What is the Meaning of Meaningless Sex in Dystopia?

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Abstract: The aim of this essay is to provide an answer to the question “What is the Meaning of Meaningless sex in Dystopia?” It will show that meaningful concepts such as sexual satisfaction and pleasure, passion, love, bonding, procreation and family are handled as threats in dystopian societies, described in well-known novels like We, Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four. It will explain how the conflict between the collective and the individual influences peoples’ sexuality. It will also explore how leading powers in the three dystopian novels use different methods to remove the significance and functions of sex. It will suggest that meaningless sex is a means to control the masses in a collective and that meaningful sex is seen an act of rebellion against the state.

Keywords: Dystopia, Dystopian societies, meaningless sex, state, control, collective, uniformity, individual, family, love, procreation, We, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell, Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels
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1. Introduction

Dystopia and Utopia are kindred but opposite societies often described in literature. The Garden of Eden is an example of the state of bliss one could expect in a utopian society. The dystopian society on the other hand might claim to be an idealistic Utopia, but despite the apparent absence of worldly worries, the anxiety to preserve the status quo makes a reader of dystopian novels aware that there is a threat to anyone who wants to change the prevailing equilibrium.

A well known dystopian novel is Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). Other examples of dystopian novels are *We* (1921) by Yevgeny Zamyatin and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell. The rulers in these three books have seized power after a war and preach conformity and obedience as an ideal and a reader would most likely classify them as futuristic Communist nightmares. The power is not restricted to the public lives of the citizens but also their private sphere and intrudes on their intimacy, relationships, love and sexuality.

1.1 Aim
The title of this essay, “What is the Meaning of Meaningless sex in Dystopia?” is a clue to its aim. It will show that meaningful concepts such as sexual satisfaction and pleasure, passion, love, bonding, procreation and family are handled as threats in dystopian societies. The reason for they are dangerous is that these concepts may attribute significance, function and meaning to sexuality.

There can certainly be subjective definitions of the word “meaningless” but a common definition from a dictionary is “lack significance and assigned function”. Meaningful sex would, in opposition to meaningless sex, carry significance and function. Most people would class propagation and love bonding between two people as the significance and function of sex. Fulfilling a biological need and pleasure could also be classed as functions.

“What is the Meaning of Meaningless sex in Dystopia?” is the question that this essay aims to answer. It will trace the conflict in the literature and explain its connection with family and love as threats to the collective and its influence on peoples’ sexuality. It will explore how leading powers in the three dystopian novels are using different kinds of methods which all seem to work to remove the significance and functions of sex. It will suggest that meaningless sex in these novels is a means to control the masses in a collective and that meaningful sex is therefore seen an act of rebellion against the state.

1.2. Method

This work is a comparative analysis of three dystopian novels: Brave New World, We and Nineteen Eighty-Four, using Marxist theory to address how they explore the meaning of sex.
Engels’ book *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* is provided as a background for the analysis. A chapter of this book describes an original antagonism between the collective (the herd) and the family. That antagonism will be discussed in relation to the dystopian novels. Marx and Engels’ co-authored book *The Holy Family* written in 1844 will also be used. Both books describe communist ideals which are useful to juxtapose with the dystopian ones.

Peter Barry’s book *Beginning Theory* describe a distinction between State power and state control made by the Marxist theoretician Lois Althusser is also useful. Finally I identify some support for my analysis in two analytical articles, by Brad Buchanan and Richard Posner. They will be referred to in the results of this essay.

### 1.3 Background, a Look at the Dystopian Novels

*Brave New World* focuses on the Industrial Revolution and genetic manipulation in human reproduction to achieve a perfect world, where every need is fulfilled and all the inhabitants are happy. Sex has lost its function of reproduction. No more babies grow in their mother’s womb. Their nine months as foetuses are spent in a bottle. Children are exposed to sleep-learning, hypnopædia, which works as a process of brainwashing, where the subconscious is affected by constant repetition of proverbs and statements. Both adults and children have their spare time filled with games, entertainment, sex and other pleasures. Freethinkers are deported.

The book *We*, written by Yevgeny Zamyatin, describes One State, which is a society built on mathematical terms. All people in One State have their needs, like sleep, food and sex properly measured and they have just two hours of spare time a day. Almost everything in One State is made of glass, which makes
intimacy and privacy impossible, though during intercourse the shades are allowed to be lowered. Freethinkers are subjected to lobotomy or death. The book is written like a journal by the main character, D-503, who, against his own logic, falls in love with a female freedom fighter named I-330.

The last of the three books, Nineteen Eighty-Four, was written by George Orwell. The main characters in this book live in Oceania, one of three combating super-states in this futuristic war-hardened world. People are divided into three classes, Inner Party, Outer Party and the Proles. The Inner Party is closest to the top of this hierarchical pyramid, which is crowned by Big Brother. The main character, Winston Smith, belongs to the middle class, the Outer Party. Sex and passion are suppressed and neurologists work to extinguish the orgasm to remove sexual pleasure. The government supervises people through microphones and telescreens. Freethinkers are questioned, brainwashed and tortured. Sometimes people are made “unpersons” and erased from news and history.

1.4 Theory
Karl Marx characterised human history in terms of ownership that controlled the means of production. He identified several historical epochs, depending on control of production. These epochs can be described as primitive communism where people held everything in common, ancient slave society where the means of production was controlled by an aristocratic elite, hierarchic feudalism where land owned by the aristocrats created most of the production, capitalism where technological development let the bourgeois class exploit factory forms of production, socialism where the workers revolt and seize the property from the capitalists and finally communism where the means of production are held in common for the benefit of
everyone in society. Despite elements of technological development and hierarchy, which could point to other stages of Marx’s historical epochs, the three novels reflect communism where the means of production is held in common for everyone in society; however, while Marx’s idea of a movement to a communist (herd) society would be a good thing according to his theory-leading to a socialist utopia, where everyone worked for the benefit of everyone else-- these three books suggest precisely the opposite: that the Marxist ideal would in fact be oppressive.

The materialistic perception of human history was shared by Friedrich Engels. “Marx and Engels’s own description of their approach highlighted precisely these points: ‘This conception of history thus relies on…starting from the material production of life itself— and comprehending the form of intercourse connected with and created by this mode of production’” (Rees 78-79). A person with this view looks for causes of development and changes in society. Engels uses the concept in The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State (1884), which was based on Marx’s remarks on Lewis Henry Morgan’s book Ancient Societies. The book describes, as well as discusses, different types of bonding and family groups that may have existed. The variations reflected which form of production was used in a particular historic era. One type of social bonding Engels describes is an early and primitive form of group marriage of a whole tribe. The tribe shares belongings and sexual intimacy with all members of the group, which corresponds to Marx’s primitive communism.

The three dystopian novels depict different types of family bonding. The society in Brave New World is similar to Engels’ primitive tribe and highly promiscuous. In Nineteen Eighty-Four a nuclear family lives in symbiosis with the state, while the inhabitants in We are hardworking singles with scheduled sexual
encounters. Similar for all novels is that people put the collective before individual and let a ruling force control most aspects of their life, including sexual intimacy.

This way of putting the collective in front of the family would create a hotbed of conflict. Engels writes in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* about a conflict between a larger group, a social and more connected herd, and the smaller more separated family. “The herd is the highest social group which we can observe among animals. It is composed, so it appears, of families, but from the start the family and the herd are in conflict with one another and develop in inverse proportion” (Engels 98). This conflict may be traced in dystopian novels since they depict collective societies with little room for the individual. Since love is a prelude to and an indicator of family bonding, it is classed as dangerous in these books. According to Marx’s primitive communism, which held everything in common, a common family might be replaced with some kind of collective in a communist society. This also fits Engels’ writing in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* where he argued that the family, as a social unit, developed as a result of economic and social changes within human society. Marx and Engels have been described as opposed to family. The conservative *Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote about their book, *The Holy Family*, in April 8, 1845, that “every line preaches revolt . . . against the state, the church, the family, legality, religion and property” (Marxist internet archive library).

2. Analysis

An analytical breakdown of the novels will show that the ordinary nuclear family is not present in dystopian novels; the collective (the herd) has taken its place. Sex is provided by the herd and under the control of the State. An analysis will also show
how threats to the status quo in Dystopia are clearly connected to a smaller form of bonding than the collective, namely the family, and how controlled sexuality is used to restrain that danger.

### 2.1 The Absence of Family in a Dystopian State

In Marx’s definition of “primitive communism”, where people held everything in common, and Engels’ early form of group marriage within a whole tribe, the ordinary nuclear family is absent. When everything is held in common and everybody is “married” to everyone else, there will be no use for the concepts “father”, “mother” and “family”. The responsibility to bring up children is replaced by a stately constitution.

In the society of *Brave New World* there are no families. The biological function of the womb has been replaced by scientific methods and genetic engineering. This enables manipulation of the foetuses to create an underclass of cloned non-thinking workers, Deltas and Gammas, as well as a brainier upper class of genetically unique Alphas and Betas. The children are brought up in state institutions and schools. Motherhood, families and homes are concepts which belong to the past in this book. Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe, explains his opinion about the insanity of these past concepts to some students:

> And home was as squalid psychically as physically . . . what dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group! Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children (her children) . . . brooded over them like a cat over its kittens; but a cat that could talk, a cat that could say, "My baby,
He continues, “No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy” (Huxley 35). “Home”, “Family”, “Mother” are described to the students as a reason for insanity as well as a hindrance to virtuosity, which in *Brave New World* equals to do one’s duty to be childlike and fulfill every little whim or lust in order to preserve happiness.

In the book *We* family is not mentioned as a concept. The main character D-503 feels a want for a mother, “If I had a mother, like the ancient: mine-yes precisely-my mother. To whom I would be --not the Builder of the integral, and not the number D-503, and not a molecule of the One State, but a simple human being- a piece of herself” (Zamyatin 216). Also in this novel private children (raised in families), belong to the past. A further statement about babies and their upbringing in One State is given when D-503 perceives the conditions in One State as superior to those used by the ancient society when they “blindly, like animals they bore their young. Isn’t it ridiculous: to know agriculture, poultry-breeding, fish-breeding…yet fail to go on to the ultimate step of this logical ladder-child-breeding; fail to establish such a thing as our Maternal and Paternal Norms” (Zamyatin 13-14). Later on in the book when he has been persuaded by his female lover O-90 to unlawfully make her with child (this action is not fully described in the book, but they probably had sex without protection) he warns her “You’ve lost your mind! . . . Have you forgotten what awaits you? If not now, in a month, in two months?” (Zamyatin 170). One understands the severity of the crime by D-503’s need to bring her to a safe place; “Wait! I know how to save you. I’ll free you from the need to die after seeing your
child. You will be able to nurse it” (Zamyatin 170). To bear a private child without consent from the state is apparently a crime punishable by death, which means that the action must be perceived as a potential threat to the state.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the family still exists, but the main male character remembers families to have been different in the past, before Big Brother’s rule. “Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason” (Orwell 33). In this novel the nuclear family is a concept, but functions more as a platform of informers for the Party than a family.

The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. They had played a similar trick with the instinct of parenthood. The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children, in almost the old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately. (Orwell 28)

As we can see, the ordinary loving nuclear family does not exist in the three novels; not only is the concept of family gone but the common understanding is that family is
something primitive, vulgar, ineffective and even insane. At best, as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an ostensible family can be used for information about possible threats.

### 2.2. Replacing the Absent Family with a Herd

In the novels people do not seem to care so much for themselves as individuals as they do for the whole community. The co-operation and industrialisation of this society reminds one of a bee colony or a herd where everybody acts together because each individual chooses the behaviour that corresponds with the majority of the group. They all work for the greater good of the colony. It is natural for humans to have some kind of attachment, grouping or bonding; even animals often flock together for protection. A small family can meet this need but, according to Frederick Engels, so can a larger group, a tribe. Engels describes in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* an initial primitive stage of human history, “when unrestricted sexual freedom prevailed within the tribe, every woman belonging equally to every man and every man to every woman” (Engels 97). To discover how a similar feeling of shared belongings is portrayed in the dystopian novels one can compare Engels’ phrase to the hypnopædic proverb “every one belongs to every one else” that runs through the pages of *Brave New World*. It is impossible to not be struck by the similarity. Furthermore, in Zamyatins *We* a similar maxim is to be found; “Each number has a right to any other number, as to a sexual commodity” (Zamyatin 21). To emphasize the likeness between the phrases I repeat the parts which correspond most fully:

- every woman belonging equally to every man and every man to every woman
- every one belongs to every one else
- Each number has a right to any other number.
A similar phrase is not to be found in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but the government in this novel has not completely abolished the nuclear family but instead changed the meaning of family from within so that their main loyalty is expected to be to the state and the Party and not to their kin. In all three novels society is pervaded by group mentality. The herd has taken over the family.

Engels also quotes *Origines du mariage et de la famille* by Giraud-Teulon:

> When the family bond is close and exclusive, herds form only in exceptional cases. When on the other hand free sexual intercourse or polygamy prevails, the herd comes into being almost spontaneously. . . In its first growth, therefore, the common feeling of the herd has no greater enemy than the common feeling of the family.

> We state it without hesitation: only by absorbing families which had undergone a radical change could a social form higher than the family have developed; at the same time, these families were thereby enabled later to constitute themselves afresh under infinitely more favorable circumstances.

*(Engels on Giraud-Teulon 99)*

This quote concludes that the family bond changes depending on circumstances and if both forms of loyalty (herd versus family) exist, an opposition might develop. In dystopian societies the herd has taken over and absorbed the families, but the family may wait for an opportunity to constitute themselves. In this lies the threat against the herd, i.e. the state.
2. 3 State Controlled Sex, Taking Care of the Herd

To avoid opposition between the family and the herd, it would be natural if the herd satisfied, or at least controlled, the needs of the group, even the sexual needs. Huxley and Zamiatin create in their novels a kind a society where a tribe (a larger group of people) replaces a spouse. If one sees the dystopian society as the collective herd which Engels describes, the family consequently is in conflict with that society. To ease the conflict the group must provide for all kinds of needs. One way is to provide sex and control the release of it, when, how often and with whom sex is to be performed.

In We the main character D-503 writes in his journal how ridiculous it would be to leave sex up to the individual; “And wasn’t it absurd that the state (it dared to call itself a state!) could leave sexual life without any semblance of control? As often and as much as anyone might wish…Totally unscientific” (Zamyatin 13). In this society every citizen receives a booklet of pink coupons to fill in with the number of the person whom they have chosen for intercourse. The correct number of sexual days is based on their sexual hormonal levels by the “Sexual Department” which also schedules their “assignations” (sexual meetings).

In Brave New World the change of partner is almost compulsory and a steady relationship would be seen as extremely unorthodox. In Brave New World a young woman, Fanny, gives voice to this view, when Lenina, one of the main characters, “confesses” that she has not switched partners for a while,

‘Only four months! . . . And what’s more, ‘Fanny went on, pointing an accusing finger, ‘there's been nobody else except
Henry all that time. Has there? . . . No, it really won't do.

And you know how strongly the D.H.C. objects to anything intense or long-drawn. Four months of Henry Foster, without having another man—why, he'd be furious if he knew.’

(Huxley 34)

A swift change of partners is only one way of providing sexual joy; this society nourishes a public obsession with sex. Sex and promiscuity are mandatory and the way the state fulfils all needs to make the citizens good and happy members of society. Feelies (films enhanced by external stimuli) are frequently arranged and so are compulsory spiritual meetings, the latter of which often turn into orgies. Children are encouraged to “erotic play” with each other. Since women do not procreate, they are provided with contraceptives. They also get chemically produced surrogate pregnancies if they feel a desire to satisfy the body’s biological need for reproduction.

_Nineteen Eighty-Four_ is different from the other two books since the state does not provide or divide sex; however that does not mean that they do not control it, they just use other methods. “All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and—though the principle was never clearly stated—permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another” (Orwell 69).

Chastity in this society is very much a virtue, and the control is to prevent individuals from taking pleasure from something that was supposed to be just a means to provide the state with new soldiers and Party members.

### 2.4 Sex as a Duty to the State
A herd corrects its behaviour towards what will benefit the majority of the group. If the herd mentality is strong this would give people in dystopian fiction a sense of importance to adjust individual needs and behaviour to fit the group. The totalitarian state’s way of controlling people’s sexual behaviour gives the citizens a sense of duty to fulfil. In Nineteen Eighty-Four Winston talks to his lover Julia about his ex-wife:

She used to call it—but you’ll never guess.’
‘Our duty to the Party,’ said Julia promptly.
‘How did you know that?’
‘I’ve been at school too, dear. Sex talks once a month for the over-sixteens. And in the Youth Movement. They rub it into you for years. I dare say it works in a lot of cases.
But of course you can never tell; people are such hypocrites.
(Orwell 136)

The duty is to produce children, not to perform intercourse; “The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party” (Orwell 69).

Winston experiences this obligation first hand with his wife Katherine, with whom he had duty filled sex. Repulsed by the passionless sex he starts thinking about celibacy but Katherine refuses: “They must, she said, produce a child if they could … She had two names for it. One was ‘making a baby’, and the other was ‘our duty to the Party’” (Orwell 70-71).

The hypnopædic proverb “every one belongs to every one else” conditions all inhabitants of Brave New World that it is in the best interest of everybody’s happiness to give yourself sexually in a very promiscuous way. Even
children are taught to keep the commandment and a children’s nurse in the novel is asked about a boy who cries in the garden of a state facility. The nurse replies “It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again to-day . . . I'm taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal” (Huxley 26). The concept of devoting yourself to just one person is not just considered unorthodox and abnormal but also selfish since you put individual interest before the group. Engels writes about the principle of promiscuity that fits very well with the conditions in *Brave New World*, namely “the absence of any restrictions imposed by custom on sexual intercourse” (Engels 101), and he complains that Westermarck, another writer of his era, “takes the standpoint that promiscuity involves a suppression of individual inclinations,’ and that therefore ‘the most genuine form of it is prostitution’” (Engels 101). He states that in his opinion “any understanding of primitive society is impossible to people who only see it as a brothel” (Engels 101).

In *We* it seems like there is a sense of sex as a duty to society as well, not only by the measured number of sexual days but on one occasion D-503 is considering an aging woman’s intention to write his name on her pink coupons; “I did not hurry her, although I realized I ought to be pleased, and there was no greater honour than gracing someone’s evening years” (Zamyatin 123). Sex is directed to fulfil a duty in all three novels, as opposed to individual feelings of belonging and love.

**2.5 Selfish Love and Jealousy**
Assuming that people in dystopian novels abide by a herd mentality and therefore are required to work towards the benefit of the group, one can imagine that great shame would come from caring about just one single individual. There are passages in all books which point to such feelings, but also jealousy, which in itself is a sign of breaking the collective rule to not put an individual before the group.

In *Brave New World* one of the main characters, Bernard, feels ashamed of his jealousy when he thinks about the partners of the woman he is attracted to. Despite him trying to fight off the jealousy, by using alternatively his will and the drug Soma, the feeling returns at intervals. Engels saw it as unlikely that a society with many people that marry many others would suffer from jealousy. “Group marriage, the form of family in which whole groups of men and whole groups of women mutually possess one another, and which leaves little room for jealousy” (Engels 100). Most people in *Brave New World* do not suffer from any jealousy, but Bernard is different, and he would, if his feeling were known by the other inhabitants of *Brave New World*, be looked upon as abnormal and selfish. Bernard feels wretched that Lenina chose to play obstacle Golf with another man, “Wretched, in a word, because she had behaved as any healthy and virtuous English girl ought to behave and not in some other, abnormal, extraordinary way” (Huxley 55).

The stigma of putting yourself ahead of the group is clearly described in *We* when D-503 makes the utterance “‘We’ is from God and ‘I’ is from the Devil’” (Zamyatin 128). His utterance also shows the conflict between “We” the herd and “I” an individual. This stigma does not prevent a devoted worker, such as U (an elderly woman), from feeling some jealousy when she notices the eagerness D-503 reveals when he is going to meet I-330. U makes an attempt to prevent their meetings, which makes I-330 furious. “’Listen’, I-330 said to me. ‘This woman, it appears, has set
herself the task of protecting you from me, like a small child. Is that with your permission?“ (Zamyatin 161). Also D-503 displays rage when he sees his love under some turmoil being carried away by another man. He screams to him to let her go and even punches him. He lifts I-330 into his arm and carries her away while he feels “a rush of such riotous, hot wave of joy” (Zamyatin 145).

In The Holy Family one can read how Marxism has the views that love is selfish, in a similar manner presented in the novels, “love even makes one man ‘this external object of the emotion of the soul’ of another man, the object in which the selfish feeling of the other man finds its satisfaction, a selfish feeling because it looks for its own essence in the other man, and that must not be” (Marx and Engels 33). Marx and Engels also unwrap the mystery of love “And is not the mysterious the mystery of mysterious love? By no means: ‘The mysterious in it is what excites, what inebriates, what enraptures, the power of sensuality’” (Marx and Engels 87).

In Nineteen Eighty-Four passion in connection with love and sex is a danger to the Party. When Julia tells Winston that she adores having sex with him he thinks “That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces” (Orwell 130). It seems that Winston is quite aware that individual love and desire is a threat to the party. Such a danger cannot be allowed to grow since it threatens the control the state has over its people.

2.6 To Fight the Danger of Passion, Love, Family and Imagination

To avoid opposition in Dystopia the government uses different levels of force to maintain control and fight danger. If dystopian novels reflect a conflict between a larger group, a social herd and the family, the former would profit from vilifying the
latter. A successful slander campaign would not only aim towards the main opponent, family, but also its vanguard, i.e. love. In the fight against love and family the dystopian state uses not only vilifying, but a wide range of methods, brainwashing, spies, taboos or even extermination of the enemy. People in Dystopia are told what to do by slogans and proverbs. It is also in the best interest of a totalitarian state to attach stigma or a taboo to what is considered dangerous to hinder change. Sex in connection with love and passion could also rob the state of valuable energy. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* explains a balance between lovemaking and usefulness to the state:

There was a direct intimate connexion between chastity and political orthodoxy. For how could the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the party needed in its members be kept at the right pitch, except by bottling down some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force? The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. (Orwell 137)

Winston’s lover Julia paints a picture of a state begrudging anyone a pleasant love life:

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

(Orwell 137)

This quotation explains the idea of converting the function of sex from being the personal; instead of sex, one engages in political spectacle. The energy should be used in the interest of the state.

If a dystopian state is plundered of what it regards as its property it can, for example, extend its control by using agents. In Nineteen Eighty-Four the Party has turned family members into informers and spies. In We there exists a similar system where the inhabitants must report their neighbour and fellowmen to the office of Guardians if they notice something outside the rules. The Guardians also watch them constantly. Since almost everything is made of glass, even the walls of the houses, people are visible practically the whole time. Sex makes it harder to spy in this world, since the only time the blinds are allowed to be lowered to hide what is taking place inside the walls of glass, is during intercourse.

The ultimate way to protect the populations in both books is to prevent them from the strong feeling that loved ones can inspire. In We imagination triggers the main characters to feel a wild and passionate love. The Benefactor, ruler of One State, explains to the main character D-503 how oblivion is bliss; “Remember: those in paradise no longer know desires, no longer know pity or love” (Zamyatin 214). In fact the imagination was conceived as such a big threat to the happiness of One State that all numbers (people) were to report for an operation, which is described as a form of lobotomy.
Similarly, the controller of *Brave New World* talks about the people as “blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about” (Huxley 194). The rulers want to protect the group; therefore family has to become taboo. How well the family taboo works is demonstrated when Lenina, a main character, gets embarrassed by two women in a savage village breastfeeding their babies. In the article *Freud and Lawrence in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World* (2002) one can read how Lenina’s discomfort could be interpreted as moral revulsion:

Indeed, any individualized, personalized sexual feelings are branded as essentially incestuous, and the language of forbidden passion is essentially a disgusting outgrowth of the obsolete love-talk between mother and child: ‘My baby, my mother, my only, only love’. . . An ‘only love’ is an incestuous love, in Huxley’s futuristic world, because it tends to work against the social solidarity which is the key to peaceful life. (Buchanan 77)

Richard Posner writes about the rulers in *Brave New World* and their determination to banish family in *Orwell Versus Huxley*:

They induce mindless contentment, including guiltless promiscuous sex. They induce complete intellectual and cultural vacuity, and complete political passivity. Marriage, the family, and parenthood—all conceived of as sources of misery, tension, and painful strong emotions—have gone by
Taboo, warnings, proverbs and other moral codices will at some point inevitably fail and the state will need information when they do, to be able to act. Consequently there might be a reason for spying as Marx and Engels hint in The Holy Family, namely that concealed things can be a sign of bad actions; “Everybody not only keeps the mainsprings of his good actions secret, but tries to conceal his bad ones in quite impenetrable darkness because he wishes to be better than the others” (Marx and Engels 98).

Winston contemplates the subject of spying when he studies one of his neighbours, a mousy anxious woman; “With those children, he thought, that wretched woman must lead a life of terror. Another year, two years, and they would be watching her night and day for symptoms” (Orwell 28).

2.7 The Future in the Future

The goal of real antagonism is to destroy one’s antagonist, and one way of doing that is to prevent threats from germinating. In futuristic novels the authors let the characters plan ahead. The main character in Nineteen-Eighty-Four, Winston, learns when he is interrogated in the end of the book:

But in the future there will be no wives and no friends.

Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated.

Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm. Our neurologists are
at work upon it now. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty
towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of
Big Brother. (Orwell 273)

Some citizens in Orwell’s futuristic drama give this thought their consent through
more subtle methods, described by Althusser in Beginning Theory, as ideological
structures. They work within groups like political parties, churches, the media and
schools. These methods run through all the books.

In Nineteen-Eighty-Four political parties, schools and the media are
frequently used to impact people; “there were even organizations such as the Junior
Anti-Sex League, which advocated complete celibacy for both sexes. All children
were to be begotten by artificial insemination (ARTSEM, it was called in Newspeak)
and brought up in public institutions” (Orwell 69).

In We it is actually the main character D-503 who, at least in the
beginning of the book, aspires to “spread the word” about the joy in One State.
He is the chief architect of the Integral, which is some kind of spaceship which will
bring One State’s ideology to new worlds so that they as well can be subjugated to the
beneficent yoke of reason.

In Brave New World the members of different classes participate in
spiritual meetings, with hymns and other religious elements. These meetings often
end in orgies and make the state’s replacement of intimate sex between couples and
following reproduction obvious. Even though their effective reproduction of children
already reached what the government in Nineteen-Eighty-Four wants to achieve, they
still make some efforts to make it more efficient and productive. They also invent new
pleasures for people to make them even happier. The main concern, however, is to
keep the status quo. The controllers believe that their system gives the largest amount of happiness; “of course we could give them shorter hours. Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours to three or four a day. But would they be any the happier for that? No, they wouldn't” (Huxley 197).

3. Discussion and Conclusion

In comparison of the novels one finds that even if the threats can be perceived to vary in the three books, they are, in essence, similar. The plot starts off with a new awareness, an inner feeling of changed values, and continues with a more extrovert and worldly expression of a need. The need is expressed as a deficiency of love, passion, a child or sex with only one person. A partnership and children are possibly extensions to a sort of family which is a danger to the collective.

The aim of this essay was to prove that leading powers in dystopian novels remove the significances and functions of sex to make it meaningless. Sex in Dystopia could be described as meaningless in one or several respects if one sees propagating, love bonding, pleasure and fulfilling a biological need as the significance and function of sex. Sex can be sufficiently, or as in Brave New World, more than sufficiently frequent but still lack in meaning since the inhabitants of the imagined future societies do not use sex to show love and affection or to create a family. I found the same belief in the article Freud and Lawrence in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World where two of the main characters are described as different from the rest and are commented in this way, “these two figures share an important common trait in Huxley’s eyes: they cannot countenance sex as a meaningless form of recreation” (Buchanan 86). The reason for sex in Brave New World is merely for pleasure. The
constant change of partners and limited time for bonding prevent people from feeling passionate about anyone or anything and they do not use sex for propagation.

The reason for sex in *We* is to fulfil a physical need calculated by a carefully measured biological formula. Sex is in no way connected to the common concept of family or love. Passion is here replaced with the joy of working for the community.

The reason for sex in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is to fulfil one’s duty by creating more citizens. In a limited way one can say that there is a function to create an ostensible family, but a family without the functions of love and support. This future form of family works more like a nest of spies, in symbiosis with the state. The government works actively for the removal of pleasure from sex and in some parts of the book Winston has problems to perform well enough to fulfil the biological task. The rulers in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are even on their way to exterminate family, and sexual pleasure completely.

The purpose of this essay was also to argue that passionate love and family are seen as threats, which might reflect the antagonism between the herd and the family which Engels described in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*. Passion, imagination and love are seen as threats, but those elements seem to act as preludes to a greater danger, the family. The authors have replaced loyalty to single family members with loyalty to a larger group, which can be classified as a sort of herd. Attachment to another person means you that want to spend time with the person, in extension that means to create a small family, irrespective of children or not. In Dystopia affection is bestowed upon many and not just one, similar to what Engels wrote about the early primitive society when “every woman belonging equally to every man and every man to every woman”. There is a danger for the totalitarian
state if a person were to switch loyalty from the herd to the family. If you do not have any brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, husbands or wives, your belonging will be with the community. To deal with this danger an important task is to first control people’s sexuality. A herd is ruled by a leader. The citizens in all three books are ruled by some controlling force, whether they call it the Controller, the Party, Big Brother or the Benefactor. The rulers enforce a moral, a codex or a maxim, which aims to place the group above the individual. One of the things regulated by this codex is sex. Sex is seen as varied forms of duty and love is made out to be selfish.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the control expresses itself by sexual repression to prevent people from improper passion, “The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act” (Orwell 69). Sex separates rather than unites. Even though the state recognizes that sex is a primal impulse and basic physiological need, it also recognizes that it can lead to psychological and emotional bonding with other individuals rather than to the state, so it creates a system designed to meet the primal, physiological need while preventing the emotional bond. There is a divorce from bonding at the individual level, even within marriage. The state does not want people enjoying sex, because that leads to greater loyalty to a lover than to the state. But the generation of a steady supply of citizens is also necessary to the maintenance of the state, so marriage and sex are still necessary. It becomes important, then, to relocate the meaning of sex from expressing love or satisfying one's physiological desires, to serving the will of the state.

In contrast the practice of sex in *Brave New World* avoids any suppression. Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe, delineates the danger of chastity “chastity means passion, chastity means
neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means
the end of civilization. You can’t have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant
vices” (Huxley 209).

However, even if they treat sexuality differently, both world’s actions
ban the same thing, even if one method is to force chastity upon people and the other
is to impose free sex and the need to change partners as fast as you an unzip a pair of
zippicamiknicks (an undergarment in Brave New World). What they ban is passion in
relation to sex and love.

In Orwell Versus Huxley Posner compares the two worlds and his
comparison supports my belief:

Perhaps, however, any kind of intimacy is a potential threat
to a totalitarian society, which seeks to mobilize the population
for selfless communal projects; and the issue is then what policy
toward sex discourages intimacy. The societies depicted in both
novels are hostile to the family…. promiscuity can undermine
the family, but so can a degree of Puritanism that weakens the
sexual bonding of married people. (Posner 20)

In We sex is not as encouraged as in Brave New World, as the characters
of this book are given a logical fixed number of sexual days based on their level of
hormones. Their choice of partner is freer than the number of days, since every citizen
receives a booklet of pink coupons that they can fill in with the number of the person
whom they have chosen for intercourse. In this society, time is used for controlling
people. The inhabitants only get 2 hours of free time each day and even that time is
restricted, so lack of time makes it harder for a single number to find the “number right”.

If characters in this book do find an attraction they are not allowed to live together, to bring up children and they must still serve others for sex, since each number has a right to any other number. One can conclude that even when they seem to have freedom of choice when it comes to choosing a partner in dystopian societies, it is a false freedom that fits well with what Althusser calls interpellation and “makes us feel like free agents (‘You can have any colour you like….’) while actually imposing things upon us (‘as long as it’s black’)” (Barry 165). The restricted colour quote is of course a paraphrase of a famous Henry Ford slogan, once stated about the car T-ford. Althusser writes that State powers are maintained by repressive structures like law, police, prison and external force. These methods can be more subtle and be called ideological structures. They work when powers seem to secure internal consent from the citizens and work within groups like political parties, churches, the media and schools. I have found the concept useful and very much carried out in the dystopian novels.

When we talk about meaningless sex in contemporary Western culture, we generally mean sex just for pleasure, unconnected to a tight emotional or monogamous bond--promiscuity, hook-ups, one-night stands, group sex, etc. What this suggests is that, for Western society, sex must fulfil some function other than merely the provision of pleasure to have meaning: pleasure sex is "meaningless" whereas sex with someone you love, or sex to produce children, is "meaningful": the meaning is located somewhere other than in the physical act itself. In *Brave New World*, this seems to be a key point: in that novel, precisely this kind of sex is what
society decides it values: variety and pleasure, rather than emotional bonding or reproduction, being what people should engage in. That is, in this novel, "meaningless" sex (as we'd define it) is the only kind that's valorised. This paper suggests it's because such sex encourages the sort of herd mentality that underlies a communist society; by breaking down individual sexual bonds between people, the state makes itself more important to people than other individuals are. Meaningless sex is divorced from love, commitment, intimacy and reproduction. The meaning of sex gets redefined as pleasure and imposed reasons. The meaning varies from book to book, but the same overall point applies: what Western society values as meaningful about sex is rejected.

The controller in *Brave New World* and the Benefactor in *We* both state that they want to make people happy, but the Dystopian society is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. It makes out to be a paradise where the government’s plan is for the greater good, nothing is lacking and everybody is happy; there are just some minor flaws to iron out.
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