)other-like behaviour for the reader, but it also actively embodies Burke’s notion that poetry can evoke reader emotion by confronting them with the sublime. For example, after the weeping witness is introduced at the opening of part III of the poem, the speaker describes to the reader what she sees on the television, confronting them with the same sublime horror that she weeps over. The haunting diction and excessive inventory of dead bodies “and burnt clothing, bloody rags, bomb-filled shoes” is peppered with intense images of “leaking chests” and “plump corpses...embraced by screams,” demonstrating what Burke (and Longinus, see below) refers to as sublime language (Brand 21). The poem thus embodies Burke’s argument that poetry is a powerful vehicle for the sublime.

Brand’s use of lists as well as her diction and vivid imagery all work to underscore how this poetic sublime can (b)reach the complacency of the reading subject. In their confrontation with the representation of magnitude in Brand’s inventory, the reading subject is both visually and linguistically assaulted by the same horrors that the speaker of the poem faces. In so doing, the poem both evokes reader emotion as well as feelings of terror in the hopes that such a

response will act as a catalyst for change or at least as a bridging to a future time when “she may stop this vigil for broken things” (Brand 42). Of course, the reader may refuse to face this sublime poem. Yet, *Inventory* is not prescriptive. On the contrary, one of the poem’s primary focuses, like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Book of Daniel*, is to critique the blind acceptance of state and social prescriptions. Thus, while the poem evinces the hope that the reader will make the ethical choice to bear witness to the horrific consequences of the war on terror, as the speaker ultimately asserts, the poem’s only real “job is to revise and revise this bristling list / hourly” (100). Like the novelist (e.g. Orwell, Doctorow), the poet’s work is to witness and document the interminable horrors taking place in the world. The reader’s job, so to speak, is to move beyond the paralysis of terror and despair to some kind of material action and, in particular, to overcome the narcissistic and destructive human propensity for complacency, self-preservation, and containment, all of which are prescribed by the Way of the Father. Burke’s emphasis on the power of language to affect a reading/listening subject opens up a productive space for *Inventory*, not only because it highlights the possibility for poetry to act as a catalyst for change but also because he validates how the terrifying aesthetics of Brand’s use of lists and imagery can work to reach the complacent reading subject – though Burke’s allowance for the subject to escape such a confrontation ultimately negates the productivity of such an encounter in the first place.

Though there is arguably less affinity between Brand’s and Kant’s approach to horror, there are a few points of intersection which are productive when analyzing Brand’s poem. First is the collapse of the distance of the Burkean model between subject and the sublime other. Such a collapse is also supported by Brand’s reimagined subject-sublime relation, which demands a bridging of the distance between the subject and the sublime object. While ultimately, Kant’s

model leads to the problematic erasure of the object, the Kantian focus on the transformation of the subject is significant. In addition, Kant's articulation that reason is needed to mediate between the subject and object is also echoed by the speaker of the poem who recognizes that we must not only witness and weep over the deaths and horrors of our world, we must also "*think...of what we might do*" (34, emphasis added). This thinking, the poem argues, is one that demands that the reader not flee from the horror faced but rather considers possible ways to address it. Morality, the poem argues, can only come from being an active witness to the atrocities resulting from the war on terror. As the poem demonstrates, the moral choice is the one made by the speaker who "sits devoted" because she "has to keep watch at the window / of the television" (Brand 28-29). Thus, like Kant, flight, this poem argues, is unethical and precludes the possibility for the positive transformation of the subject, which results from confronting the sublime other.

So, as I have outlined, traditional models provide productive points for approaching the horrific violence graphically depicted in *Inventory*. However, they also contain problematic points which run counter to the content, form, and ethics of *Inventory*. One of the first significant issues which the poem critiques in both Burke's and Kant's models is the hierarchal relationship between subject and other: such is the Way of the Father where the prescribed relationship between subject and other results in the regulation and colonization of the other (whether human, natural or humanmade). This regulation is further troubled by the tendency of both Burke and Kant to feminize or racialize this other. In other words, the Way of the Father leads to relations between subject and object that are built on the mastery of the other. The latter, *Inventory* argues, serves to contradict and undercut the purported notion that an encounter with the sublime results in the (moral) elevation of the subject.

Underpinning the hierarchal relation of canonical models of the sublime is the assumption that the subject and sublime other are radically different from one another in terms which are not only racial and sexual but which are also imbued with value judgements about Western subjects who “down to the last general and secretary / of state / ...found themselves good” (Brand 73). Specifically, as *Inventory* charges, the perspective of the Western white male subject is always granted more weight, highlighting a major problem inherent in a model that “continue[s] to think identity in terms” that posits “the male subject as norm” (Battersby 111). Rather than accepting culpability for the horrors produced by the subject-other relations prescribed by Way of the Father, “The men...declare themselves innocent of all events, / those that have happened and those to come” (Brand 73). In such a model, the subject’s elevated state is achieved at the expense of the colonized and, by implication, deviant, feminized and racialized other.

Thus, *Inventory* exposes the hypocrisy of Burkean and Kantian theorizations and rejects the power structure implicated in the desire for the subject’s elevation over an other. As the speaker of the poem argues, we need to do much more than getting an adrenaline rush from watching planes crashing into towers or from watching the so-called victories in the war on terror. Seeking delight and establishing mastery over unknown others, she argues, are not ethical options. Instead, *Inventory* focuses on bridging the gap between subject and other, conjuring a Path of the (M)other, which refutes the negation and value judgements evidenced in either Burkean or Kantian models. Significantly, like the central vision that informs my project as a whole, “Brand pursues a rhizomatic form of resistance, in which one point or subject can connect to any other in order to form community across borders” (Dobson 180). In so doing, *Inventory* poetically resists the hierarchal landscape which is mapped out by the Way of the Father; for too

long, such canonical models of subject relations have precluded attempts to find solutions that support sustainable living for humans on this planet.<sup>58</sup>

### Brand vs. the Way of the Father

The most obvious way the poem counters the hierarchical relations documented in the canonical sublime of the Father is by documenting the actions and experiences of individuals in a randomized listing throughout the poem. In so doing, the poem demonstrates a refusal to prioritize any individual, event, or nation over another: subjects and others are linguistically and structurally placed on an equal plane. Indeed, the speaker insists on demonstrating that what she witnesses applies to everyone and everywhere, noting that “nothing personal is recorded here” (Brand 22). The result is that *Inventory’s* poetic structure both imagines and inscribes a horizontal space for subject-object relations, effectively highlighting how the relations of mastery internalized into Western ideals of subjectivity have and continue to contribute to the problems facing our modern world negatively. By placing all events on a horizontal and impersonal plane, the poem’s listing works to expose the hypocrisy beneath one of the myths underpinning the Way of the Father, namely, that the Western male subject is somehow superior.

The point of such a list is not to negate difference but rather to shift the reader’s focus to what connects rather than separates human subjects – a move that is emblematic of that found on the Path of the (M)other. The cultivation of empathic connection on such a path is especially important because, in terms of culpability and responsibility for the horrific events that the poem

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<sup>58</sup> One only needs to look at the abysmal failure of humans to co-operate in addressing the spread and impact of coronavirus. Though the Path of the (M)other would offer a far more sustainable solution to a virus that knows no borders, instead as I write this we are seeing the rise of vaccine nationalism, where wealthy nations, primarily in the West, prioritize their own vaccine needs, completely missing the fact that unless all humans are protected, no humans will be. For more, information on the global health impact of vaccine nationalism, see World Health Organization’s COVAX project: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax>.

lists, it is “so hard now to separate what was them / from what we were” (Brand 8). The poem eloquently argues that we must all carry the burden of the horrors which this poem inventories by paying attention to our human kinship and the fact that “*we* did all this and more” (Brand 7, emphasis added). In the face of war, violence, pandemics, and death, there are no justifications for the paranoid borders between the so-called blameless, superior subject and the ostensibly responsible other. As the poem makes clear, paranoid discourse about the axes of evil has obscured the Western subject’s responsibility for the very war that it claims will lead to peace. Though the war on terror is supposedly a defence against the “savagery / against civilized nations” (Brand 43), the consequences resulting from such defence have only served destructive ends. If my analysis of the paranoid rhetoric behind our us/them approach has revealed anything, it is that the prescriptive paranoia of the “civilized” Father is both harmful and hypocritical. As the speaker of the poem notes, “whatever language we might have spoken / is so thick with corrupt intentions” (Brand 43). Not only is the mythical elevation of the Western subject effectively debunked here, but our culpability for and complicity with it is also exposed. Certainly, in terms of our normalization of the Way of the Father, we are all accountable.

To counter the negation of that which horrifies us, *Inventory* argues, we must overcome our propensity to seek a Burkean-type distance. In so doing, we can choose to walk the Path of the (M)other and counter the damage which results from “the loosening clasp of affinities” between all human subjects (Brand 29). Given that, as Orwell and Doctorow also highlight, the prescription of distance between subject and other facilitates a damaging emotional anesthesia, we must learn how to bridge this distance – not just to understand, as Winston does, that we all exist under the same sky, but also to confront our own culpability for the many atrocities enacted against the other.

As such, the poem effectively counters both Burkean and Kantian notions of containment. The word inventory, which refers to both the poem as a whole as well as the verb, neither calculates nor orders chaos. Instead, it attempts to, like organizations such as the Iraqi Body Count project, witness and weep over the deaths which have gone unnoticed by political and military bodies. Consequently, while the inventory in this poem may appear to employ a Western capitalist model of accounting, it does so to make clear the failure of this system to account for anything at all. Instead, the inventory produced here both documents the limits of reason and intimates what lies beyond such limits without any attempt to rationalize or regulate either.

Thus, while the poem's form and content are built on a paradox, it is this very paradox that enables it to re-envision human relations ethically as not emptied of their intensity and intimacy. This re-mapping of the relation between subject and alterity is critical because it underscores the ethical politics at the root of Brand's poem. On the one hand, it is a poem that is built upon the figure of the incalculable, told by multiple female speakers who are "losing the idea / of mathematics" (Brand 33). On the other hand, in their inventories of horror, these speakers demonstrate the power of language to (b)reach the complacency of the distant and desensitized spectators (i.e. readers) who must be called to act. It also reflects what many literary critics have cited as an ethical turn in Canadian literature as a whole.<sup>59</sup> In line with these critics, who argue that Canadian literature is becoming more concerned with the Real and communal responsibility, *Inventory* models ethical responses to the violence taking place in our world. In keeping with the Path of the (M)other depicted in the works of Orwell and Doctorow,

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<sup>59</sup> For a detailed exploration of the turn to ethics in Canadian literature, refer to the *University of Toronto Quarterly* which published a special issue on this topic in Summer 2007.

such responses involve a subject who actively witnesses horror without focusing solely on their own self-preservation.

As seen in the embrace of the (M)other figures in the works of both Orwell and Doctorow, confronting horror requires courage and openness rather than paranoia and self-defence. To take the Path of the (M)other then is to reject the desire of the paranoiac to order that which creates anxiety. In the case of Brand's poem, confrontation occurs simultaneously between the speaker who lists the horrors she sees and the subject reading said list. To read this text is to be confronted with a poetic inventory, the contents of which are as "unreasonable" as the human atrocities it documents.

When placed in the context of American foreign policies and responses to 9/11, the implications of Burkean and Kantian subject-object relations are enormous and lead to a disturbing rationalization of the war on terror. As the poem's speaker notes, Western subjects "declare themselves innocent of all events / those that happened and those to come, / ... they examine the evidence against themselves / and suggest the victims cunning" (Brand 73). Rather than leading to a containment of excess, the Father's reason (which is really only thinly veiled paranoia about the other anyway) has hypocritically reproduced the very thing that it supposedly sought to control. As the speaker pointedly charges, the result of using reason and paranoia to fight terror has been "murders when we talk peace" (Brand 43). The text perceptively argues that the act of regulating fear through paranoia about the other and by containing excess through reason has been catastrophic. The Way of the Father, this poem highlights, again and again, is destructive, hypocritical, and unethical. Most of the efforts to contain the other have only paradoxically produced the very things which the Father claims to be protecting the paranoid subject against. Indeed, historically, the West's continued actions to fuel the fear of the other

have led to an irrational and paradoxical cycle of “endless death / for endless peace” (Brand 86). To place our faith in the Way of the Father’s “reasonable” approach to the other is highly questionable.

In response, the text calls readers to consider how the imagination can produce affect and, in so doing, address the other outside of paranoia, fear, and reason; in other words, outside the Way of the Father. For example, Brand’s text tells “us all [to] celebrate death” (35). While this is a disturbing and seemingly unreasonable invitation, it needs to be understood outside of Kantian models of understanding excess. As both history and the poem persuasively demonstrate, reason has been used to justify and repress many of the consequences of the war on terror. In response, the poem refuses to be reasonable. Thus, though reason “make[s] coy distinctions among mass / murderers,” the imagination, as evidenced in the poem, makes no such distinctions (Brand 35). Being “unreasonable” also facilitates the text’s project to shatter complacency as well as prescribed ideological and paranoid subjectivities. Ultimately, rather than containing excess, the text “celebrates” it to harness the power of sublime discourse to connect subject and object in an intimate relation. Rather than maintaining the distance between subject and other prescribed by the Way of the Father, a Brandian sublime model seeks to bridge it.

As I have argued, the poem’s use of language, form, and imagery effectively reimagines subject/object relations ethically and responsibly, resulting in a text with an alienating and terrifying aesthetics. Though the poem’s grim depictions of world events may alienate many readers, it is crucial to understand the impetus behind the bleak nature of the poem as well as to understand the resulting relation between the reader and text. On the one hand, the poem is terrifying precisely because the horror that it portrays is similarly terrifying and alienating. However, on the other hand, portraying the unrepresentable opens up the possibility for a

different kind of subject/other relation than those articulated in Burkean or Kantian models. As one critic notes, the poem presents “a theory of relation potentially quite different than that of Self and Other, which has dominated much contemporary theory, and different as well from theories of Them and Us, which structured colonial thinking and are revived ... in the context of George W. Bush’s ‘war on terror’” (Brydon 998). As I have been arguing, to portray excess, the poem’s ethical foundation is built on an interminable inventory: a structure that allows the text to speak of that which is unspeakable in an ethical manner. It neither attempts to contain the excess nor reduce it to a logical or solvable equation, as the following passage elucidates:

eight killed by suicide bomb at  
 bus station, at least eleven killed in Shula at  
 restaurants, at least fifteen by car bomb, Irbil  
 ...  
 twenty-three by suicide bomb at Ibn Zanbour kebab  
 restaurant, no need to repeat this really, just the name  
 of the kebab place is new, isn’t it  
 enough numbers still to come so twenty  
 outside bank in Kirkuk. (Brand 26)

While this text uses mathematics as a central discursive figure, it only does so to underscore the indefinite and unbounded nature of the horrors occurring in the world. In the poem, the numbers point to “the seduction of infinity” and chaos rather than summation and totality (Brand 26). Nothing in the text is explained away, and no detail is suppressed.

It is, perhaps, here that readers can begin to develop a strategy to engage with this text. Specifically, the morbid celebration of death and excess in the poem provides a model for how to approach the text. While traditional models of the sublime focus on the preservation of the subject's integrity, here, the poem's exposure of the ideological and paternal nature of subjectivity constructed by *Way of the Father* argues that we must abandon such a model. Rather than preserve the so-called enlightened moral subject, we must instead shatter it, for only then can we bring Big Brother down, to invoke Orwell's figure. As *Inventory* argues, the ongoing rationalization, suppression, and erasure of the horrific have only led us to current global economic, social, and environmental crises in the first place. Significantly, then, the excess (of emotion, despair, and so forth) that the text produces in the reader must not be contained since containment and repression lead to the kind of apathy that the text writes against so fervently. Instead, as Diana Brydon states in her article "Dionne Brand's Global Intimacies: Practising Affective Citizenship," "affect is as much the subject as the method for registration of the political" (992). Applying logos alone to account for the feelings produced by reading *Inventory* will not produce a satisfying engagement with it. On the contrary, what the text demands is a reading that challenges the privileging of reason and logic. Like the poem's inventory that cannot make things add up, reason alone will not offer enough insight into this text and, by extension, the chaotic and violent world in which we live.

The implication then is that rather than being located in a masculine symbolic where distance, logic, and self-preservation are privileged, the mode of reading needed here is - to some extent - located in a feminine imaginative space: a space which recognizes the limitations of the rational and underscores the importance of the affective. On one level, Brand's *Inventory*, like Kant's *Critique*, recognizes the failure of the imagination to represent the interminable horrors in

the world in a satisfactory manner. However, as it also convincingly demonstrates, reason has not, and *will* not, provide a more complete understanding of this excess either. In other words, rather than follow the Way of the Father, this text seeks to put us on a path towards the (M)other.

Longinus

So, *Inventory*'s aim is not to delight the reader but rather to terrify them enough that they will be challenged to question how their own subjectivity is prescribed and constructed by national, social, and cultural institutions under the ministry of the Father. But there is one more traditional theory of the sublime that can aid in understanding Brand's use of the linguistic sublime to shatter enlightened subjectivity—Longinus's text, *Peri Hypsous*. This text, written in the tradition of Greek manuals on rhetoric, offers specific instruction regarding the most effective rhetorical devices that can be employed to achieve sublime discourse. On the one hand, to a large extent, his discussions of literary strategies are problematic and reductive since they run counter to his insistence that the sublime cannot really be defined or discussed. On the other hand, Longinus's text is also both important and unusual given the context of its predecessors because its chief focus is on the power of language to evoke an affective response in the audience – and this *is* a productive approach for engaging with *Inventory*.

For Longinus, how to write the sublime is not as important as what the sublime can achieve: "Sublime language disrupts everyday consciousness" (Freeman 16) because "great writing...takes the reader out of himself" (Lang qtd. in Freeman 16). In a Longinian framework, the text itself (i.e. *Inventory*) is granted the status of the sublime, an object capable of disrupting the emotional anesthesia of the reading subject through its rhetorical power. From a Longinian perspective, then "the sublime is a certain kind of linguistic event, a mode of discourse that breaks down the differences and involves a merger between speaker (or writer) and hearer (or

reader)” (Freeman 16). Such a merger between reader and text is a powerful idea that provides context for the utility of the bleak and horrific poetic excess in *Inventory*. Taken from this perspective, “the very nature of the sublime” is transformative because of “its ability to blur distinctions between observer and observed, reader and text, or spectator and event” (Freeman 5). Rather than follow Burkean and Kantian sublime models, which “claim for the spectator a state of detachment,” the merger produced between subject and other “rejects the latter” (Freeman 5). After all, to negate the potential that results from the sublime encounter between subject and other would be to “nullify the very features of rapture, merger, and identification that characterize and define the sublime, for the sublime event is precisely one in which what happens to “the other” also happens to the subject who perceives it” (Freeman 5). Rather than replicate the isolation of a traditional sublime model, from a Longinian perspective, the sublime is an event that carries with it the potential to bridge a subject and an other.

In so doing, the linguistic sublime is a powerful tool that can help to “develop our nature to some degree of greatness” – a point which is in line with *Inventory*’s project of shattering and transforming the reading subject from apathetic to affected (Longinus 1). Longinus refers to “Sublimity [a]s a kind of eminence or excellence of discourse” (Longinus 1). Specifically, it is a discourse that is elevated, especially since its “grandeur produces ecstasy rather than persuasion in the hearer” (Longinus 1-2). Longinus grants sublime discourse the power to transport (*ekstasis*) the subject outside of themselves. This state of ecstasy, or “being beside oneself” (OED), is significant because it speaks to the imaginative potential of the subject’s encounter with the (rhetorical or linguistic) sublime. In particular, such transport can provide the potential for both seeing the prescribed nature of enlightened subjectivity as well as providing the perspective needed for developing the self differently. In transporting the subject outside of themselves, the

subject has the opportunity to see and question the Father's borders behind which they have been constrained.

The latter point not only counters the self-preservation so central to both Burke and Kant, but it also recoups the possibility for a sublime encounter that retains its power of influence. In a point that challenges the Burkean focus on pleasure as well as the Kantian focus on reason, Longinian sublime discourse overwhelms its reader, producing an effect of "wonder and astonishment [that] always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant" (Longinus 2). As such, Longinus validates the power of sublime discourse over traditional rhetorical models, which focus on logic "because persuasion is on the whole something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every hearer" (Longinus 2). Unlike Burkean and Kantian depictions of magnitude, for Longinus, the sublime produces that which is invincible; it is a power that cannot be contained. The result is that the overwhelmed subject can neither flee nor reason away that which they encounter. In such a model, an encounter with the sublime retains its transformative potential.

To a limited extent, this transformative power is reflected in Kant's model since the subject's encounter with the sublime leads to a subject that discovers their powers of reason. However, in Kant's model, the power of the sublime is eventually contained and thus, is made impotent by logic. Overcoming the sublime thus negates the very power that both Burke and Kant initially grant the sublime other, ultimately placing it under erasure to ensure the preservation and elevation of the subject. In contrast, while Longinus is also interested in the effects of the sublime on the subject, his model of subjectivity is not one that results in either the containment of the other or in the preservation of the subject. On the contrary, the subject's encounter with the sublime does not result in order at all. Instead, as Longinus argues,

“Sublimity...tears up everything like a whirlwind, and exhibits the orator’s whole power at a single blow” (2). Sublime language is powerful and violent, and this Longinian blow should connect us, not individualize us, as in the Kantian tradition. Rather than resulting in the preservation of the subject, an encounter with the sublime results in the undoing of the subject, an idea that has clear resonance with the transformative potential of a reader’s confrontation with *Inventory*. Though Longinus also cites an encounter with the sublime as one that leads to a subject “to be elevated,” such an elevation is one that “leaves him with more to reflect upon than was contained in the mere words” (7). Indeed, for Longinus, if an encounter with the sublime does not result in “reflection,” it is “not true sublimity” at all (7).

On the one hand, therefore, this rhetorical model of the sublime is a kind of linguistic sadism. However, as *Inventory*’s gruesome listing makes clear, such linguistic violence is necessary in order to think about how the enlightened subject model can be shattered and transformed. After all, *Inventory* “celebrates” death in order to open doors to imagining possibilities for reconceptualizing subject/other relations outside those prescribed by the Way of the Father.

## Conclusion

As the multiple speakers of this poem a/effectively attest, measuring morality against the perceived success of colonization of the other is nothing short of barbaric. So too is fleeing the sight/site of that which we fear. As variations of the Way of the Father, both Burkean and Kantian subject-other models envision a relation that is figured in hierarchal terms (much like a Freudian model does). In either model, the “success” of the subject’s encounter with the other is measured against the subject’s ability to maintain their privileged position of mastery over an (feminized and racialized) other. Such a model is built on maintaining the distance between a

subject and an other, whether that distance is imagined in physical, sexual, or racial terms. Regardless of how such a distance is envisioned, what is consistent is that it is manufactured by cultivating a fear of the (different) other via prescriptive paranoia.

In response, Brand's work provides a model of resistance against that of the Way of the Father. One way that it does so is by delivering a Longinian blow that works to shatter the complicit conformity and the emotional anesthesia produced therein. Via both its form and content, the poem effectively levels any claims valorizing the purported elevation which comes from regulating excess through an ostensibly cultivated and "reasonable" Western patriarchal lens. It also condemns the cowardice of the thrill-seeking subject who seeks out the other only as a source of titillation.

Instead, *Inventory* demonstrates that neither flight nor reason can shield us from the infinite horrors produced by humanity. As the pandemic and climate change are showing us, there are horrors from which we cannot flee. There are also fewer gaps between us than we might believe. By disallowing the flight of the subject as well as underscoring the inability of Western modes of logic to make sense of the world, the poem seeks to shatter our complacency, delivering a Longinian blow to break us out of our complicit conformity with the Way of the Father. While this poem is an inventory, it does not produce an organized list of various events in the world. Instead, as the poem argues, the act of counting, whether dead bodies or atrocious acts of violence, frustrates all efforts at rationalization and containment. Far from providing any order or meaning, this *Inventory* leads to "numbers [that are] so random, / so shapeless" (Brand 26). No amount of counting can contain the horrors imagined in this text.

Ultimately, by using an inventory that cannot contain the horror that it lists, the text underscores the failure of the "cultivated" Western mind to contain or order the excess in our

post-9/11 world. While the poem's speaker frantically attempts to record the many deaths that she hears listed in the news, she also realizes the impossibility of her infinite task. Like the poem's attempt to inventory violence, the task of the witness is an interminable one. As the text's grim ending shows, the excess in "this bristling list" continues to accrue even after this poem ends – a point which is further emphasized by the absence of any punctuation at the end of the final line (Brand 100). The horrors continue even as we choose to flee. Once again, as we were in the pages of Orwell's and Doctorow's texts, we are confronted with our own inaction. And, once again, we are called to do something radical, to follow a Path of the (M)other where we might shed our fear long enough to embrace the other in love. And, as I discuss in my next and final chapter, it is precisely such an embrace of the other that this poem imagines for us by showing us the intimate and fragile connections that we each have with one another.

## Chapter Five: Imagining a *Path to and Beyond the (M)other*: Dionne Brand's Ethical Response to Paranoia, Terror, and Alterity

The previous chapter traces how *Inventory* works to bring Big Brother down, identifying the problems that arise from our normalization of the Way of (More) Fathers (i.e. Burke and Kant). It does so by delivering a Longinian blow, effectively extending the Path of the (M)other envisioned in both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Book of Daniel*. Just as Orwell's and Doctorow's texts do, Brand's poem critiques the fearful and suspicious subject-other model fuelled by prescriptive paranoia. Such a model does nothing to address the material reality of our world – a world which, the poem depicts, is reeling from the disastrous consequences of blindly following the Way of the Father. As outlined in Chapter Four, the origins of this can be found in the discussions of the sublime, particularly in the works of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant. Such discussions offer a philosophy that intrinsically requires us to distance ourselves from a metaphorical other, highlighting another patriarchal lens that normalizes an us/them mentality coloured by fear. The result is our society: a space predisposed to adopt the Way of the Father over the Path of the (M)other. In such a worldview, the latter is a space relegated to those perceived as overly idealistic, naïve, and foolish.

From one perspective, Burkean and Kantian sublime models provide a productive framework for considering the significance of a sublime and uncontainable other, which is especially relevant for this chapter's focus on the events leading up to and following 9/11. However, ultimately, traditional models of the sublime work to regulate the ethical imaginative lesbian and feminine sublime space figured in *Inventory*. Chapter Four then outlines the failings of a patriarchal philosophy of the sublime in engaging with Brand's text and with engaging with

our world as a whole. We learned in Chapter Four that our understanding of the sublime, and so of Brand's text, cannot rest on narratives of fear and defence. Instead, as the speakers of the poem argue, to truly come to terms with the systems we live under (and which produce the literature we study), we need to go deeper in unpacking the dominant narratives that govern our lives.

Consider then the productive and rhetorical power of the Longinian Blow, discussed in Chapter Four, to affect an apathetic reading subject. Brand's poem exemplifies what Longinus means when he writes that the orator, to effect change, must muster "whole power at a single blow" (2). The work of two important feminist scholars, Barbara Claire Freeman and Joanna Zylińska, provide useful guidance for investigating the Longinian blow further. Both scholars support my reading of the transformative potential located in the *linguistic/rhetorical blow* of a sublime text as outlined in *On the Sublime*. Taken together, my analysis of such a *blow* provides a framework for understanding *Inventory*'s rhetorical ability to produce a sublime encounter for the reading subject, ultimately demonstrating the potential for reframing the hierarchical relations between subject and other as modelled by the Way of the Father. Feminist theorizations of a feminine sublime model support the need highlighted throughout *Inventory* to re-imagine subject-other relations and do so in ways that are reminiscent of the elements identified in the approach to the other as modelled via the Path of the (M)other.

However, while theories of the feminine sublime are helpful, like the traditional sublime models they critique, they ultimately fail to provide a completely satisfactory model of ethical intersubjective relations because they place the materiality of the (M)other's body under erasure. In other words, they replicate the same privileging of reason over feeling, mind over body. In response, Brand's work imagines an alternative to traditional and feminist sublime models,

consistent with that of the Path of the (M)other. Specifically, by disallowing the erasure of suffering human bodies everywhere, the poem models a sensuous sublime model that, rather than turn away from the (suffering) body of the other, ensures that each body is counted. By presenting the reader with an inventory of the suffering other, the poem confronts them with the consequences resulting from an ongoing disinterest, ultimately disallowing the ongoing complicity with the Way of the Father. By demanding an ethical response from the reader, *Inventory* makes clear just how committed it is to the project of reimagining subject-other relations. By disallowing the artificial separation and privileging of the mind over the body, Brand's sensuous sublime refuses to ignore the material suffering of the other. Her model thus reminds us of the unethical decision we make each time we turn away from the other, and in so doing, asks us to consider the nature of the subject that we are striving to protect.

As the previous chapter noted, *Inventory* can be situated in the Canadian long poem tradition. However, ultimately, the text functions as an anti-epic and therefore anti-national piece, reframing the epic tradition to redefine national boundaries/borders. As the speaker of the poem states, "I say this big world is the story, I don't have an other" (Brand 84). The result is that the text images a *transnational space*, one that circumvents and challenges the rhetoric of prescriptive paranoia as well as the artificial boundaries that we myopically defend.<sup>60</sup> The Way of the Father leverages fear and paranoia to convince us that we must secure perimeters and borders; this is the only way (so the "logic" goes) to keep the foreign threat out. However, as the poem demonstrates,<sup>61</sup> there is an intimate and fragile connection that binds us all together. Distancing ourselves via the sublime denies this connection and makes the Path of the (M)other

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<sup>60</sup> Consider how well the defence of our borders has helped us in during the pandemic or in relation to global warming.

<sup>61</sup> Again, as COVID and climate change have shown us.

impossible as an alternative. And so, reflecting our interconnected nature through the sensuous sublime, the poem moves “from the intimacy of the human body outward into the range of spatial scales now attracting considerable attention within globalization studies: from the home, through the community, to the region, the nation, a broader trinational region and the world” (Brydon 5). In so doing, the poem demonstrates how tragedy, violence, and war know no boundaries. There is devastation everywhere.

And, thus, while the text is written by a significant Canadian poet who has been recognized with the Toronto Poet Laureate award, this text writes outward in a global gesture that rejects the prescriptive paranoia of the Father. Rather than attempting to locate one responsible party *over there* for the violence that continues to dominate our world, Brand’s text includes everyone and everywhere in her vision. In so doing, she shows how complacency with the Way of the Father has rippled throughout the Western world. Thus, while Jane and Finch figures in her text, indicating the Canadian context from which she writes, it is there to highlight that war knows no boundaries – the violence in this text occurs “all over the world / ...all the dictators’ palaces are made of the same wood” (Brand 34-35). The possibility for salvation and peace does not even figure in any particular place; rather, it is located in a future time, as the speaker repeatedly asserts.

As a result, *Inventory* takes stock of the material waste and devastation that we have inflicted on ourselves and the Earth. It thus attempts to force the reader to face the discomfort of their cognitive dissonance or doublethink, highlighting the destruction that comes from “progress.” In many respects, the speaker of the poem is like an “Angel of History,”<sup>62</sup> forced to

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<sup>62</sup> The Angel of History is a concept taken from Walter Benjamin’s work *On the Concept of History*. Based on Paul Klee’s 1920 painting entitled, “Angelus Novus,” Benjamin speaks to the idea of progress as something that comes from the chaos of history. Significantly, said history is something that we can only see by looking backwards.

witness the past while being violently propelled into the future. Though not in itself an act of change, this act of witnessing becomes, the poem and this final chapter argues, a crucial first step on the path to shatter the paranoid, complacent, and apathetic subject. If, as Orwell and Doctorow compellingly depict, such a suspicious subject is complicit with the destructive Way of the Father, then *Inventory* highlights the horrifically ironic repercussions emerging from it. Though we have privileged the so-called rational self under the Way of the Father, we have mistaken fear for defence, conforming for orthodoxy, and rational detachment for emotional anesthesia. The enlightened and rational subject, when viewed through the lens of reason, has not led to positive change or openness to difference. On the contrary, as *Inventory* convincingly depicts, reason has led to a world with characteristics reminiscent of an Orwellian nightmare, a place where we choose to fear rather than embrace the foreign other, even as such fear leads to our own destruction.

The Way of the Father has not led to positive world change or mindfulness but rather to a paternal subject that demands a mastery of personal relations predicated on the negation of difference and an *irrational* paranoia about alterity. The other is a deviant who must be contained via conversion (by the Father) to the social norms of (Western) society. As Orwell and Doctorow's texts have shown, the deviant other is a threat that must be subjugated, colonized, and converted. However, the horrifying irony is that the subject who converts the other manifests the same symptoms of dis-ease as those they claim to cure. For example, recall that Freud's theories and conversion narratives echo Schreber's, just as O'Brien demonstrates the delusional behaviours he claims to be curing in Winston. The Way of the Father does not invite a horizontal relation between persons equal as subjects. Rather it closes down such possibilities, resulting in a vertical power of subjugation that represses and justifies (via conversion) not only

difference/deviation from the norm but even the very act of subjugation itself (i.e., Freud/O'Brien are not subjugating, they are *righting/curing* the deviant). *Inventory* argues that this double repression must be openly critiqued if we are ever to experience radical and meaningful change in our world. Not doing so enables a process of doublethink (deviation bad/righting good) that continues to justify our inaction even as it destroys all living beings on this planet.

So, Like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, Brand's *Inventory* shows us the insanity of our continued complacency with the Way of the Father, highlighting the destructive aftereffects of subject-other relations regulated by prescriptive paranoia. Brand's work then "draw[s] attention to the dominant discourse on culture," recognizing that knowledge can be sought from paths other than those prescribed by Way of the Father (Brand *Bread Out of Stone* 131). Where the poem departs from Orwell's and Doctorow's, however, is in its explicit and direct implication of the reading subject as responsible for the disasters it catalogues. While Orwell's and Doctorow's texts certainly confront readers with horrific events, Brand's text goes one step further by holding them accountable. In so doing, her poem works to break through the subject's complacency more directly. It does so by creating a sublime encounter for the reader that resists attempts of prescription, mastery, and repression. For example, while the poem is beautiful, it is also an exceptionally difficult and disturbing text to read because, through its use of such literary devices as amplification and imagery, it seeks to be something of such magnitude and sensory quality that it effectively overcomes and pierces through the emotional anesthesia of the disinterested reading subject. It does so by cataloguing and responding to various violent events taking place in our times: times which, the poem laments, are dominated by the rhetoric of the Way of the Father. Where this way dominates, we

will find paranoia, hatred, and war. Instead, Brand's poem offers an alternative to the us/them mentality that is so readily prescribed in patriarchal structures. This alternative is depicted in the poem through the figure of cousinhood.

### The Feminist Sublime

Feminist theorists have long interrogated the sublime tradition as a whole, and their critique provides a starting point for exploring the form and content of Brand's poem. Feminist theorists have sought to rethink the Enlightenment subject as depicted in canonical sublime theory, charging that the sublime has been dominated by a universal and exclusively white male subject. In contrast, these feminist theorists seek to redefine the sublime relations determined by the Way of the Father by considering the politics of sexual difference. Two important representative feminist works are Barbara Claire Freeman's *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* and Joanna Zylińska's *On spiders, cyborgs and being scared: The feminine and the sublime*. Both works seek to revise canonical theories – especially those of Longinus, Burke, and Kant - in the context of what they refer to as a “feminine sublime” space, calling attention to the phallogocentric nature (i.e., the Way of the Father) of Western theorizations of the subject and the sublime. In so doing, both Freeman and Zylińska attempt to challenge a masculinist discourse to redefine Enlightened subjectivity such that the relation between subject-other does not result in either containment or mastery.

For Freeman, and in contrast to Longinus, Burke, and Kant, the “feminine sublime” is “neither a rhetorical mode nor an aesthetic category but a domain of experience that resists categorization, in which the subject enters into a relation with an otherness – social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic—that is excessive and unrepresentable” (Freeman 2). For both Freeman and Zylińska, the definition of the sublime other includes anything that exceeds representation.

Zylinska, in particular, draws on Lyotard in order to speak of the sublime other as “the excess of the everyday” rather than the object of grandeur that is often depicted in the traditional canon (37). Significantly then, a confrontation with the sublime becomes a part of the quotidian. There is a potential for encountering the sublime in everyday events, objects, and people, already making an encounter with the sublime a far less hierarchal experience.

This broadening of the definition of the other is an essential aspect of the feminine sublime model because it facilitates the application of sublime modes to approach the horrors in our everyday lives – horrors which, as the *Inventory* shows, continue to accrue in our post 9/11 world. However, while the definition of the other shifts in the feminine sublime mode, what does not shift is the focus on the subject’s reaction to the sublime: “The sublime is a theoretical discourse...about the subject’s diverse responses to that which occurs at the very limits of symbolization” (Freeman 3). In terms of the focus of this chapter on the events of and following 9/11, the sublime can thus be either a subject’s response to the moment when the planes crash into the towers or to the threatening foreign faces which become targets in the war on terror. In this way, what governs the understanding of the other seems to be a sense of strangeness. However, in contrast to Burkean and Kantian traditions, the feminine sublime articulates a subject/other relation that rejects the privileging of reason and self-preservation as well as critiques the desire for distance and control. The problem with traditional theories of the sublime is that while “they merely...[seek] to explain the sublime,” as a result of defining “the sublime as the elevation of the self over an object or experience that threatens it, the sublime becomes a strategy of appropriation” and mastery (Freeman 3).

In contrast, Zylinska’s and Freeman’s works critique the limitations of a sublime, which cannot account for an other that resists regulation and threatens to (b)reach the wholeness of the

subject. Rather than working to find a way to preserve the self after an encounter with the sublime, the feminine sublime – at least in theory - seeks to “embrace that excess which is restrained and controlled in the sublime of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant” (Zylinska 4). In place of an impersonal subject-object relation predicated on distance, self-preservation, and mastery, the feminine sublime follows the Path of the (M)other, offering an ostensibly *interpersonal* relation wherein the subject “open[s] itself up to an incalculable difference which threatens [their] stability and self-sufficiency” (Zylinska 4). The result is that this relation is characterized by intimacy, love, and paradoxical pain and pleasure that come from an experience that poses the potential to shatter what the subject knows of themselves. Like the embrace of the M(other) (which occurs in the face of death as depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), loving the other is terrifying, but this terror is accepted. In the subject-other relation imagined in the feminine sublime, the subject refuses to “domesticate the object that might be a source of a threat,” instead “accept[ing] the amorous relationship of pleasure and pain, and life and death, and the potential dispersal of the self” (Zylinska 31). The willingness to face an other may result in the death (as it does for the (M)others in both Orwell’s and Doctorow’s texts) or shattering of the subject, but this is a necessary part of an open and ethical sublime model. To flee or reason in the face of the other is, as this model shows a heartless and dangerous response. The example of the planes crashing into the twin towers illustrates some of the ethical problems that emerge in light of the canonical tradition. The subject’s flight in the face of 9/11 effectively reduces a horrendous act of senseless violence to a thrill ride. The subject benefits from having an intervention into the ennui of their everyday existence but then returns intact to a pre-sublime state, evacuating the sublime encounter from its potential to facilitate reflection and meaningful change for the subject. In contrast, in the feminine sublime model, an encounter with the other

does not lead to containment; instead, following the Path of the (M)other, an encounter with the sublime is transformed into a “site ... of women’s affective experiences” (Freeman 2). The result is that the sublime event remains “a crisis in relation to language and representation that a certain subject undergoes” (Freeman 2).

The site of the feminine sublime experience and the resulting crisis is important on multiple levels, as Brand’s poem makes clear. Recall that the push to an affective space, *Inventory* argues, counters the complacency that the poem highlights is fueling and underpinning the devastation taking place in our world. Rejecting emotional anesthesia is essential if we are to find a more sustainable approach to the other. Like the speakers of *Inventory*, the feminine sublime model demands that the subject must “take responsibility for the incommensurable otherness that many theorists of the sublime have attempted in one way or another to deny or tame” (Zylinska 8). For example, in the case of the planes crashing into the towers, a feminine sublime event results in a subject that questions their own responsibility for the tragedy, enabling responses to the other that are not solely prescribed by the paranoid rhetoric of the state. Consequently, a feminine sublime model opens up a space for a relation between self and other that does not replicate “the masculinist sublime that seeks to master, appropriate, or colonize the other” (Freeman 11). Certainly, said masculinist approach is quite clear in the Bush administration’s paranoid response to the events of 9/11. Referring to the latter, the speaker of the poem remarks that “there are announcements of imagined disturbances, / of dreads and sometimes it must be play, surely, / and the peculiar fragility of power” (Brand 25). Not only does the speaker highlight the justification of the containment of the other by the state, but she also intimates here, and throughout the poem, that the paranoid response to 9/11 neither reduced the risk of further acts of terrorism nor increased the safety of America.

Using a similar “play” metaphor as Brand here, national security expert Bruce Scheier notes that the paranoid responses to 9/11 are more about “security theatre” than producing any kind of meaningful safety measures (Schneier *Beyond Fear*). Rather than protect the citizens of America, the war on terror, as the poem’s listing of deaths attests, has only served to prolong the senseless violence which began on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Such a cycle of violence has been supported and enabled by a subject, who is complacent with the masculinist sublime tradition. Because the response to the horrific is either flight or reason, the relation between subject and sublime other in a masculinist tradition is one where “everyone grows perversely accustomed” to violence and death (Brand 29). In contrast, and in line with the subject-sublime other relation outlined in the feminine sublime, the poem’s speaker “refuses” (Brand 29). The speaker’s refusal to flee or colonize the sublime other leads to the Path of the (M)other, which, as seen in Orwell and Doctorow, evinces a “politics of the feminine sublime [which] involves taking up a position of respect in response to an incalculable otherness” as well as a position of responsibility (Freeman 11). In a feminine sublime model, the subject opens to the approach of the other even in the face of death. Failing to embrace the other leads to a turning away from the subject’s own responsibility for the horror in the world – an act which *Inventory* repeatedly cites leaves all subjects susceptible to prescriptive paranoia, leading them to “succumb...to...science-fiction tales of democracy” (Brand 8).

Of course, this is not to say that facing the other is an easy task. Indeed, in many respects, to follow the Path of the (M)other in facing an ostensibly threatening other may lead to a point of crisis for the subject. Such a crisis may produce feelings of fear, doubt, rage, and denial. However, consistent with Orwell’s and Doctorow’s texts, Brand’s *Inventory* works to highlight how such a crisis of confrontation presents the potential for the enlightened and paranoid subject

to step outside of themselves. In the act of facing the other, the subject gains perspective, seeing the destructive nature of nationally and culturally prescribed normative roles prescribed by the Way of the Father. Contrary to Kant, for the speaker of Brand's poem, culture does not produce cultivated minds. Rather, echoing Orwell, Brand depicts the need to be critical of culturally, socially, and politically prescribed notions of normative subjectivity. As the speaker warns us, the so-called cultivated minds of world leaders have all too often focused on "cultivate[ing] ..... wicked knowledge" (Brand 44). It is up to us to see that such knowledge has long led to our own destruction. In other words, the text forces us to recognize our own cooption into the totalizing systems that make up the Way of the Father. To confront the inventory that Brand presents us with is to recognize the stark and horrifying truth that all along, we have been performing "acts of ventriloquism," complicitly conforming to the Way of the Father (Brand 4). Instead, the poem offers us another path – a space that though fraught with the crisis that emerges from confronting our complicity and culpability, also contains the potential for the subject to break free from being "imprisoned ... in their ghosts" (Brand 9). In this way, in reconceptualizing the traditional sublime model, feminine theorists have provided a revision that facilitates a productive approach to the bleak landscape of Brand's text.<sup>63</sup>

So, in focusing on the need to bridge the gap between subject and other, both Freeman and Zylinska's works demonstrate how necessary it is for us to walk the Path of/to the M(other). However, while their critiques of both Burke and Kant certainly resonate with Brand's critique of traditional self-other models of relation, their theorizations fall short in three important ways. Firstly, the feminine sublime does not account for the productive elements of the Longinian blow and subject-other merger. Secondly, it duplicates the canon's *non-sensuous sublime* model,

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<sup>63</sup> They also provide a productive way to approach the stark world of Orwell's text.

resulting in a similarly abstract and universal subject rather than one rooted in the material reality of the other. Specifically, in focusing almost entirely on the other, the feminine sublime model places the subject under erasure, threatening the possibility for the relation of respect and responsibility between a subject and other that it claims to be imagining. Finally, the non-sensuousness of the feminine model not only keeps the sublime in the traditional realm of the abstract, but it also negates any possibility of an embrace between the subject-other. The result is a sublime mode that argues for an embrace that it does not easily facilitate: the embrace remains nothing more than an abstract fantasy.

My exploration of the limitations of the feminine sublime begins with Freeman's reading of Longinus's sublime model, which does not provide an entirely satisfying critique of the Longinian blow and merger. The problem begins when she bases her analysis on the critical reception to *Peri Hypsous*. For example, Freeman charges that Longinus's blow to the subject duplicates the hierarchal relation of Burke and Kant. To support this claim, she states that: "Although Longinus never explicitly confronts this issue, his treatise suggests (or is more *frequently read as if it suggested*) that the moment of *hypsous* becomes a struggle for dominance between opposing forces" (Freeman 17, emphasis added). While Freeman goes on to build her critique on this assumption, as she admits here, Longinus does not make any such claim. On the contrary, the struggle for the poet/speaker is not to dominate the subject but rather to help them step outside of themselves in a way that encourages self-reflection.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> This is not to suggest that Longinus's model does not have limitations. For example, as Freeman has noted, *Peri Hypsous* contains internal contradictions. Like any text attempting to discuss the sublime (including this dissertation), there are problems with attempting to theorize that which, by definition exceeds language and understanding. Longinus's attempts to nail down what rhetorical devices a sublime text must use to be sublime are in this light reductive and counter to the spirit of the sublime.

While much of Freeman's reading is based on an assumption that seems to misread the point behind the violent blow of the orator, parts of her critique are productive. For example, Freeman's critiques of Longinus's literary reading of Sappho point to an important contradiction in Longinus's text. As Freeman convincingly argues, Longinus's reading of Sappho's poem as that which seeks to unify rather than shatter or fragment the reading subject is problematic. Freeman is wise to note that to misread Sappho in this manner, "ignore[s]: the deployment of agency to intensify and underscore the wish for dispossession, and to recognize in the scene of self-dispersal a site of self-empowerment" (19). Indeed, such a reading of *Inventory* would lead to similar problems since, like Sappho, Brand's poetic empowerment comes from the self-dispersal and undoing of both the speaker and the reading subject. However, while I agree with Freeman here, her work does not seem to address precisely *how* the sublime fragments the subject. Longinus, however, does address this. Consequently, Freeman's glossing over of the productive role of the linguistic blow in the undoing of the subject leaves it unable to entirely interrogate how *Inventory*'s terrifying aesthetics works.

Freeman offers other compelling points of critique as well. For example, she argues that the Longinian sublime results in the possession of the subject by the speaker. She points to Longinus's assertion that to be effectively sublime, the discourse must convince the listener "to believe we have created what we have only heard" (Longinus 7). Seemingly, for Longinus, the ultimate aim of sublime language is to control the subject, leading Freeman to argue that the relation is one of mastery. In this case, the sublime would function in a manner very similar to the prescriptive paranoia that I discuss and critique throughout this project. In this model, the encounter with the sublime does not encourage the reader to think for themselves but rather to think in prescribed ways. The result is that the sublime is related to a kind of mental rape such that, as

Freeman notes, the sublime “effect is one of ravishment” (16). Freeman’s assertion that the linguistic force and violence of the sublime ravishes the reader is convincing. However, whether this necessarily results in the colonization of the subject is not as clear given Longinus’s stated purpose for the sublime event and merger as one that leads to self-reflection and development. If we assume the latter to be the case, sublimity is not about possessing the subject at all but rather about transporting or dislocating them outside of the patriarchal norms which regulate subjectivity.

Thus, while Freeman argues that “the view of creativity [i]s bound up with the quest for mastery and ownership,” what Longinus actually argues is that creativity has the power to transport the subject outside of their prescribed subjectivity (Freeman 17). The orator does hit the listener with a blow that leads them to think like them initially. However, the purpose behind this blow is not prescription but rather a spilling over such that the subject can see and move beyond any prescriptions.

For example, in keeping with Longinus’s point that language can overwhelm the reader, Brand’s poem draws on various poetic, structural and literary devices in order to deliver her blow to the reader. One way that the poem assaults the reader is through its inventory. In particular, the poem’s excessive listing of deaths effectively makes use of amplification to overwhelm the reader with facts that are generally elided from official accounts, forcing them to face the harsh reality regarding the material consequences of the war on terror. Certainly, the hopeful result of being faced with this death count is that the reader will take responsibility for it rather than flee from it – though closing the text is, of course, always an (unethical) option.

However, and in keeping with the Longinian sublime, another purpose behind Brand’s violent, poetic amplification is to encourage reader reflection. The amplification of violence in

the structure of the text then is used to combat the passivity and complacency of the reading subject. As the speaker cites, the latter needs to be challenged to face that fact that “the Arab faces were Arab faces after all” (Brand 22). Like the weeping witness who is undone by the violence which she witnesses, the reader who stays is similarly undone by the swelling list of deaths that they are made to witness. The faces of those killed must be recognized outside of the paranoid rhetoric of a threatening Middle Eastern otherness. While the complacent subject continues to believe that “we’ll make it.../ without a war, without the tragedy / of it all,” the poem’s amplification of details proves that “it’s too late for that” (Brand 5). In this way, *Inventory* demonstrates what Longinus cites as the power of poetic excess to (b)reach and undo any preconceived or prescribed notions held by the reading subject.

But in contrast to Freeman’s points regarding the ravishing of the subject as an act of possession, the ravishing can instead be read as an act of liberation – one that leads precisely to the kind of self-dispersal that Freeman observes as empowering in her reading of Sappho. In this case, for example, though the reading subject is troubled by what they are made to witness, Brand’s listing, which is based on solid research, provides overwhelming evidence that forces them to spill beyond any prescribed notions that the war on terror leads to the protection of anyone. Like the T.V screens that we effectively watch with the speaker of the poem, this poem is another “screen that lacerate[s] our intimacies” (Brand 5). Because there is a merger between what the speaker sees and what the reader sees, there is a possibility for self-development. The sublime moment produced by this encounter with excess has the potential to not only convince the reader of their own culpability but also to encourage them to act. Thus, while Freeman is not necessarily wrong in reading the Longinian model as one where the sublime is predicated on the ravishment of a listening subject, I would suggest that the use of linguistic violence to threaten

the subject, whether through poetic structure or literary devices, leads to the subject's undoing in a way that is imaginatively productive.

The poem itself demonstrates how linguistic and rhetorical violence can be harnessed to productive ends. For example, like the accounting, which is used to critique capitalism, the poem uses violence to critique violence. As such, when the speaker declares that she “sleep[s] / with Sun Tzu / under my pillow,” she is speaking to her use of the art of linguistic war against war itself (Brand 77). This productive use of linguistic violence to counter material violence is analogous to the poem's use of linguistic violence to undo the reading subject. The reader is assaulted not only by the gruesome lists of dying children but also by the structure of the poem. For example, though there are glimpses of optimism and joy throughout the poem, for the most part, any such images are limited to the final part of the poem. Structurally then, the reader faces an inventory of violence and horror before the speaker will relent, providing a short reprieve from her list of deaths and war. This poetic structure is significant because it makes material what the content of the poem repeatedly points out: there can be no happiness in a world that is “ravaged like any battlefield” (Brand 42). Before it speaks of happiness, it uses the power of the sublime language to show the reading subject what writing, and the imagination can do. As the speaker knows, language has power: “Some words can make you weep, / when they're uttered ... / they break all places intended and known” (Brand 99).

This is not to suggest that reaching the reading subject is easy. Like Orwell's, Brand's text “worries” about how to get through to a desensitized and disengaged reading subject. In response, the speaker wants the reader to “know that I am ... your terrorist” (Brand 37). Terrorizing the reader through a sublime poetics leads to a potential undoing of the complacent subject. Moreover, such an undoing not only allows said subject to recognize the constructed and

prescribed nature of their own subjectivity, but it also allows them to see the presence of the other. Poetic terrorism and rhetorical violence are thus harnessed in a productive manner. Specifically, in its representation of the magnitude of war, hatred, and greed, the poem delivers a blow to the reader. However, rather than lead to a relation of mastery, this blow leads to a dispersal of the self as well as a connection between subject and other. The result is a moment of *ekstatis* wherein, in being beside themselves, the subject has the perspective to question and spill beyond the borders of pre-scripted subjectivity. In this context, the Longinian blow and merger overflows with great transformative potential.

Anne Carson's figure of "decreation" is useful in attempting to theorize the undoing of the subject as an imaginatively productive rather than destructive event. The potential of decreation is, in large part, part of the project of Brand's poem to shatter the reading subject. Carson defines decreation as "an undoing of the creature in us – that creature enclosed in self and defined by self" (202). Her use of this term comes from the French philosopher and Christian mystic Simone Weil. As Carson states, "Weil was also a person who wanted to get herself out of the way so as to arrive at God" (194). This process Weil referred to as decreation. Without wanting to digress too far away from my purpose here, as Carson is clearly pointing to in her work, Weil's idea of getting the self out of the way for the divine is useful in thinking about the subject's relation with the linguistic sublime event as articulated in my reading of Brand (and Longinus as well). While Freeman chooses to read the identification between reader/listening subject and author/orator as a relation of mastery, the act of linguistic ravishing (occurring at the site of the reader's encounter with *Inventory*) is better understood as a radical opportunity for the subject to decreate themselves. The result is that the ability to think differently from the Way of the Father becomes possible.

Rather than reading the merger between speaker and reader as an act of domination as Freeman does, in *Inventory*, the merging of subject-other is empowering. As Carson argues, “To feel the joy of the Sublime is to be inside creative power for a moment, to share a bit of electric extra life with the artist’s invention, to spill with him” (*Decreation: Poetry* 46). As both Carson and I argue, to spill with the writer is an imaginatively productive act because it encourages a spilling over and beyond the prescribed borders of subject-other relations too long defined and regulated by Way of the Father. Such an overflowing of language and of self facilitates an ethical sublime model that not only goes beyond prescribed borders of subjectivity but also, by its very definition, recognizes and welcomes excess. In fact, the site of excess or overflow is shared by both subject and other, as seen in the embrace between the speaker of the poem and the reader. By not addressing the blow and merger of Longinus in these ways, Freeman’s sublime mode undercuts the power of the linguistic blow and thus misses the transformative potential of the embrace or merger between listening subject and speaking other. The merger between reader and writer may be one of ravishment in the Longinian mode, but this sublime event is a productive one which leads Brand to imagine a sublime mode where the subject-other are connected rather than isolated.

#### A Further Critique

That Freeman misses the imaginative and transformative potential in the Longinian, and by extension Brandian, blow, and merger also points to some other problems with the feminine sublime mode. In particular, the feminine sublime duplicates the canon in some problematic ways, especially in relation to its privileging of the other over the subject. For example, while it critiques the assumption of a patriarchal universal subject in the canon, the feminine sublime model ultimately theorizes a subject position that is also problematic. Though the feminine

sublime subject is not patriarchal, it is still imagined as having a universal response to the sublime other. Part of the problem is that the feminine sublime model places the body, specifically the female body, under erasure. Zylinska, for example, states that she is “not interested...in determining whether or not there *is* a sublime which is specific to women” (8). As one important critic notes, this negation of the material body (i.e., the sensuous sublime) echoes Kant’s sublime mode since he “secures the universality of the experience of the sublime only by overlooking or downgrading material or cultural differences between subjects” (Battersby 87). Consequently, the feminine sublime model duplicates the non-sensuous standard of the Kantian sublime, locating the sublime in the abstract rather than material, the mind rather than the body. The latter not only negates the materiality of the female body (a huge problem for a model that claims to be challenging patriarchal traditions), it also negates the possibility for diverse responses to the sublime.

Compounding the non-sensuous standard of the feminine sublime is both the mode’s exclusionary focus on the other as well as the universalizing of said other. Philosopher and theorist Christine Battersby agrees: “The continued emphasis on the ‘absolute and incalculable alterity’ in the aesthetics of the ‘feminine sublime’ continues to erase the historical, material and political dimensions of the sublime of the embodied *female* and ‘*raced*’ and ethnically distinct subjects” (88). Here, Battersby speaks to the feminine sublime model’s disturbing erasure of subjects such that it reproduces some of the very aspects of the tradition that it claims to challenge. The problem is, as Battersby aptly argues, that “Zylinska’s emphasis on the ‘feminine’ sublime does – like the traditional aesthetics of the sublime that it seeks to subvert—leave materiality behind as it privileges that which is ‘other’ to and ‘beyond’ the masculinized self” (103). Taken together, the negation of the material (historical, physical, political etc.) combined

with the privileging of the other effectively excludes raced and sexed bodies from the feminine sublime mode.

In contrast, Brand's sublime mode calls into question the ethics of such erasures and exclusions, forcing the reader to face the material reality of the suffering nature of bodies everywhere in its detailed and gruesome listing of death "by suicide bomb, by car bomb, by ambush" (Brand 25). As evidenced in her accounting of the many ways that a human can die throughout the poem, Brand's sublime mode is firmly invested in the material; it is, as I have noted, a sensuous sublime. In contrast, the feminine sublime mode "operates at too abstract and universal a level to capture the *philosophical* problems which are posed by thinking of the self as not detached from his or her familial, social and historical relationships, and also as not just contingently embodied" (Battersby 103). For the speaker of the poem, the sublime must be considered in sensuous rather than non-sensuous ways that consider both the subject and other equally. Such a sensuous sublime model holds the possibility for an embrace because it spills over and beyond the prescribed self-other border of modern understandings of enlightened subjectivity. In the context of our post-9/11 world, *Inventory* argues, leaving materiality behind is both unthinkable and unethical.

The abstraction or erasure of bodies seen in various sublime models is, thus, vehemently opposed throughout Brand's text. Bodies, and in particular suffering bodies – a category that transcends sex, race, and class – do in fact "count," linguistically and literally in Brand's *Inventory*. In so doing, the text challenges the famous line uttered by General Tommy Franks that "We don't do body counts" ("iraqbodycount.org"). Rather than consider this line in abstract

ways, Brand uses figures from such sources as the Iraq Body Count project<sup>65</sup> to counter the erasure of subjects by military institutions after 9/11 in a concrete and measurable way. In doing so, the poem bears witness to individuals who have been deemed unimportant by official calculations, serving to make present what official institutions have attempted to erase. In contrast then to official military responses to the war on terror or to theories of the sublime which do not take materiality into account, as Cheryl Lousley notes, “bodily suffering remains in *Inventory*...the site/sight of injustice” (45). Brand’s inventory of suffering bodies effectively counters the erasure at the heart of not only aesthetic theories but also of political, military, historical and social institutions as well.

Brand’s inclusion of suffering bodies also works on another important level. In particular, it serves to document the horrific atrocities that continue to ripple out from the war on terror. Far from attempting to contain the excessive violence which has resulted from the war on terror, *Inventory* is filled with haunting images of “plump / corpses ...leaking chests...” all of which are portrayed in light of “the abrupt density of life gone out” (Brand 21). To erase bodies from their representation of magnitude would be to replicate the same act of erasure seen in previous models of the sublime – an act this poem demonstrates has material consequences. On the one hand then, the speakers of the poem bear witness to the casualties of war that are too often erased by official accounts. In so doing, “The poem turns the gaze back from the suffering body to the watcher,” in the hope that the site/sight of dead bodies will lead to some form of action (Lousley 44). In contrast to the abstraction of horror, which the poem cites is responsible for the continuing psychological and physical violence against human bodies, the poem confronts the

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<sup>65</sup> The Iraq Body Count is dedicated to recording the number of deaths in Iraq that have resulted from military action since 2003. For more information see <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>.

reader with a sensuous sublime model. It achieves this by presenting the reader with a sublime located at the sight/site of the suffering body.

Brand's sublime model then challenges feminine sublime models, demonstrating that negating the body essentially perpetuates a similar negation of others as seen in traditional sublime models. Because *Inventory* grounds the sublime encounter in the sensuous realm, Brand can "investigate the range of responses by those who have been excluded" (Battersby 104). In the wake of models which seek to perpetuate borders between the subject and other, this poem will "fill" this border "with the overflow" of the flesh and the material, evidenced both literally and figuratively, by the bleeding and suffering bodies that litter the text (Brand 32). In bridging the gap between subject and other, Brand's poem opens the doorway to the Path of the (M)other – a figure who holds the other within, linguistically, figuratively, and materially. The latter, the poem argues, is a site that can represent the merger between a subject and an other that does not replicate the oppositional dialectics of the Enlightenment subject. In locating her sublime in both suffering bodies in general and the female body specifically, *Inventory* effectively pushes beyond theorizations of the feminine sublime by not only "detect[ing].....the 'other' that haunts at the margins of philosophical discourse as an ineffable excess, but also [by] learn[ing] to recognize the 'other' who is present" (emphasis added, Battersby 104). For example, while, on one level, the poem's inventory of dead bodies is impersonal, on another level, it recognizes the individual humanity of the dead bodies as well. Thus, the speaker tells us that among the dead are a "small girl, in wading pool, twelve half naked by river...three nephews, one aunt" (24). Unlike official institutions that remain blind to the individuals who suffer from the many wars taking place on our planet, the speaker of this poem sees the individual humans who make up its overarching inventory. As the speaker notes, it is through the portrayal of "the details that" she may be

“triumphant” over the cultural and political forces that attempt to both figuratively and literally erase the suffering of people that are deemed unimportant (Brand 28).

By recognizing these others, *Inventory* effectively counters the rhetorical discourse that has underpinned and justified unethical military responses to 9/11, forcing readers to see that the collateral damage of the war on terror is a homogenizing rhetorical ploy that flees from the site of dying children, aunts, and brothers. In response, Brand’s text reimagines both traditional and feminine sublime models because it refuses to “leave materiality behind” (Battersby103). Leaving materiality behind has enabled the continuation and expansion of aggressive military action in the Middle East. Thus, although feminine sublime models theoretically account for the others listed in the poem, they do not see them. To see others, *Inventory* convincingly demonstrates, means that we acknowledge their suffering bodies.

*Inventory* then models a subject-other relation that – at least partially - echoes the openness of the feminine sublime mode. In particular, the poem provides an imaginative (re)inscription of a space that has for too long been defined by the hierarchal and patriarchal relations articulated in canonical understandings of the sublime and self-other relations. In so doing, the text imagines a space that theorizes the possibility for a non-colonizing relation between self and other: a space that does not “will another empire but [is instead] history’s pulse / measured with another hand” (Brand 11). However, ultimately, *Inventory* spills beyond traditional and feminine sublime models, reaching out to, rather than fleeing from the other.

*Inventory*’s speaker imagines the possibilities of relationships between subjects and others via the Path of the (M)other. At the heart of the poem is the project to “gather the passions of women / their iron feet, their bitter hair” (Brand 31). In so doing, this poem counters the Way of the Father, noting that we have “fail[ed to] notic[e] absences” of women (Brand 63). In

response, the poem calls for the reader to think with “deliberateness” in order to counter the fact that there are “only men ... Everywhere” (Brand 63). Locating the sensuous sublime in the female body demands recognition of the fleshy other. It also provides a fertile space for imagining a subject-other relation that does not duplicate traditional understandings of inter-subjective relations as oppositional. As I have noted elsewhere, the Path of the (M)other offers us a radically life-affirming alternative to the Way of the Father. Specifically, because “the female subject...is capable of birthing the other within her own embodied self, [she] ... fall[s] outside the norms of oedipalised selfhood which represents the relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’ in fundamentally oppositional terms” (Battersby 130). The figure of the pregnant body effectively captures the kind of breaking down of oppositional self-other relations that Brand also seeks to explore through her poem. Like the pregnant body in Battersby’s female sublime, in *Inventory*, the female body becomes a symbolic site where the embrace between subjects and others can happen. It is in this life-affirming embrace between subjects and others that the subject can give birth to an other that is both the same and yet different – a relation that echoes Brand’s own figure of cousinhood.

Even in the death and devastation listed throughout the inventory, as the speaker states in an important address to the reader, the female body can (re)produce life: “I can offer you now ... my brooding hand, / my sodden eyelashes and the like ... understand, I will keep you alive like this” (Brand 37). The offer of an embrace in this address to the reader is life-affirming: a reaching out that both recognizes and holds the other with care. This holding applies not only to the reading subject but to all suffering bodies. As the speaker cites at the end of the poem, “there are atomic openings in my chest to hold the wounded” (Brand 100). This final act of (M)otherly love parallels Battersby’s metaphor of the pregnant female body. Because the speaker of the

poem becomes pregnant with the wounded, she effectively imagines the possibility of a subject-other merger that results in connection rather than colonization.

If the Way of the Father's paranoid and enlightened understandings of the self-other relation as always oppositional and a site of death, *Inventory* demonstrates that the space between self and other can be a site of embrace, overflowing with life. For the speaker of the poem, holding the other does not result in death. Though the speaker attacks the Western subject's complicity and passivity in countering traditional subject-object relations, this work of poetic terrorism ultimately works to produce life. While the work may be read as part apocalyptic warning, *Inventory* is not a revisioning of Revelations. Rather, as its structure into seven distinct parts intimates, this is a revision of Genesis, a roadmap to a new kind of creation. Through its deconstruction of patriarchal and Christian traditions and consistent with the site of the pregnant body, this work imagines possibilities for (re)birth and subject-other relations that are not constituted in oppositional terms. In so doing, it refuses to replicate the privileging of either subject or other as seen in traditional and feminine sublime models. Other sublime models imagine an oppositional and potentially hierarchal or master-slave relation between subject and other, not unlike the us/them rhetoric prescribed by Way of the Father.

It is precisely this oppositional model which has underpinned the us vs. them rhetoric of the war on terror. In response, the poem asks the reader to consider the far-reaching and deadly consequences of the latter, rhetorically asking the reader, "what goes for conscience now / ... what animus calms us" (Brand 27). Not giving the reader the opportunity to respond, the speaker immediately answers the question by noting that what calms us is telling ourselves that "we're / doing the best we can with these people, / what undeniable hatred fuels them, what else / can we do, nothing but maim them" (Brand 27). This passage confronts the reader with the

consequences of a subject that perceives itself to be distant from and superior to the other. This perception of an elevated (national and individual) subject position has, as the poem laments, justified the continued violence against the supposed threat of the enemy, taking the Hegelian allegory of the fight to the death between master and servant to a literal level. In response, the poem seeks to push through the self-other border such that an embrace between subject-other (as subject) is both possible and material.

One way that the poem does this is by demonstrating that the border between subject and other is both constructed and permeable. For example, the poem argues that we all occupy the space of the other. Such a space is relative to the particular historical, geographical and social space that we occupy at any given moment. In demonstrating the permeability of such a border, Brand challenges the narrow understanding of the other that does violence to the subject and, which underpins national and individual responses to 9/11 as well as traditional and sublime models. If there is violence in the approach of the other, *Inventory* argues, so too is there violence in the approach of the subject.

Though feminine sublime models focus primarily on the nature of the other and its incalculable alterity, what *Inventory* forces the reader to recognize is that we too are the other that threatens. It is only in recognizing the latter that the subject-other border can be reimagined in such a way that the subject takes responsibility for its role in the inventory of horrors listed in the poem. Consequently, the (M)otherly sublime relation demands that subjects recognize their own proclivity for hatred and violence towards the other as well. Unlike traditional or feminine sublime modes, which imagine a one-way relation between subject-other, the relation between subject-other in a Brandian mode is one of equal exchange. Neither the subject nor the object is privileged. Instead, the text bluntly demands: “let’s at least admit we mean each other / harm, /

we intend to do damage” (Brand 42). It is in this admission of the vicious nature of *all* humans that there is the possibility for something beyond the despair located in this text. In other words, the meeting of subject and other is one that presents a potential threat for both subject *and* other. An ethical sublime model must break down the subject-object relation entirely in order to show that the relation is always between two subjects or between a subject and an other-as-I-am-an-other-too. The latter imagines a very different relation from that prescribed by the Way of the Father, which attempts, through paranoia and terror, to negate and master the other.

So, the terrifying aesthetics of this poem do not aim to replicate the paranoid rhetoric of the social, political, and cultural institutions at the heart of the Way of the Father. Like both the works of Orwell and Doctorow, Brand’s poem warns us about the consequences resulting from our blind adherence to the Way of the Father, showing us how prescriptive paranoia has been used to encourage ongoing paralysis and complacency. It does this by showing how subjects have been manipulated by the paranoid rhetoric of our post 9/11 world: “on those safe streets, amber alerts go out / ... in sessions of paranoia” (Brand 25). Here, *Inventory* exposes the failure of fear and violence to protect us. As the poem clearly shows, the war on terror has not fought terror at all. Instead, it has infected subjects everywhere by propagating a level of paranoia and fear of the other that is so great that it has robbed individuals of their critical thinking skills, leading to countless deaths worldwide. Moreover, it has produced an entire shift in the geopolitical and economic global economy as well as an unsettling reification of ethnocentrism and xenophobia that continues to reveal itself, most recently, under the leadership of individuals like the former American President, Donald Trump.

Though a bleak, violent and unforgiving work, *Inventory* is, on one level, simply cataloguing the actuality of a history of death, hatred and horror that shows no signs of abating.

Its poetic violence is then, from one perspective, merely a reflection of actual world events. However, the violence depicted throughout the text is also a necessary rhetorical tool, particularly so because of the kind of complacent subject that is produced by the Way of the Father. As the text convincingly argues, traditional models of subject-object relations produce a Hegelian<sup>66</sup> subject that both consciously fears death as well as evades any relation with it. According to Hegel, the subject achieves consciousness by recognizing and incorporating the other, essentially negating the other's difference. The result is that the other is assimilated into and as the subject. For such a subject, death is always someone else's and is always instigated by someone else. Most importantly, such a subject refuses to accept any responsibility for the horrors happening everywhere. In response, as *Inventory* clearly argues, we are inextricably and constitutively linked to death – whether our own or others'. Consequently, this work of poetic terrorism figuratively redefines the war on terror, highlighting the responsibility that we all have in allowing ourselves to continue to use fear to justify our apathy towards each other. In response, the text demands that the reader find a way to relate to the other outside of models of fear and suspicion. After all, as *Inventory* depicts throughout, to be paranoid about the other has not protected us at all; instead, it has enabled catastrophic events to occur everywhere. Our apathy does not erase our interpolation into or our culpability for the aftereffects emerging from our acceptance of the Way of the Father.

The poem addresses the reader's internalization and blind acceptance of the Father's ways right from its stark opening. As the text bluntly states: “we were never anyone, / everything we were preceded us” (Brand 4). The problem, the speaker argues, is that we have accepted our

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<sup>66</sup> A complete analysis of Hegel's work is outside the scope of this project. For more information on Hegelian notions of the subject consult his formidable tome, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Clarendon Press 1977).

socialization into patriarchal normative ideas of subject-other relations (prescribed by various social, cultural, and political ministries) despite witnessing the horrendous consequences of doing so. In other words, by accepting the Way of the Father as readily as history demonstrates we have, we have neglected to approach subject-other relations from a (m)otherly perspective. Our willingness to follow the Father, without question, as the poem's first line states, betrays how "We believed in nothing" – that is to say, nothing outside of that which has been prescribed to us (Brand 3). In so doing, our complacency has led us to become complicit with the Way of the Father. The result is that, while we may not wish to accept our culpability for the catastrophic events taking place on our planet, as the poem reminds us, it is "so hard now to separate what was them / from what we were" (8). The speaker laments that we have allowed ourselves to be "evacuated...of the goodness" necessary to stop the death and destruction that results from our continued complacency with the Way of the Father (Brand 8). This leitmotif of evacuated subjects runs throughout the poem, highlighting the direct correlation between the horrific inventory of death and violence in the poem with the complacent and distanced subject who, as a result of inaction, supports the very horror that they often claim to deplore.

The recurring depiction of evacuated subjects also supports the text's insistence that change can only occur once we shatter these ideologically constructed notions of subject-other relations. As *Inventory* depicts, there are other possibilities of being. We do not need to be like the disinterested subjects figured throughout the text in front of their televisions, unmoved by the horrific events unfolding on their screens. For such subjects, the problem is that in the safety of their homes, "all this became ordinary far from where it happened" (Brand 22). Rather than maintaining distance to preserve a catatonic subjectivity, subjects need to learn to harness the power that comes from recognizing how they each have produced and contributed to the excess

present in the world. Contrary to conventional thinking, which suggests that media can bridge the distance between the us and them figured throughout the poem, here the speaker exposes the underlying hypocrisy of media like television, film, and the internet, which though claiming to inform, actually produce desensitized, unthinking, complacent subjects who find “the lives of movie stars more lamentable” than the loss of human life (Brand 22). If there is any hope in this text then, it is located partially in the past tense of the first line. That is to say, while we once believed in nothing, the question now, as the text confronts us with our own interpellation into the horrific events occurring around the world, is what we will believe once we have finished reading this inventory. In other words, will we allow the excess in this text to decreate us?

By demonstrating how destructive the Way of the Father’s prescriptive models are, the poem highlights (like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Book of Daniel*) how fear is used as a tool of manipulation. As all of my primary texts consistently warn, the destruction of the other can only result in the destruction of the self. One only needs to think about the response of the Bush administration to 9/11 to see evidence of such. For example, as the poem notes, all efforts to increase security at borders in order to keep individuals safe in a post-9/11 world have only served to produce the kind of subject who seeks the death of the other: “lines of visitors are fingerprinted, / eye-scanned, grow murderous” (Brand 16). Not even the speaker herself, who weeps for the destruction taking place in the world, is impervious since she too is influenced and infected by those who fuel the paranoid fear of the other. As she observes the lines at the borders, she notes that “she felt ill, wanted / to murder the six boys, the guards, / the dreamless shipwrecked / burning their beautiful eyes in the patient queue” (Brand16). Horrifically, paranoia and fear of the other, far from protecting the subject, leads to a “murderous” contagion.

As each of my primary texts show, again and again, paranoia produces the very monster

that it claims to protect the subject against. In *Inventory*, the hypocritical lie beneath claims that the negation of the other leads to a subject's safety is exposed. Life can only exist in the disavowal of such negation. In fact, any kind of ethical self-consciousness is only possible when alterity is embraced rather than subsumed. Alterity, by definition, is the un-subsumable. As *Inventory* makes clear, subject-object relations that focus on preserving the subject through the negation of the other are not only short-sighted but are also ultimately self-negating. Death is not evaded by the destruction of the other; it is invited by it. In responding to the other through paranoia, denial, and complacency, we create the greatest threat of all to ourselves. For example, as *Inventory* warns, complacency towards the other will eventually make a claim on the subject as well: "passivity can be inchoate self-loathing" (Brand 17). The repercussions of passivity and self-loathing are significant because rather than produce an aware subject, they produce an unthinking subject that, in its "eagerness / to be all the same," sacrifices its own individuality and agency, its own life (Brand 17). Tellingly, the consequence of "tendering our own bodies into dreamery" is that we have ended up "nibbling our own hearts to the red pits" (Brand 3 & 10). As such, what makes this work both powerful and significant is that it re-imagines/re-opens the possibility for a non-Hegelian dialectic or, at the very least, it alters the Hegelian dialectic in a way that does not necessitate the negation or death of the other but instead demands the continued presence of this other. This is not to suggest that Brand's model does not protect the subject at all but rather that it does not protect the subject by destroying the other. Counter to relations that result in a destructive and consuming force, the text shows the reading subject how our cooption into models of subject-other relations, prescribed by Way of the Father, have led us to be complicit in the war on terror.

Cousinhood

By modelling a subject-other relation that demands exchange between two equal subjects, Brand's work responds to cultural theorist Paul Gilroy's salient point that in the historical context of our 9/11 world,

We need to know what sorts of insight and reflection might actually help increasingly differentiated societies and anxious individuals to cope successfully with the challenges involved in dwelling comfortably in proximity to the unfamiliar without becoming fearful and hostile. (Gilroy 3-4)

Brand's reimagined subject-subject relation posits an equal and life-affirming exchange – one that responds to Gilroy's call for an inter-subject relations that respond to the discomfort of dwelling with strangeness. In this way, the poem imagines possibilities for standing with the other.

The poem models this relation through the figure of *cousinhood*. Like Battersby's use of the productive image of the pregnant female body as that which overcomes the us-them dichotomy, Brand's image of the relation between cousins moves away from replicating the traditional and feminine sublime focus on the alterity of the other. Through cousinhood, strangeness goes out of focus so that, for better and worse, we can see that we all share basic affinities. Despite the potential threat posed by the other, the word "Cousin" has the power to "clasp what is foreign whole" (Brand 59). This is not to suggest that Brand's work attempts to erase difference, but rather that the poem recognizes that "the more urgent task now seems to require finding some new foundation for a politics that might save the earth and humanity from the intertwined violence and apathy" plaguing our world (Brydon 996). Of course, as philosopher Charles Taylor noted in his seminal essay, "The Politics of Recognition," it is very difficult to provide a self-other relation that accounts for both basic universal rights as well as the

needs of the individual. Multi-culturalism, as the heated debates among Canadian critics show, remains a problematic approach to self-other relations. However, as Taylor points out, regardless of how we might think about a way to theorize a politics of difference that can also speak to basic collective rights, “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need” (26). *Inventory* underscores the need for such recognition, highlighting that intersubjective relations can be based on a recognition that does not see the other as necessarily either like-me or for me.

*Inventory* clearly demonstrates not only that intersubjective interaction must be between equals, but it also argues that while others can be held, this is an act that must not betray or contain said subject. Rather than accept that the subject can only attain consciousness through the act of negating the other, *Inventory* explores the potentiality of a relation that demands affirmation of otherness within and without through the figure of cousinhood. While this relation may be dialogical, it is not one based on subordination. It is rather a model that seeks to explore the possibilities of a subject-other relation, that while demonstrating a reliance on the other subject for self-awareness, does so without a need to sublimate that other. While a cousin is like me, they come from a different family. Connections between cousins in the poem do not result in the disturbing synthesis of self-other, which leaves the self as the only remainder. For example, neither cousin depicted in part IV of the poem is motivated by a selfish desire to use the other, and neither attempts to assert mastery in a “movement [that] simply preserves itself” (Hegel 108). As aforementioned, traditional models of subject-other relations result in a subject that, while supposedly preserved, is ultimately alone. In contrast, *Inventory* inscribes a new structure that is based on kinship. However, this model of kinship is not one that duplicates the traditional hierarchy of the Way of the Father. Far from being invested in patriarchal structures of power

that demand mastery over the other, cousinhood figuratively offers an alternative interpersonal relation that is based on equity, responsibility, and love.

The figure of cousins, introduced in part IV of the poem, is particularly effective because cousins are “equals or peers in a larger, extended family” (Lousley 51). In part IV of the poem, the speaker narrates that while travelling in Cairo, “a voice called to me, ‘Welcome back, Cousin’” (56). Significantly, this meeting between cousins inhabits spaces that are traditionally conceived of in oppositional and threatening ways: East and West, female and male, subject and other. In contrast to such oppositional relations, Brand’s cousin relation is loving even as it may incite fear: “when cousin / came from both our mouths / [it] was a warning and a lie, and / a soft meeting and a love” (Brand 58). This symbolic portrayal of cousins not only demonstrates an exchange between equal subjects; it also challenges the problematic assumption that fear is a valid justification for suppressing or avoiding an encounter with an unknown other. On the contrary, the poem posits the powerful and potentially redemptive nature of embracing those whom we fear, suggesting that an approach towards and by the other is a gift that, while “so unexpected,” is also “so merciful” (Brand 60). The figure of the cousin functions as a re(con)figuration of the self-other relation outlined by traditional sublime and Hegelian models. It replaces the discourse of mastery and the paranoid fear that the other “could be a spy” with a relation between strangers who call with voices that “caress” (Brand 56; 58). In so doing, the poetic figure of cousinhood challenges paranoid Western notions regarding the threat of the Eastern other, offering the possibility of an intimate and equal connection between all subjects. Not only does the intimacy between cousins challenge the prescriptive paranoia underpinning the Way of the Father, but it also works to undo its destructive effects, “polish[ing]” away “so much suspicion” that has been “spun” about the connection between subject and other (Brand 57)

Cousinhood is a model for non-colonizing relations between subject and other that functions outside of patriarchal models of subject-other relations. Based on exchange and respect, the relations between cousins do not result in negation. Instead, an embrace between cousins is such that the other-subject can ultimately be “left to himself” (Brand 59).

This non-colonizing approach between cousins also characterizes the poem’s approach to the reading subject. Though *Inventory* certainly echoes the Longinian move to deal readers a blow, it also treats us like cousins, ultimately leaving us to ourselves. Following the work of Orwell and Doctorow, Brand’s long poem does not seek to prescribe any particular course of action. Yes, in the bleakness of the text, we are confronted with a sublime horror. However, such a confrontation contains the possibility for shattering our prison of complicity and complacency, opening doorways into other spaces where the intimacy between cousins can take place – though the choice to do so is ultimately ours. The call of the cousin depicted in the text then echoes the call of the text itself to us: it is a call that is both threatening and fear-producing but one that also provides the possibility for healing for the shattered and fragmented subject. In other words, the text recuperates a space for the institutionalized subject who now has been shattered by the poetic embrace of excess in *Inventory*. Ultimately, the hope is that the freed subject can move forward despite the fear that comes from being jolted from what we know – or think we know.

If there is any real possibility for redemption and wholeness after the shattering of the subject, then it is located in this intimate human space – a space of kinship that both calls to the subject and provides the possibility for healing. In the words of one of the speakers, it is a space that contains an “imperishable beckoning grace” (Brand 60). In the loss of what we thought we knew comes significant gains: in particular, the possibility for a life that is not evacuated of its emotion, connection and meaning. While the reader can certainly choose to continue as an

evacuated, passive, and distant subject in the face of horror, they can also choose to respond to the call. This call asks us to move beyond the shattering of our own constructed subjectivity towards that which, although frightening, is also potentially redemptive. The reading subject is faced with the horror of their own fragmentation and culpability in confronting this poem. However, despite this alienating encounter, for the reader who can embrace the text's poetic excess, the result is a sublime reading experience that frees them to see beyond ideological and cultivated notions of subjectivity.

Consequently, while the text certainly does harm to its readers, the act of shattering the subject is a gesture of love – a love that insists on painful admissions but that concomitantly frees and leaves them to find ways of dealing with horror and excess on their own terms. Thus, when the speaker addresses the reader in a letter in part V, it is significantly written with “much love” (Brand 77). Though the shattering of the reading subject may be at first construed as an act of linguistic aggression, it is ultimately an act of love that opens up the possibilities for a self that is free to question that which is prescribed by the Way of the Father. In effect, shattering socially, politically, and culturally constructed notions of subjectivity opens a space for knowledge that is not *wicked* but ethical.

Brand's work then offers a sublime model that harnesses the violence of language seen in canonical models of the sublime. But, while it uses violent language and imagery to deal the reader a blow, the intent is never to master or indoctrinate. On the contrary, given its heterodox rhetoric, what the text intends is to shatter hierarchal and prescribed notions of subjectivity so that what remains is a subject that is empowered to think critically and respond to the text's call on their own terms. In contrast to the poem's opening line, what is left is a subject that is free to believe in *something*. While culture and media are portrayed on “screens [that] lacerate our

intimacies,” the poem provides an antidote by celebrating and calling for a recuperation of those intimacies (Brand 5). It does so by lacerating those prescribed notions of subjectivity which, the text argues, have evacuated emotion, and prevented us from recognizing the intimate connection that we have with each other and every other living thing on our planet.

In so doing, the text depicts the potential for respectful, non-colonizing and non-hierarchical ways to approach alterity, despite the feelings of terror, paralysis, and paranoia that may accompany the subject’s encounters with the other. Reading becomes a courageous act – thus, making language more powerful than even Longinus and Burke initially suggested. To be sure, as the speaker wistfully notes, *Inventory’s* imaginative inscription of a sensuous sublime space depicts a compelling though fragile landscape which exists in the “flutter of another century” (Brand 86). Writing, too, then is a courageous act. Despite the text’s dark depiction of a past and present that continues to put faith in colonization and calculations, *Inventory* provides a space where human experience can be measured differently.

## Conclusion

As I outlined in the introduction to this chapter, traditional sublime models which normalize distanced positions between subjects and others do not provide protection for said subjects. Instead, like the many Ways of the Father explored throughout this project, they enable further destruction. As Brand’s text makes clear, to follow such models is not just unethical, it is suicidal. *Inventory* is a radical and remarkable example of how traditional subject-other models do not work. In response, this chapter, and this project as a whole, provides a new way of reading that which we fear. We need to learn how to read ethically. Learning how to read in our fast-paced, traumatized, and paranoid world is essential, not because it provides readers with an escape or safe haven from the troubled world around us. On the contrary, it is essential precisely

because committed literature confronts us with our troubled world, challenging us as complacent subjects to see the repercussions of our desire for safety. Now, more than ever, we must draw on our imagination if we are to create life-affirming spaces on this planet. To borrow the words of the 9/11 Commission, the failure to imagine carries significant consequences. It is in imaginative acts and works that we confront the consequences of past events, consider possibilities for the future, and hopefully find the courage to face the implications of our actions. Far from being easy, if we are honest with ourselves, what the imagination confronts us with, as Brand brilliantly demonstrates in her ethical long poem, is our complacency with and culpability for “the ravaged world” that is already here (Brand 11).

9/11 was a horrific event – one that Americans and people around the world still have trouble understanding and coming to terms with. A large part of the problem is that this event exceeds our ability to respond to it: language fails us, and thus, “what is terrible about ‘September 11<sup>th</sup>’ ...is that we do not *know* what it is and so do not know how to describe, identify, or even name it” (Derrida qtd. in Borradori 94). What has further complicated and arguably prolonged the grief and senselessness of this tragic event was, and still is, the response to those unimaginable acts of violence and terrorism: a response rationalized and supported by our ongoing capacity to prescribe subject-other relations based on fear. As Judith Butler argues in her work *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, “in the fall of 2001 ...the United States was missing an opportunity to redefine itself as part of a global community...instead, it heightened nationalist discourse, extended surveillance mechanisms, suspended constitutional rights, and developed forms of explicit and implicit censorship” (Butler xi). Thus, while this event – like so many other tragic events in human history – could have led to a global sense of community, healing, reconciliation, and wisdom, it led to a perpetual state of

fear and violence. As seen with the release of the Abu Ghraib photographs in 2004, rather than promoting healing, by clinging to the Way of the Father, “the wound remains open by our terror before the *future*” (Derrida qtd. in Borradori 96).

In hindsight, the desire for national and individual safety and self-preservation has been a costly choice: “This anticipation of future ‘traumatism’ obstructs the ‘work of mourning’ while it also works to justify the violations of democratic principles, civil liberties, and...justice” (Cilano 14). Indeed, as we emerge from under the shadow of Donald Trump’s presidency, one thing seems abundantly clear: though 20 years have passed since 9/11, we continue to follow the Way of the Father. Sadly, “the utopian moment that 9/11 and Abu Ghraib might have sponsored” has passed; we have thus missed “a moment for radically refiguring the relations of the homeland to the foreigner” (Simpson 169). It is at this juncture between our defensive response to the destructive anticipation of the future and the need to revisit the past that *Inventory* begins its recalculation of current world events. Brand’s poem is simultaneously a critique, a meditation, and a lament for humanity, a species who have clearly chosen – yet again – to refuse to learn from the past.

Now, it is up to each reader to refuse cooption into a system that perpetuates the horror of past traumatic events under the rhetoric of fear and to use their imagination instead to open up the possibility for change, peace, and collective healing. The text teaches us how to witness horror in an ethical manner. It does so by bringing us face-to-face with that which we deny, forget or even worse, blame others for. Showing us the consequences of our relentless and blind pursuit to preserve and avenge ourselves, we learn that we have not confronted the uncontainable horror of 9/11 and its aftermath. Indeed, in a horrifying and ironic way, we have rather brutally and short-sightedly perpetuated the very acts of violence that we have been claiming to be

fighting against. Sadly, what began with the tragic deaths of nearly 3,000 Americans on September 11<sup>th</sup> has since ballooned to more than 801 000 Americans, Iraqis, and Afghans (“costsofwar.org”). In hindsight, this was not a “war on terror” so much as a war on humanity, hope, and the imagination. On one level, then, *Inventory* presents the reader with a second chance to re-face the continuing horror of our post 9/11 world. Through its graphic and unflinching depiction of the consequences of our fear of future traumatism, the work forces the reader to confront the inventory of deaths, injustices, and wars that continue right before our eyes.

*Inventory* refuses to allow anyone amnesty: Brand’s work confronts the reader with the stark reality of not just America’s response to 9/11 but the global community’s response as well. We are all guilty. *Inventory* grants the reader another opportunity to confront the trauma of 9/11 and its aftermath. Rather than a destructive force, in this work, trauma becomes a force that decreates the subject, echoing the rhetoric of the theories of Longinus, “a mind-blowing experience that destroys a conventional mind-set and compels (or makes possible) a new worldview” (Farrell qtd. in Gray 27). Staying safe, as the poem argues, has paradoxically placed us in the greatest peril of all. Brand’s inventory of horror does what many preliminary responses to 9/11 could not do because it tells us “a story that cannot be told yet has to be told” (Gray 50). It is able to show the deep connection between aesthetics and ethics and thus provide the possibility (however unlikely) for the conditions of reading, writing, and analysis to actually change how we interact with the world and each other. The fleeting hope is that somehow these new conditions for analysis will lead to our ability “to understand the whole language, / the whole immaculate language of the ravaged world” (Brand 11). And, perhaps once we can understand the language of our ravaged world, we can begin to imagine a future filled with hope

rather than fear, love rather than violence.

## Conclusion: Wake Up

**“Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire...The salvation of man is through love and in love.” (Viktor E. Frankl)**

**“There is a crack, a crack in everything / That’s how the light gets in” (Leonard Cohen)**

As I write this conclusion, I watch in horror as new strains of the coronavirus are emerging, the forests and oceans are ablaze, the war continues in Ukraine, people are dying from heat exposure, and more and more unmarked graves of children are discovered at the sites of residential schools. All these events occur against a backdrop of relentless corporate and institutional greed. Like Brand, I could continue, providing an interminable listing of the horrors I see each day, but I know that to quote Doctorow, “you get the picture” (19). Though it breaks my heart to witness our fear of the other, complicit conformity and emotional anesthesia seem only to grow in the wake of each new crisis that we face. The Way of the Father is more entrenched than ever before.

The tragic events portrayed in Orwell’s, Doctorow’s, and Brand’s texts call on us to act, disallowing crises to simply fade into distant memory. As readers, we are invited to awaken to our own inaction, to step onto the Path of the (M)other. But, as the headlines I read daily show me, we remain asleep, inert “starfish,” like Daniel’s sister. If anything, the events depicted in my primary texts over the last 70+ years serve only to underscore our capacity to hurl ourselves ever more rapidly towards our own extinction, consuming ourselves and the planet as we go. In the pages of their bleak and disturbing texts, Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand have shown us the willingness of the modern subject to remain complicit with prescriptions that are ultimately at the root of that which threatens our very survival.

And, on this scorching summer's day in 2022, I see us once again on the brink of "wasting" more crises, repeating our past mistakes rather than choosing to do better. With each new horror that we face, we respond with an us/them mentality that threatens to obliterate us all, willfully blinded by prescriptive paranoia. Like the Western world's nationalistic response to the coronavirus pandemic, we continue to erect walls between us, facilitating the very dis-ease that threatens to destroy us and enabling its mutation into ever-increasing variants of concern. Walling ourselves into our so-called protected garrisons produces other problems as well. Our self-enforced isolation disconnects us from the life-affirming possibilities located in empathy, compassion, collaboration, and mindful action. There is another path. It will not be easy *but*, it is possible if only we wake up.

A dissertation, or any research project for that matter, is fueled not just by what inspires the writer but also by what haunts them. This dissertation is no different. At the heart of this project is my desire to understand our willingness to follow the Way of the Father despite the horrific consequences emerging from our complicit conformity with it. In its pages, I have worked to reconcile the imaginative inventories of death and destruction reflected in my primary texts with our inaction. Even as we are accountable for much of the horrors that my primary texts confront us with, we continue to sleep, dulled by our adherence to the Way of the Father. And, so, I return to the questions that I began this project with: Why do we continue to fear the other from our distanced positions, even as we know that the terrible events we are experiencing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century impact us all? When will we awaken to our complicit conformity with the Way of the Father? And, finally, can we find the courage to love the other – an act that is both radical but also necessary if we desire to ensure our own survival on this planet? In my attempts to answer these questions, I have sought to deconstruct a subject identity that has been forged in the fires of

fear and paranoia, suspicion, and distrust. At every turn, I see Western subjects who continue to be shaped by a powerful legacy – a hermeneutics of suspicion that has morphed into a contagion of prescriptive paranoia. As long as we permit such a toxic culture of fear to transmit, our future will be a bleak one.

And so, you may be asking, what now? We could, of course, just give up. And, yet, what has propelled me to continue my humble life project of resistance to the Way of the Father are the very things that have always taken me through the darkest periods of my life: compassion, connection, and love. So, yes, on the one hand, my primary texts have demonstrated that we have a lot of work to do because “the hermeneutics of suspicion seems exceptionally resilient and impervious to direct attack, infiltrating the words of its most implacable opponents, sprouting new heads as quickly as we lop them off” (Felski “Suspicious Minds” 227). However, on the other hand, even as my primary texts have warned me about humanity’s blind faith in the Way of the Father, they have also offered me small glimmers of hope, presenting compelling examples of “the imagination as transformative, as leading out of the pessimism of colonial discourse, as making new narratives” and forging new paths (Brand *Bread Out of Stone* 131). Whether imagined through an Appendix, a tender moment of grief, or through the figure of cousinhood, each of these texts shows the reader that there *are* possibilities for subject-other relations outside those shaped by prescriptive paranoia.

For far too long, the Way of the Father has promoted a response to the other through a default position of suspicion and fear. In so doing, like the hate rituals of Oceania, responses to the other are dominated by violence and mastery. Such responses only encourage the spread of that which we seek protection from. For example, as Brand’s work depicts, the Western world’s response to 9/11 did little to protect subjects from the ostensible threat of terrorism. If anything,

as her body count underscores, by promoting the war on terror, Western nations replicated the very destruction and terrorism that they claimed to be fighting against in the first place. Already seeing the outcome that would be produced by the American government's violent response in the aftermath of 9/11, his Holiness The Dalai Lama called for a more measured response to the attacks: "Retaliatory military action by the United States may bring some satisfaction and short-term results, but it will not root out the problem...Long-term measures need to be taken. The U.S. must examine the factors that breed and give rise to terrorism" ("dalailama.com"). One of the most damaging factors that breed and gives rise to terrorism is the us/them mentality at the heart of the Way of the Father. Fuelled as it is by prescriptive paranoia, the Way of the Father uses fear of the other as a mechanism of control, keeping the subject subservient and the other demonized. It does so because when "terror...percolates in the constitution and practice of knowledge," "It creates an environment of doubt and suspicion in which free-thinking and freedom of expression yield ground to intolerance or tactical silence" (Azam 168). With the benefit of time, we can see that our responses to the other during moments of crisis, like the 9/11 terrorist attacks, have wreaked havoc upon us all.

In the wake of uncertainty, the problem is that we repeatedly buy into the subject model prescribed by the Way of the Father. And we do so despite the reality that the nature of such subjects is defined by their "predatory identities...fomented by the dialectics of we/they" (Almeida 130). At the heart of the prescriptive paranoia of the Way of the Father is the horrific delusion that our safety "require[s] the extinction of another collectivity for [our] own survival" (Appadurai qtd. in Almeida 130). The fear produced by this delusion has been disastrous, especially so because subjects have been complicit with fearing an other who is (as each of my primary works highlights), most often "a disempowered minority" (Almeida 130). Sadly, the

Dalai Lama's call for long-term solutions continues to go unanswered. Whether in our response to 9/11, COVID-19, or climate change, we have yet to wake up and rise against the Way of the Father, willfully ignoring the reality that, for good or bad, all our fates are inextricably linked together.

So, examining the nature of prescriptive paranoia as one of the factors which breed and gives rise to fear is critical because "Resisting terror... appears as the ultimate concern of all humankind at the moment" (Azam 69). If there are any possibilities for overcoming the devastation resulting from the us/them mentality that we have succumbed to, they emerge once we walk the Path of the (M)other. For meaningful change to occur, we must realize that we are all cousins to invoke Brand's symbol. Responding as it does to the need for ownlife, empathic connection, and the act of loving the other, the Path of the (M)other offers us alternative ways to respond to the other with understanding rather than retaliation; mindfulness rather than anxiety; collaboration rather than self-interest.

It is this path which my texts attempt to lead us to. In part, they do so because literature opens doors to anti-paranoid perspectives. Because imaginative representations offer possibilities for approaching the other from a place of understanding rather than suspicion, "literary texts are more likely to train readers' ability to take the perspective of others" (Koopman et al. 1, 104). One look at the world today highlights the desperate need that we have for such training. Reading literature offers us an alternative lens through which to view others. In this way, reading can be one small but significant step towards the Path of the (M)other; it is an act that cultivates hope. The latter is necessary if we want to encourage action in the face of fear, suspicion, and pessimism. At once, an act of resistance and of transformation, reading can retrain us to see the other differently by warning us about the consequences of our ongoing complacency.

For example, in Orwell's and Doctorow's texts, we learn about the ramifications of succumbing to the Way of the Father. Thematically underpinning *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a warning about the consequences which emerge when we give in to the fear of the other; doing so produces a wasteland where individuals trust no one and exist in a state of endemic dis-ease. Doctorow's novel contains a similar warning about the consequences of succumbing to Orwellian-type hate rituals, highlighting the ramifications of a nation consumed by prescriptive paranoia during the Cold and Vietnam Wars. In Doctorow's text, citizens become the pawns in a larger game of chess, to borrow the oft repeated and significant leitmotif interwoven throughout Orwell's novel. In both texts, prescriptive paranoia is consistently administered to the collective via hate rituals, torture, and, to borrow a contemporary term, fake news. While Doctorow's novel intimates that Daniel will be able to ultimately resist the Way of the Father, other characters in both Orwell's and Doctorow's texts are not so fortunate. For instance, Winston, Julia, Paul, and Susan all succumb to the Way of the Father, internalizing state-prescribed paranoia so fully that they perpetuate the very system that ultimately destroys them. Seeking to challenge the subject identity produced under the Way of the Father, my Brand chapter theorizes possible paths to break free of such a subject model by challenging the privileging of the mind over the body, reason over imagination. Through her powerful poem, a doorway opens to ethical subject-other relations, possible once the fearful and suspicious subject is shattered. In so doing, a space opens for a new subject model rooted in the (feminine) body. Free from the shackles of prescriptive paranoia and the us/them mentality of the Father, this new subject understands themselves as being connected, a node in a web of kinship, one of many cousins.

Taken together then, the works of Orwell, Doctorow, and Brand highlight how our complacency has enabled an ongoing cycle of terror and violence. Walling ourselves into our

own delusional garrisons has not helped us. Instead, history continues to show us that our approach to one another must be entirely re-envisioned. Though we continue to buy into the narrative that to be paranoid is to be prepared, we must consider that this approach to the other produces the very thing that it ostensibly seeks to resolve, namely, a state of dis-ease.

Prescriptive paranoia is not a cure for this dis-ease; it is one of the primary sources of it. A willful state of ignorance that robs us of our humanity, prescriptive paranoia leads us to the betrayal of our cousins and our willing entrapment in the Father's Room 101. We need only to consider Winston's final fate to remember that betraying the other does not protect us; it merely serves as proof of a subject's "successful" conversion to the Way of the Father. At the end of his story, Winston remains willfully asleep, numbing himself to his complicit conformity by drinking copious amounts of Big Brother's (ironically named) Victory Gin. We leave him eagerly awaiting Big Brother's bullet to enter his brain, another sleeping subject, another complicit convert.

But what if we imagine an alternate ending to that of Winston's? To do so, I want to (briefly) return to Room 101 via another imaginative work, Lana and Lily Wachowski's dystopic film, *The Matrix* (1999). Not only does this film suggest that we must seek out alternatives to the Way of the Father, but it does so by imagining the possibilities for a subject who awakens and chooses to walk the Path of the (M)other. Through the portrayal of Trinity, *The Matrix* imagines the possibilities which emerge for those who have the courage to develop the three characteristics at the centre of this path. It is only by following Trinity that Neo (and by extension us) learn about the potential emerging from looking through lenses outside those prescribed by the Way of the Father. As she shows Neo, by committing to his own life, building empathic connections, and acting to love the other, he can choose another path outside that

written for him in the (Symbolic) code of the Father (figured as the program which runs the Matrix). Because he chooses to follow Trinity's lead, Neo's ending is very different from Winston's. Though the Father attempts to kill Neo for his unorthodoxy, he is embraced in love by the (M)other (i.e. Trinity), which literally saves his life. Unlike Winston, who passively waits for the Father's bullets, Neo is reborn, now able to stop the bullets of the Father from entering him. To walk the Path of the (M)other is so empowering that he can both literally and figuratively rewrite the binary code of the Father.

Reflecting a critical historical moment of heightened paranoia, the film speaks to the imagined fears of chaos that would result from the Y2K bug at the end of the millennium.<sup>67</sup> Set in a post-apocalyptic future where human bodies are used as an energy source (i.e. as batteries) to fuel the sentient computers who control the world, the film portrays humans as willing participants in a system that literally and figuratively consumes them. Like the citizens of Orwell's Oceania or Doctorow's America, the citizens of the Matrix abdicate any sense of their ownlife. As the Father's lead representative, Agent Smith, notes, the Matrix functions as a mass opiate, a space where "Billions of people [are] just living out their lives, oblivious" (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:31:49 – 01:31:55). Rather than face the consequences of the ravaged Earth left behind because of their war with the machines, humans choose to live in the Matrix, a computer simulation of the world before the war.

A type of digitized Oceania, the Matrix is a linguistic system that regulates citizens' behaviours and desires to ensure their conformity with the Father's code. Everyone who is plugged into the Matrix is enslaved by their willing participation in a system that offers them a

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<sup>67</sup> In America alone, the uncertainty produced by Y2K led to citizens hoarding food and water as well as stocking up on guns. See Francine Uenuma's 2019 article in *Time* entitled, "20 Years Later, the Y2K Bug Seems like a Joke."

“safe” alternative to living in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. Though their complacency amounts to allowing the machines to extract their life force as a source of power, most humans in the Matrix do not resist. To give up one’s own life seems a small price to pay for maintaining the status quo. As one character, Cypher, states while making a bargain to re-enter the Matrix, “Ignorance is bliss” (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:04:10). Though Cypher knows that the Matrix is simply a series of lies, like so many others, he chooses to follow the Way of the Father, believing that doing so will shield him from the harsh realities of living in the ravaged world. Even though this choice requires that he meet the Father’s demands to betray his friends in the real world, he does so in order to avoid confronting reality. His mistake is his belief that subjects who do not deviate from the orthodoxy established by the Father will be better off; it is the same mistake that Winston makes when he betrays Julia. But, as the plot of the film progresses, one message is clear: staying asleep in the face of tyranny is not a life-affirming option – Cypher, like Winston, will die for his choice. When we betray the other, we betray ourselves.

In *The Matrix*, the protagonist’s story begins where Orwell’s text leaves off, literally and figuratively, in Room 101. By the end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston ends his story by embracing a state of drunken apathy prescribed to him by the Party; like Cypher, he chooses to return to sleep. In so doing, Winston does what the many complacent humans do in both Oceania and the Matrix: he chooses to remain plugged into a system that ultimately consumes him. In contrast, the Wachowskis’ protagonist refuses to do so. While Neo may be initially imprisoned in Room 101, as his name foreshadows, this is a “new” Winston; a figure who, rather than betray the (M)other, learns that his life depends on the act of loving the (M)other.

Like Winston and Daniel, Neo has the benefit of learning from multiple (M)other figures who offer to guide him. The most important of such figures is Trinity – a (M)other figure who in

both name and spirit works to counter the binary systems written by the code of the Father. Equal parts message and warning, Trinity's first call to Neo as he sleeps in Room 101 is significant, highlighting what Neo must do to free himself from the Matrix. Her call to "Wake up, Neo" is punctuated by a sense of urgency for as long as he sleeps, Neo remains trapped by a system governed by the principles which underpin the Way of the Father (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:07:14 - 00:07:30). Though Neo, like many in the Matrix, experiences fear, complicity, and apathy, he struggles with breaking free from the system, unable to see past the code of the Father. As she warns him, "The Matrix has you" (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:07:29). Neo is asleep, caught in a nightmare from which he cannot wake up on his own.

The problem is that despite his attempts to wake up from his nightmare, Neo has internalized the Way of the Father. Consequently, he looks to places for answers which, though helpful initially, end up replicating the very aspects of the Matrix dreamworld which he seeks to escape. For example, at the film's opening, while Neo sleeps at his desk, behind him, the word "Searching..." appears on his computer screen, evidence of both his dis-ease and attempt to seek answers (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:06:40). Though it will ultimately be what he needs, Neo is not seeking out the Path of the (M)other at this early point in the film. Instead, the results appearing on his screen show that Neo is searching for information about a "terrorist" named Morpheus (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:06:42). Fatherless in a world that he feels is not quite right, Neo seeks out a Father-figure who he believes will help him to answer the question that haunts him, "what is the Matrix?" (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:11:41-00:11:42). But Neo's choice to seek out Morpheus is ultimately misguided. After all, as the allusion behind his namesake foreshadows, Morpheus is a god of dreams and sleep, not reality and wakefulness. To complicate matters further, Morpheus is also depicted as the captain of the Nebuchadnezzar, a

biblical allusion to a king who cannot interpret his own dreams. Taken together, these allusions foreshadow that Neo is searching for answers in all the wrong places. The god of dreams will not be the guide to help him wake up and take another path outside Room 101.

Still, it is not that Morpheus is an irrelevant guide for Neo, only that his teachings do not go far enough to help him awaken from the Matrix of the Father. The problem is that while in some ways his teachings offer some important lessons, in other ways, they are actually counterproductive because they do not provide the bridge needed between the dream world (i.e. the code of the Matrix) and the real one; between subject and other. Many of Morpheus' teachings are limited by the same binary perspectives as those coded into the very system that he claims to be challenging.

Of course, Morpheus is not wholly unaware of his own limitations. During the famous blue pill/red pill meeting where Morpheus first meets Neo, he explains to Neo that he is "offering...the truth," by which he means that if you take the red pill, "You stay in wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes" (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:29:14). Morpheus then offers to guide Neo, but only in wonderland. Unable to guide him in the *real world*, the teachings he offers Neo occur within a replication of the simulated dream world of the Matrix. For example, when Morpheus teaches Neo the art of combat, it is in a sparring program (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:49:14). Similarly, when he reveals to Neo the state of the post-apocalyptic world and the enslavement of humans by the machines, he does so in a computer simulation (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:41:04). Though important for Neo, Morpheus' training cannot adequately prepare Neo to take on the role of the One (i.e. challenge the code of the Father) because his training is one of simulation rather than action. More importantly, Morpheus' training occurs within the confines of the same binaries coded into the Matrix.

Though Morpheus sees through the code of the Matrix, his alternative is to produce another version of it, warping it to his purposes. As such, though his training is essential for Neo, it serves to replicate the same patriarchal narrative of mastery, combat, and violence as that of the Father's Agents. To access the power that comes from being a minority of One (as the anagram of his name foreshadows), Neo must learn to walk a different path to that shown to him by Morpheus. Only once he sheds the identity constructed for him by the Way of the Father (whether that Father is Morpheus or his dark parallel, Agent Smith) can Neo awake from the nightmare he is caught in.

So, while Neo originally searches for Morpheus, the guide who will actually show him a path to awakening is Trinity: a master hacker who Neo does not initially recognize as powerful because of his blind acceptance of the patriarchal codes of the system he is literally and figurately plugged into. His internalization of these norms is clear from his first meeting with Trinity. Though Trinity's role as saviour figure is hard to miss given Neo's exclamation of "Geezus" when he learns her identity, Neo chooses to remain oblivious (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:10:28). For example, that the full extent of Trinity's power is lost on Neo comes through in his incredulity when he asks her if she is "*The* Trinity that cracked the I.R.S D-base?" (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:10:23-00:10:26). As if to justify his incredulity, he explains to Trinity that "I just thought...you were a guy" (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:10:31-00:10:34). Her sharp response of "Most guys do" not only demonstrates her keen awareness that the Way of the Father is everywhere but also her foresight that she cannot help Neo until he first overcomes his blind adherence to the binary codes of the Father (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:10:34-00:10:36). Until Neo is ready to accept another path, she takes on the role of watching, waiting in the wings and helping Neo search for the answers on his own terms. So, while it is Trinity who

calls him at the opening of the film to wake up, it is up to Neo to act upon her call. After all, as Morpheus wisely states, a guide can “only show you the door;” it is up to Neo to “walk through it” (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:53:26-00:53:30).

Trinity’s role as watcher comes from her refusal to prescribe action to Neo. She recognizes that Neo must learn, as she did, that Morpheus does not hold the answers that he needs to become the One. Even as she willingly leads Neo to Morpheus, she shares with him something that she has already learned—interestingly, not just from her own experiences but also from Morpheus as well. She says to Neo, “you’re looking for him. I know because I was once looking for the same thing, but when he found me he told me I wasn’t looking for him. I was looking for an answer” (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:11:13 – 00:11:27). This answer, Trinity knows, can only come from walking a different path than that coded for him by any Father, even a benign one like Morpheus.

The first step that Neo must take is to see the other outside a lens of suspicion, a wholly foreign concept to any citizen of the Matrix. That Neo trusts no one is precisely what facilitates his enslavement in the Matrix. Only through trust can he establish the human connection necessary to wake up from the Way of the Father. But, to trust a stranger is a frightening step to take for one who sees the world in the binary code of the Father. Even though Neo desperately seeks to relieve his sense of dis-ease in the Matrix, he is also afraid to leave the safety of the life he knows. When Trinity offers to take him to meet Morpheus, his initial response is to flee. It is Trinity who encourages him to take this courageous step. As she reminds him of the dead-end that his life of suspicion has led to, she offers him an alternative; to awaken, she tells him, “you have to trust me” (Wachowski and Wachowski 00:23:34 - 00:23:35). Trinity knows that establishing trust is a necessary step on the path to awakening; not only will learning to trust

Trinity lead to Neo's development of a sense of his ownlife, it will also allow him to ultimately reject the isolating binary system of the Father. Without trust, he will never move past the prescriptive paranoia of the Father and, as such, will remain trapped by his willingness to fear all others. As Trinity knows, Neo can shatter the subject identity written for him by the Father's code only after he lets go of his fear. To leave Room 101, you have to remember that "The Matrix cannot tell you who you are" (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:08:45 – 01:08:48).

Trinity first needs Neo to understand that Morpheus' teachings about combat and violence are not a solution to their entrapment in the Matrix. In one particularly gruesome scene, Trinity<sup>68</sup> and Neo slaughter a room full of men to save Morpheus, who has been captured by the machines (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:41:31 – 01:44:04). Unflinching in its critique, the film's use of blood on the white shirts of Trinity's and Neo's victims serves to dramatize the high price for following the Way of the Father. By engaging in violence, Neo and Trinity replicate the very system that they claim to be fighting against; they lose the opportunity to become agents of change and instead become prescriptive agents, inhuman like Smith and inflexible like Morpheus. Further along in her journey towards the Path of the (M)other, Trinity understands this. Though she participates in the acts of violence, from this moment onwards, she will no longer simply accept Morpheus' way. By the end of the film, she rejects his narrative entirely, understanding that transformation cannot come from violence but from an embrace.

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<sup>68</sup> Trinity's decision to go with Neo can be read as problematic. However, there are a few ways to address her willing participation in this scene. When Neo first suggests that he is going to rescue Morpheus by shooting his way in, Trinity attempts to dissuade him. However, as Neo's guide, she reluctantly agrees to go. After all, Neo's rescue of Morpheus is an integral part of his journey towards the Path of the (M)other since it is here that he learns that the Father is not All-Powerful. Another way to look at her participation is to consider that, while Trinity is certainly more advanced than Neo in her resistance of the Father, there is a sense that she has yet to completely extricate herself from the patriarchal grip of the Matrix as well as Morpheus.

That Neo will finally be able to answer Trinity's call to wake up is signalled as they attempt to rescue Morpheus. Captured by Agent Smith, Morpheus is in chains. At this moment, Neo finally sees what Trinity has already recognized: even though he is the leader of the rebels, the Matrix has Morpheus too. Though able to leap tall buildings in his simulation programs, in the Matrix, Morpheus is limited, a lame god whose belief in resistance through violence has failed to release him from the confines of the Matrix fully. Indeed, as Morpheus runs towards the helicopter piloted by Trinity, he is shot in the leg by an Agent, symbolically highlighting his weakened mobility. It is here that Neo finally recognizes the fallibility of his chosen Father-figure<sup>69</sup> (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:49:26). As Neo reaches out to help the fallen Father, his actualization begins; he can finally see who his guide should be going forward. Acting as the helicopter pilot in this scene, it is Trinity who literally and symbolically takes both he and Morpheus to safety. Having realized that Morpheus does not offer him a path out of the Matrix, Neo begins to see the alternatives that Trinity has shown him all along.

That Neo must choose a different path from that offered by Morpheus is depicted in his final confrontation with Agent Smith in a subway station. Though Trinity is not in the Matrix with him as he faces Agent Smith, her teachings remain. As if to remind Neo that violence is not the answer, the number three repeatedly appears throughout the scene (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:57:04). This reminder of the "path of Trinity" as an alternative to violence is an important backdrop that foreshadows Neo's ultimate rejection of Morpheus's combat training. At first, however, Neo decides to fight Agent Smith; watched by Morpheus and Trinity as he battles Smith, Neo fails to understand that violence is not the answer. Morpheus also does not

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<sup>69</sup> That Morpheus' is unable to break free from the binds of the Matrix is highlighted even further in the same scene. While Morpheus is able to break the chains placed on him by the Agents, he is not successful in completely removing the handcuffs since they remain on his wrists. As figured here, Morpheus has never really been able to completely free himself from the bonds of the Matrix.

understand. It is only when his “prodigal son” dies at the hands of Agent Smith that Morpheus sees what has happened. But rather than help Neo, he gives up. In the end, Morpheus fails to teach Neo that the Way of the Father leads to the death of the subject.

At this point, Trinity finally intervenes, doing that which Morpheus cannot: she brings him back from the dead not through violence but through love. Highlighting the power of those who walk the Path of the (M)other, Trinity’s embrace transcends the boundaries of the Father. Though she embraces Neo in the real world, her love has the power to overcome the code of death written by the Father. Though Morpheus insists earlier that death in the Matrix leads to death in the material world, Trinity challenges his limited worldview, which only sees human experience as the Matrix does, in 1s and 0s, truths and falsehoods, subjects and others. Unlike Morpheus, she recognizes that death in the Matrix does not destroy you unless you buy into the Father’s code.

Trinity models another perspective entirely that refuses the binaries of both the Matrix and of Morpheus. As she shows Neo, to move outside of the code of the Father, he must reject violence and instead respond to the other in love. To achieve this, he must reject the prescriptive paranoia embedded in the code of the Father. To break free from the chains of the Matrix, to fulfil his potential as a “minority of one,” he must do that which Winston does not: he must embrace the other in an act of love. This latter point is foreshadowed earlier in the film when Neo meets with the Oracle, who tells him that “Being the One is just like being in love” (Wachowski and Wachowski 01:14:17 – 01:14:22). Not only does Trinity’s final act of love bring Neo back from the dead, but it also models an alternative way to approach the subject’s interpolation into the Matrix. Significantly, after Trinity resurrects him, Neo dies as the son of

many fathers, a point emphasized by Agent Smith's final words to Neo after he shoots him: "Goodbye Mr. Anderson" (02:03:44 – 02:03:48).

Now dead as the son of the Father, Neo is free to be reborn. Again, he is guided by Trinity, but rather than tell him to wake up as she does in the film's opening, she now tells him to "get up" (Wachowski and Wachowski 02:04:53 – 02:2:04:55). Emphasizing Neo's actualization as the One, he rises from the dead and once again faces the Agents. However, unlike earlier confrontations in the film, when the Agents shoot him, he refuses to engage in violent combat even as they prepare to shoot him. Highlighting his first steps on the Path of the (M)other, rather than fighting back, he says "no" to further violence (Wachowski and Wachowski 02:05:04). As he stops the bullets and drops them to the floor, his actions underscore the failure of violence to solve the crisis facing the humans. No longer trapped in a world of binaries, Neo finally walks on the path that Trinity sets him on, ending his journey, not in Room 101 but rather 303 – the very room that Trinity is in when she sends him the call to wake up in the opening of the film. By the end of the film, Neo has embraced Trinity's call to wake up. Having learned from Trinity how to disrupt the binary system of the Matrix, Neo's ability to hack the code of the Father is so powerful that it ultimately leads to "a system failure" in the end (Wachowski and Wachowski 02:08:16). Awake to the new possibilities that emerge outside of the code of the Father, Neo's final words provide a message of hope rather than fear. Waking up outside the system of the Father opens possibilities to new paths. No longer trapped by the binary code of the Father, it allows the rebirth of something new. As if to emphasize this point, Neo's final voiceover is directed to the audience: "I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it's going to begin" (Wachowski and Wachowski 02:08:12). In the end, Neo is like Trinity, a guide to another path. It remains to be seen whether we respond to the call. To borrow

Neo's final words, "Where we go from there, is a choice I leave to you" (Wachowski and Wachowski 02:08:38 – 02:08:41).

There is a 50-year gap between Orwell's and the Wachowskis' warnings to wake up. Yet, given the state of the political, environmental, and social challenges that we face in our time, we are obviously still asleep. By imagining the possibility of exiting the Father's Room 101, we are shown how we too can "unplug" from the Matrix. Doing so frees us to move beyond the emotional anesthesia that threatens to keep us plugged into the systems of power that enslave us. Though to experience the feelings of despair so prevalent in many of us as we continue to face crisis after crisis, as all my primary texts have shown us, we must avoid reverting to becoming doubting Thomases – a biblical allusion used in the film to underscore the protagonist's, (Thomas Anderson) initial unwillingness to recognize the fake world in which he lives. That even a doubting Thomas can be transformed into a "Neo" person is in large part one of the main messages of hope not only in the film but also in my texts and this project. To achieve said transformation requires a willingness to see beyond the prescriptive paranoia of the Way of the Father, to wake up and get up.

Having spent much time reading, thinking, and writing, the next task before me is one of action. This journey has opened a door to that which has always been there before me. As I take my first steps away from these words and towards a new path, I, too, am freed from the code of the Father. I have meandered long enough in these pages and must, like Daniel, set my sights on new approaches to keeping the (M)other alive. For I seek to travel on the Path of the (M)other, and there I hope to greet you, dear cousin, in an embrace of love.

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