

# Prologue: A First-Year Writing Journal

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## Prologue: A First Year Writing Journal 2016

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*Prologue: □*  
*A First-Year Writing Journal*



**Volume 8: Spring 2016**

## ***Prologue***

*Prologue* is an annual journal of academic essays designed to showcase first-year writing at Denison. The journal aims to provide students with the opportunity to have their works published, usually for the first time. The selection process begins with many first-year students submitting their essays anonymously; these submissions are then carefully reviewed by members of the Editorial Board. Our Editorial Board is comprised of six members of the Writing Center staff. Four pieces were selected for publication, and one of the Writing Center consultants on the editorial board reviewed one of the selected essays and met with its author to discuss how the paper could be improved. Final revisions are made by students with the guidance of a consultant before publication.

We invite you to read the following exceptional papers written by first-year students.

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## Society and Its Influence on Identity: The Consequences of Heterosexism and Heteronormativity in Curtis Sittenfeld's *Prep* Jayla Johnson

The emotions Lee Fiora and Sin-Jun Kim experience in Curtis Sittenfeld's *Prep* (2005) represent the living embodiment of everyone: uncertainty, awkwardness, and a desire to love and be loved. Sittenfeld adds a questioning sexuality to the turmoil of feelings Lee and Sin-Jun encounter, both of whom grapple with their sexuality in an environment that tries to restrict it. By tying Lee's and Sin-Jun's sexual uncertainty to their identity, Sittenfeld presents just how easily their identity can be altered in order to find acceptance in society and their surrounding peers. Through the heterosexist environment of Ault, where homosexuality is often rarely acknowledged or supported, Sin-Jun is compelled to keep her lesbian identity a secret while Lee suppresses her sexuality – both attempting to adhere to society's conventional attitude regarding sexuality.

Lee, explicitly aware that she lives within a heterosexist society where heterosexuality is valued over homosexuality, is quick to denounce the idea that she might be gay or bisexual. Lee's fear of being a lesbian stems directly from living within a subconsciously homophobic school. Lee feels "terror [pass] through [her]" (Sittenfeld 34) at the possibility of someone discovering the "gay" pamphlet hidden in her room, imagining how disastrous it would be to her future if "everyone at Ault thought [she] was a lesbian" (34). If homosexuality was an accepted norm just like heterosexuality, Lee would not feel as if being a lesbian, or having others mistake

her for a lesbian, is the end of the world. Her fear of being seen as gay by her peers is so severe that skipping class and facing the consequence of “having [her] name reported to the dean” (34) to destroy any evidence of her reading a pamphlet about a sexual orientation that does not pertain to heterosexuality “seemed a small price to pay” (34). And it is not just society suppressing her from exploring her sexuality – Lee finds herself “trying not to be excited” (32) at the thought of kissing Gates. She feels her “stomach tighten” (31) while reading the pamphlet and has to force her eyes away and firmly tell herself, “No, [I’m] not gay” (33). Lee, in a desperate attempt to fit in Ault, conforms her sexuality to reflect those around her, rather than take the time to sort through her conflicting feelings and determine her sexual orientation for herself.

Ault’s attempt to bring more awareness to the LGBTQ community by hosting yearly drag shows and pamphlets that tackle sexuality, instead further supports homosexuality being viewed as “abnormal” and heterosexuality as “normal.” In the infirmary, among the pamphlets that address “*Am I gay?*” (31), are several pamphlets surrounding it, ranging in topics from suicide to date rape. Here are pamphlets meant to inform students of serious, terrible issues and, within the mix, is one about questioning your sexuality, suggesting that being gay is as terrible as contemplating suicide or experiencing rape. The fact that the “gay” pamphlets are only found in the infirmary where the “sick or faking sick” (30) stay, subtly implies that questioning your sexuality and being gay are signs of mental sickness, or abnormality. Even when Ault hosts an annual “drag dance” (17), it is not to raise more attention on, for instance, transgender issues, but rather to poke fun at the very thought of seeing “girls dress as boys, and boys dress as girls” (17). By giving Ault students the chance to “try on” a different identity, the school promotes the idea that it is okay to dress in drag for one night and laugh about it with friends, but only to return to

normativity the next day. To throw a “drag extravaganza” (18) without acknowledging the problems and stereotypes the LGBTQ community faces on a daily basis, is to silence their voices. Ault, while not only ignoring the issues and experiences of the LGBTQ community, symbolizes a society that views homosexuality as abnormal.

The negative outlook on homosexuality in Ault and society leads Sin-Jun to conceal her sexuality from her friends and family, believing she could never, truly, be accepted. When Lee asks if there is something going on between her and Clara, Sin-Jun denies it, claiming “nothing is going on” (234) out of fear of Lee condemning their relationship. Considering Ault’s acceptance of heterosexual couples, had Sin-Jun been in a relationship with a man rather than woman, she would not have felt embarrassed and ashamed nor would she have avoided telling Lee. Instead, the stigma of being a lesbian creates such a strong fear in Sin-Jun that she cannot even confide in her friend. Similar to how Lee, early in her freshman year, worried about the school believing she might be gay, Sin-Jun, too, fears the school discovering her secret. Sin-Jun, constantly having to mask her sexuality, is driven to believe the only way to escape society’s oppression is to permanently leave it. Sin-Jun’s attempted suicide, by “[taking] pills on purpose” (208), serves as a much needed reminder that society’s and Ault’s disapproving attitude toward sexual orientations that deviate from what is considered “normal” has drastic consequences. Growing up in a school environment where “there are no gay people” (32) and within a heterosexist culture, Sin-Jun’s sexual orientation alienates her from her peers, repressing not only her sexual identity but personal identity, as well.

Being an adolescent in the twentieth century is difficult enough with trying to navigate friendships, homework, and the pressure to be popular and well-liked. Lee and Sin-Jun, however,

have an added obstacle – both girls struggle with their sexuality. Induced by the environment around them, Lee represses the idea that she might be a lesbian, and Sin-Jun hides her true sexuality from her peers in order to “fit in” and appear as any other Ault student. In an ideal world, Lee and Sin-Jun would have the freedom to explore their sexuality without society’s and Ault’s influence on their actions. Instead, these two girls find themselves acceding to societal pressure, consequently missing out on the opportunity to discover their true identity and sexuality, and to engage in relationships undeterred by what others think of them.

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# Go The Distance: The Hero's Journey

## Benjamin S. Keefer

From being a Greek farm boy to evolving into a godly hero, Disney's Hercules stands as a strong example of the hero's journey. In their Hercules film, Disney takes the Greek myth of Hercules and takes a big, creative twist on the tale—creating an almost entirely new story of their own. For most of his young life, after Hades and his henchmen took Hercules away from his parents Zeus and Hera, Hercules only knows of a modest life as a regular boy. He lives as an outcast from the other teenagers because of his different abilities. Rather than feeling special with his great strength, he only feels more alienated and alone in the world. However, he goes on a journey to find out who he is supposed to be. He meets his father, Zeus, and ends up becoming a great hero after facing many trials and growing greatly as a person (inside and out)[1].

Hercules is a quintessential example of the hero's journey archetype. The hero's journey is a central archetype and formula to many fairy tales, myths, and many other stories in human culture such as those found in books, television, and videogames. I believe that the hero's journey, like that of Hercules and other tales, is not only one of the most important fairy tale archetypes, but that it is also important to human culture and society.

Before getting into the details and themes of Hercules, however, the formula of the hero's journey should be reviewed. The basic formula for the hero's journey is often quite similar across different tales, and of course many stories simply make small, creative changes. The prevalence of the hero's journey for so long and the power of its themes suggest that it is one of the strongest fairy tale archetypes. The concept and term of "the hero's journey"[2] was originally introduced and coined by Joseph Campbell.[3] He analyzed tales throughout history

and noticed a strong correlation between them—the formula he dubbed as the “monomyth,” or “hero’s journey.”[4] There are a few different versions of this formula. One such hero’s journey formula, very similar to Campbell’s, was summarized by Christopher Vogler, a writer at Disney, in 1985 as a Disney studio memo.[5] The formula is in twelve parts. First is the “ordinary world,” which is the protagonist’s normal life before the call of adventure.[6] Second, the call of adventure. The protagonist is called to action by some crisis or problem, beckoning them to step out to an adventure. Third, the protagonist is fearful of the adventure, and initially refuses to change. The fourth piece of the formula is a meeting with the mentor. This is when the protagonist meets with some kind of teacher and begins to learn the skills they need to conquer their obstacles. The fifth step is crossing the first threshold into a “special world,” where the hero steps out and is challenged by a big, new world to travel. Sometimes, it can even be another realm, or simply an expansion of the outside world. Sixth in the formula is a combination of tests, allies, and enemies. The new hero faces challenges to help test their abilities and grow, enemies to defeat, and allies to help them along the way. Seventh along the journey is the travel to the “innermost cave.” This basically translates to whatever setting houses the main antagonist or danger, or a dungeon of sorts that the hero enters to face a great test after they have grown. Eighth is the ordeal, which is the fight inside the “innermost cave.” It is by this time often that the hero experiences their greatest change or transformation of maturity. Ninth is the reward for overcoming the ordeal. This could be a sought after power or object, or maybe the person whom the hero wanted to save; the reason for their journey in the first place. Tenth in the formula is the road back home to their life, which then leads into the eleventh piece. This is “the resurrection,” which is a final test that requires the hero to recall everything they learned over their whole

journey and use all of their skills and strength to overcome this final task. Finally, the twelfth and final part of the formula is “the return with the elixir,” which is when the hero brings back a power to help their people back home and make their world a better place.[7] Overall, this is roughly the most common twelve-part formula of the hero’s journey archetype. In my mind, the monomyth is a metaphor for life, all of its hardships, and the courage we need to muster to prevail. This is why the hero’s journey is so important.

The hero’s journey truly matters to our society. In life, we all face challenges big and small. Over the years, we have to overcome great obstacles—whether it is the loss of a loved one, succeeding in difficult tasks at work or school, or the difficulty of simply becoming the fulfilled person one may want to be. These are our calls to action. Whether or not we accept the call, every person has their own journey and challenges in life. For some people, it can touch their heart and empower it. Through metaphor and analogy, these tales can teach us lessons for life. The hero’s journey gives people hope, and it provides role models with the courage and strength to push forward. In the message of the hero’s journey, I personally find encouragement and inspiration in my own life. Especially now, the hero’s journey serves as an example of strength to look to while I am at college. College is a challenging step up from my previous chapter in life, and it has already proven to be a difficult road to travel. As I go through each day, sometimes the path can get bumpy and rough. Sometimes, I get tired and worry that I might fail. But, heroes like Hercules serve as an inspiration to persevere. I do my best to muster the courage and strength to keep working hard to continue moving forward. Like Hercules, we all need to “go the distance.” As stated previously, Hercules is a powerful example of the hero’s journey archetype.

Our culture, the culture of the human race as a whole, is absolutely full of stories about the hero's journey. Looking at human history and culture, we seem to be obsessed with heroes. Fantastical tales of heroism have provided inspiration and courage to countless generations of people. The tales can teach life lessons and make their readers into heroes in a way. Hercules, of course, is one of these many tales. However, I believe that some observation shows that Hercules takes a slightly different turn than the others. In the beginning of Disney's Hercules, the narrator says "The greatest and strongest of all these heroes was the mighty Hercules. But what is the measure of a true hero?"[8] As it turns out, the measure of a true hero is not the number of monsters killed or awards won. The true measure is found inside.

In the beginning of Hercules' tale, we see him as an outcast. His uncontrollable strength gets in the way of his relationships with people. He is called a "freak." [9] This period of time for Hercules, going along with the monomyth formula, is the "ordinary world." After an accident with Hercules' strength occurs, Hercules is ridiculed and feels horrible and misplaced. In response, his adopted mortal parents tell him the story of how they found him. As a baby, he was wearing a medallion with the symbol of the Gods, and so, he goes to the temple of Zeus to get his answers. Here, we see the "call to adventure" from the hero's journey formula. He discovers that Zeus is his father and the only way to reclaim his godhood is to "become a true hero on Earth." [10] However, there is more to that task than meets the eye. Zeus tells Hercules to find Philoctetes (Phil), the trainer of heroes. Hercules quickly sets out on his journey on the back of his winged horse, Pegasus. He meets Phil, the trainer of heroes, and this event represents the meeting of the mentor piece of the monomyth formula. Unlike the classical hero's journey formula, Hercules actually is not the reluctant one. Hercules finds Phil, and Phil is the one who is

initially very reluctant to take on another potentially disappointing “hero.” This is until Zeus sends down a lightning bolt to signal Phil that he needs to train Hercules. Over the course of what seems to be several months, Hercules goes from a scrawny-bodied kid to a big, muscular, buff, typical hero build. At this point in time, Hercules still has a very typical, two-dimensional view of what being a hero means. He shows this by saying “I wanna see battles and monsters! Rescue some damsels! You know, heroic stuff!”[11] He takes this attitude with him for his initial trials as a hero.

There are different types of heroes throughout fairy tales and myths. Maria Tatar, a Denison University graduate and literature professor at Harvard University, outlines the two basic types of heroes in fairy tales—“Among folklorists, it is the fashion to divide heroes into two distinct classes. There are active heroes and passive heroes...tricksters and simpletons. According to theory, the oppositions active/passive, seeker/victim, brave/timid, and naive/cunning serve as useful guides for classifying fairy-tale heroes.”[12] Similar to Tatar, we divided heroes into “fool” and “foolhardy.” Hercules starts out as a foolhardy hero. He shows himself to be both overconfident and brash in his initial trials.

I mostly agree with Tatar’s analysis of hero classification. In fairy tale history, all heroes lie in one of these classifications, or at least along a spectrum of sorts. As for Hercules, he is definitely the active, brave, seeker type of hero. But, he is also somewhat naive and foolhardy. He rushes into battle like a bull before really thinking. Over the course of the film, he grows as a person and evolves as a hero. Important to this change is the introduction of a very important character—a love interest. He first meets this woman soon after he crosses the first threshold, another sectional representation of the hero’s journey.

Disney's Hercules, I believe, makes an important change to set itself apart from many classic hero's journey tales. What sets Hercules apart is the introduction of Meg—the strong, independent, atypical female love interest of Hercules who evolves throughout the film and turns out to be the key to Hercules' heroic success and reclaimed godhood. In many fairy tales, the female is just a damsel in distress—a helpless princess who needs to be saved. A two-dimensional woman to reward the hero's efforts. Meg is a slightly different story. Meg's strong character, while in the grasp of a monstrous centaur, tells Hercules "I am a damsel, I am in distress, I can handle this. Have a nice day." [13] Immediately, we can recognize her as a much more independent character in her own right, rather than a side or secondary character revolving around the hero. Despite Meg's attempt at self-defense, Hercules ends up beating the centaur anyway, saving Meg. Hercules is infatuated with her, she flirts a bit with him, and then she goes on her way for the time being. It turns out that Meg is working for Hades, albeit reluctantly, since he owns her soul. Meg does serve as a love interest for Hercules, but she is even more than that. In a way, she is a double-edged sword to Hercules' journey. She is forced to do Hades' bidding, and causes Hercules' to get a little hazy-minded at times. But, she is also a source of great courage and support for Hercules.

In Thebes, Hercules defeats the mighty Hydra, which was a trap from Hades. After the defeat of this great beast, Hercules becomes rich and famous almost instantly. He goes on defeating monster after monster, saving whole towns of people. As a song in the movie says, he goes from "zero to hero." [14] He gains fame and riches, very true to another statement from Maria Tatar—"The trajectory of the hero's path leads him to the goal shared by all fairy tales, whether they chart the fortunes...enthroning the humble and enriching the impoverished." [15] Similarly

in Hercules, we see the once humble farm boy become wealthy, and also his family. In the film, there is a short scene showing that Hercules has sent much of his riches back home to his very poor adopted parents. Greece itself flourishes from Hercules' heroism. He may be a big hero now, but he has not lost his compassion by any means. He returns to Zeus' temple in hopes of being a true hero now, but Zeus has to tell him that he has not reached that point. Hercules' objects, saying "But, Father, I've beaten every single monster I've come up against. I'm the most famous person in all of Greece. I'm an action figure!"[16] But as Zeus replies, "I'm afraid being famous isn't the same as being a true hero...it's something you have to discover for yourself...look inside your heart."[17] For Hercules, this is a reflective moment that immediately changes his behavior. He starts to become less conceited and self-absorbed in his fame, and desires to find what truly matters. Hades offers Meg a deal she cannot refuse, her freedom, in order to get her to betray Hercules and find out his weaknesses. However, Hercules and Meg both fall in love with each other. Through this, Hades finds the weakness in Hercules—his heart. His love for Meg. But this so-called "weakness" ends up being Hercules' greatest power and ally.

Hercules, in an impossible choice, gives up his powers to Hades in order to save Meg, on the condition that she is safe. Being the noble hero he is, he takes a turn different from the classic hero's journey formula and basically sacrifices himself to save Meg. Hades takes this opportunity to release the destructive Titans upon Greece to destroy Zeus and Hercules. With this comes a pivotal point in the hero's journey tale, a "final battle" with the evil forces. But Hercules, in this final battle of destruction, is already so weakened that he is vulnerable and relatively powerless. When Hercules has lost his powers, Disney shows the contrast by making

his color palette very cold and gray looking. To try and save Hercules from getting himself killed, Meg gets on Pegasus to go and get Phil to help Hercules. Phil encourages Hercules, and he ends up defeating a Titan without his powers of strength. In this scene, we see Hercules begin to move towards his status as a true hero slowly, but surely. After Hercules sends the Titan falling, he is about to be killed by a falling pillar. Meg saves him, but sacrifices herself in the process. This breaks his contract with Hades, and Hercules gets his powers back. He and Zeus defeat the Titans together, but at a great cost. Meg dies. Hercules weeps at her side, but then realizes what he can do—go to the Underworld and retrieve Meg’s soul. He makes a deal with Hades that if he can get Meg out of the pool of dead souls, that she can live. Hades thinks this is impossible, because Hercules will die before he reaches her.

At the very last second, while swimming through the dark waters and quickly decaying, Hercules becomes a true hero. He immediately regains his godly powers and becomes immortal. He takes Meg from the pool of the dead and rises out, glowing in gold like the sun. Hades tries to stop him, but Hercules simply uppercuts him into the pool of death (he doesn’t die, of course, since he is a god himself, but he is officially defeated). Hercules returns Meg back to life, and they embrace. Through true love, Hercules has become a true hero, and completed his journey—the hero’s journey. Hercules and Meg are carried up to Mount Olympus so that he can rejoin the gods. In response to Hercules becoming a true hero and god again, Zeus states “For a true hero isn’t measured by the size of his strength, but by the strength of his heart.”[18] The elixir from the monomyth formula, for Hercules, is love. Rather than going back home with the gods, Hercules chooses to give up his godhood and stay on Earth with Meg. The dreams of Hercules,

Meg, and Phil all come true with the ending of this hero's journey. It is stories like this that I believe are important to people.

Unlike some hero's journey tales throughout history, with two dimensional heroes, Hercules evolves and becomes greater than them. This is where I believe Maria Tatar may have been too strict in her two-sided classification of heroes. They aren't always black and white, simple heroes, based on having one trait or the opposite. They do not have to be static characters.

However, Tatar made another very good point about what makes some of the most successful heroes: "...simpletons in the Grimms' fairy tales possess one character trait that sets them apart from their fraternal rivals: compassion...Of the various tests, tasks, and trials imposed on a hero, this first test figures as the most important, for it establishes his privileged status. Once he exhibits compassion...he can do no wrong." [19] Just so, Hercules started out as a typical foolhardy hero, but through his love and willpower, he grew as a character into something bigger and better. He risked his life to save his love. Like Tatar asserts, the compassion Hercules showed became his most important test, his greatest power, and allowed him to succeed on his journey to becoming a true hero. Some may criticize the repetition of the hero's journey formula, but from its great success and evolution over time, I believe it is simply powerful and too good to not reiterate. The life lessons and courageous role models serve as a tool for giving people hope, and teaching children that they can be heroes in their own special ways if they can just persevere through life's trials and make love their greatest ally. This makes the Disney Hercules movie special, heartwarming, and inspiring, which I believe stands as a testament to what the hero's journey can become in great tales. Like Hercules, we all need to go the distance in our own lives to become the people that we each are truly meant to be.

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## Power and Control in *Brave New World* and *1984* Molly Keisman

In reference to *Brave New World*, Brian Smith once wrote, “as one immediately discerns, the story is a satirical, though sincere, prognosis and sociopolitical warning: unless humans are careful, we might just permit political realities to emerge that redefine and fundamentally subvert what we consider human freedom and dignity to be” (349). Smith’s words ring quite true in regard to the dystopian genre as a whole. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *1984* are two of the most famous dystopian novels of all time and both, as Smith articulates, are sociopolitical warnings. Yet, they warn against two very different things. Neil Postman writes, “Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance...” (qtd. in Diken 156). Due to the contrast between these two men’s fears, the societies of *Brave New World* and *1984* are radically different. *Brave New World*’s World State is governed by ten world controllers and is comprised of stringent class distinctions enforced from the embryonic stage of life. Natural reproduction has been abolished, and embryos are raised in “hatcheries and conditioning centers” where they are bred to fit into their assigned caste. Consumption and consumerism are highly enforced, and people are encouraged to be as promiscuous as possible. The entire society is built upon maximum happiness, thus, any time negative emotion is felt, citizens take “soma,” a hallucinogenic drug. Contrastingly, the world of *1984* is ruled by a mysterious figure named “big brother,” and is in a perpetual state of war (or so

the government claims), the only classes are the inner party, outer party, and the proles who remain largely ignored. Sex, as well as all other forms of attachment or connection, is strictly prohibited, and citizens are monitored around the clock by telescreens that watch their every movement. In this paper, I will argue that both governments' strategies to hide reality from their citizens can be explained through the same philosophical, cultural and critical theories, yet the World State manipulates and controls in a subtler, more insidious way than does The Party in *1984* and, thus, has a stronger and more permanent grasp over its citizens.

To support this idea, I will be looking at the works of multiple theorists. First, I will analyze how the two societies employ Michel Foucault's theory of the Panopticon. Next, I will discuss how Jeffrey Cohen's monster theory connects to both societies' dehumanization of their ancestors. I will next look at Plato's ideas about representation posing as truth and how these societies employ tactics to conceal the truth from their citizens. After this, I will analyze how each government, in order to brainwash their citizens and maintain control, utilizes forms of teaching that closely resemble Paulo Freire's concept of banking education. Lastly, I will discuss the similarities between all these theories, how each government uses them differently, and why all this matters within the context of our own society.

### *The Panopticon*

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault discusses Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a circular prison with a tower in the middle. The guards in the tower are able to watch the prisoners at all times, yet the prisoners are unable to verify whether or not they are being observed. This constant visibility leads to self-regulation, as prisoners have no idea when they're

being monitored (250). Foucault uses the Panopticon as an analogy for power in societies. This can certainly be applied to both *Brave New World* and *1984*.

In *Brave New World*, citizens are strongly dissuaded from ever spending time alone. While conversing with the Savage, a doctor tells him, “If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don’t encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements” (163). The World State discourages solitude because it is a means to introspection and deeper thinking. Furthermore, it is difficult for the government to regulate people’s activities if they are by themselves. Thus, all solitary activities are forbidden and looked down upon with disgust. While talking about Bernard, Lenina’s friend Fanny even says with horror that people claim “he spends most of his time by himself—*alone*” (45). The World State’s abolishment of both the state of solitude and its enjoyment can be seen as an example of Panopticism. If people are forced to always be in the company of others, they will never commit heretical acts. This campaign against solitude is really a method in which the World State ensures permanent visibility of its citizens. The government knows that its citizens will monitor and regulate each other. Bernard becomes very conspicuous in his dissenting beliefs because his penchant for solitude has already drawn a great deal of attention to him.

In *1984*, The Party employs the Panopticon in a far more literal way. Telescreens (devices that function as both televisions and surveillance cameras) are placed in public establishments as well as the homes of all citizens, except for those of the non-threatening lowest class. The telescreens cannot be turned off—even when people are sleeping. Thus, citizens are in a constant state of surveillance just like that of the Panopticon prison. Winston contemplates, “it was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within

range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself..." (62). The consistent presence of the telescreens makes it nearly impossible for citizens to commit any acts against the government. Later, when Winston finally gets up the courage to act on his beliefs, he has an unimaginably difficult time hiding his activities from the telescreens, leading us to even wonder if such dissent is even worth the effort and pain.

Therefore, the difference in these governments' applications of the Panopticon comes down to conspicuousness. Both governments effectively utilize Panopticism, yet in the World State, this is behind the scenes. Citizens believe that solitude is abhorrent, yet do not realize that this belief has been carefully constructed and imbued within them by their government. They take this sentiment to be their own and, therefore, fully embrace it. On the other hand, *1984*'s people are acutely aware of the telescreens and the purpose that they serve. It is significantly easier to discern governmental manipulation and control in this tactic simply because it is so much more obvious. In this way, the World State succeeds at a greater degree in its control of its citizens because they do not even realize that their aversion to solitude is their government's form of panoptic control.

### *Monster Theory*

In *Monster Theory*, Jeffrey Cohen discusses the significance of monsters, and how such monsters are intrinsically linked to the values, fears, and concerns of the cultures that create them. Cohen has seven different theses about these monsters. I will be focusing on his fourth thesis, entitled "The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference" (7). In this thesis, Cohen asserts

that cultures create monsters in order to discriminate against certain groups of people—the Other.

In *Brave New World*, the World State monsterizes its ancestors in order to garner and maintain support for its current way of life. Cohen writes, “Representing an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic” (7-8). The World State certainly does this. In one scene, the Controller explains to a group of students what older times were like. He says, “Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children...brooded over them like a cat over its kittens” (37) and goes on to say, “no wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable” (41). Just as Cohen claims, this government monsterizes and dehumanizes its ancestors in order to make them into the Other, and depict its current society as civil, therefore maintaining the support of its citizens. By alluding to previous generations as monstrous savages, through language like “maniacally” and “wicked,” the World State justifies this group’s defeat and lends support to the current system, which was necessitated by the failure of these “savages.” Thus, by representing their ancestors as monsters, the World State manages to seem like it is doing things right.

In *1984*, the Party dehumanizes its ancestors in a similar way. Winston remembers a section in his childhood textbook that attacked capitalism by monsterizing capitalists. Winston, recalling what his textbook claimed about capitalists, says, “everything existed for their benefit. You—the ordinary people, the workers—were their slaves... they could ship you off to Canada like cattle. They could sleep with your daughters if they chose” (90). The Party portrays capitalists as evil, impregnating people with this idea from an early age. By instilling fear and loathing in the citizens when it comes to the “bad” capitalists, the Party ensures that it will

continue to earn their support. Such ideas point a finger at the people, implying that they could be enslaved or attacked if capitalism was allowed to dominate once more.

This is another case in which the World State utilizes subtler and less harsh tactics to rule its citizens. The World State wants its denizens to be disgusted by their ancestors, even laugh at them and mock them. The Party wants its people to fear their ancestors. The World State brings to light its monsters to explain why life is better now. The Party uses its monsters to threaten its citizens—to tell them that capitalism is a danger to them all. In *Brave New World*, the monsters are an inconceivable joke. In *1984*, the Party wants its people to know that the monsters were very real, very serious, and, if people don't abide by society's rules, could come back to haunt them. It seems to me that the World State's method of monsterizing its ancestors is far more effective than that of the Party. A government best maintains control over its people by keeping them happy—not frightening them. The World State is able to explain to its people why their ancestors were monsters, but in a way that portrays them as clowns and ridicules them. These people become active participants in reveling in their ancestors' stupidity and foolishness. They take pleasure in reflecting on how civil and intelligent they are currently and think of their ancestors as an extinct breed, far in the past. Contrastingly, the Party seeks to frighten its citizens into submission. It wants to make sure that no one would ever consider capitalism over the party's politics. These people feel frightened when they think of the monsters in their country's closet. They feel no pleasure in thinking about the past in the way that citizens of the World State do because these monsters don't feel so removed from life now. The World State's people are clearly happier and more content than are the people in *1984*.

*Plato's Theory on Representation*

In *The Republic*, Plato writes, “When people tell us they’ve met someone who’s mastered every craft, and is the world’s leading expert in absolutely every branch of human knowledge, we should reply that they’re being rather silly. They seem to have met the kind of illusionist who’s expert at representation and, thanks to their own inability to evaluate knowledge, ignorance, and representation, to have been so thoroughly taken in as to believe in his omniscience” (67). I will be looking at how both the World State and the Party employ tactics to hinder their citizens’ abilities to evaluate knowledge, ignorance, and representation.

In *Brave New World*, the government and leaders like Mustapha Mond construct a society that functions smoothly and effortlessly through the careful brainwashing of its citizens who whole-heartedly believe in the system. The World State uses hypnopaedia (sleep teaching) to condition its citizens to believe certain things. For example, children that are in the Beta caste listen to this as they sleep at night: “Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They’re too stupid to be able to read or write... I’m *so* glad I’m a Beta” (27). This is just one method that the government uses in order to prevent its citizens from evaluating the things around them. Because these ideas are instilled within them from such an early age, no one thinks to question them. Therefore, there is no reflection or analysis. The people do not stop to think about the arbitrary and unfair nature of their class system or the cruelty of its deliberate and enforced divisions. They also do not doubt its validity. No member of the beta class, for example, stops and thinks “why are epsilons so bad? Why is it good that I am a beta?” These people are taught to simply believe and not question. It is their inability to evaluate their situation (caused by years of mindless brainwashing) that allows the government

to continue its subtle and discrete oppression. Furthermore, whenever citizens feel any kind of discomfort (any emotion other than happiness) they are encouraged to take “soma,” a hallucinogenic drug. Soma further hinders their ability to evaluate knowledge, ignorance and representation. It simply transports them to another reality where they do not have to think about their problems or any kind of negative emotion they may feel. These people do not dwell on anything that is not positive, and therefore have learned to avoid thinking deeply about anything.

In *1984*, truth is manipulated in a far more literal, physical way. The Party alters and destroys newspapers, photographs, and all other evidence of the past in order to suit its agenda. The people have learned not to doubt anything the Party claims—if the Party says it, it must be true. In order to accommodate this constant changing of “the truth,” citizens use “doublethink.” This is the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously and express whichever the Party requires you to believe at that given moment. Citizens forget any information that has become inconvenient or contradictory and acknowledge that there is no objective reality. Therefore, when the Party claims that Oceania is at war with Eurasia, when in fact, just yesterday it had claimed Oceania to be at war with Eastasia, the citizens are able to simply believe what is being told to them. Thus, in the context of *1984*, the government manipulates truth and the people are able to receive this manipulation without question as they have trained themselves mentally to do so. Therefore, the Party is expert at representation and the people are also completely unable to evaluate knowledge, truth, and reality. The Party has all the power.

The Party’s form of deception is far riskier than that of the World State. The Party alters reality in an extremely conspicuous, blatant manner, and relies on citizens’ effort to doublethink. The World State, however, employs a form of brainwashing that is far less noticeable—one that

occurs as its citizens sleep or acts as an escape from their problems. Once again, the Party imposes itself upon its people while the World State invites its citizens to believe that their ideas and beliefs are their own. Additionally, in *Brave New World*, the World State acts as a sort of savior for the people, providing them with soma, which they can use to escape pain. Therefore, the government assists and enables the peoples' ignorance. In both societies, the people are unable to evaluate the reality of their lives, yet in the World State truths remain constant and are firmly instilled within the individuals from childhood to adulthood. The Party, on the other hand, requires that its citizens constantly adapt to new truths. Therefore, the World State's methodology is sneakier, far less risky, and it earns the approval of its citizens by providing them with drugs.

### *The Banking Concept of Education*

In *The Banking Concept of Education*, Paulo Freire discusses the traditional education system in which students passively receive information from their teachers. His term "the banking concept" is derived from the idea that education is an act in which teachers deposit information into their students who are containers or receptacles. Freire characterizes this type of education as passive and devoid of any real thought or analysis (244).

In *Brave New World*, the primary form of education is hypnopaedia, which I discussed earlier. This form of teaching is as passive and depository as they come, as its recipients are literally unconscious. Professors Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison conducted a study in 1991 about the meaning of active education. They write, "students must do more than just listen: They must read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems... Students must engage in

higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” (5). This is exactly the type of education that the World State seeks to combat through hypnopaedia. Due to this form of education, citizens never learn to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate. They learn only statements and facts—no skills or helpful mindsets. The banking concept of education ensures that its recipients lack the ability to think critically. This, however, is clearly of great use to the World State. It doesn’t want its citizens to analyze their situations. It only wants that they be able to repeat, like robots, what their government tells them. Active education is the opposite of banking education—such a type of learning would send the World State crumbling to the ground.

In *1984*, the banking concept of education is used in a couple of ways. A great deal of emphasis is placed on slogans, which the citizens mindlessly repeat and internalize. The Party tells its citizens: “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.” These ideas are key to the Party’s control over the people. Furthermore, the party has certain ideas and methods of thinking that it simply expects the population to accept. Winston, for example, is unable to perform doublethink. At the end of the novel when he is being interrogated and tortured, O’Brien holds up four fingers and asks Winston how many he sees. Winston replies, claiming that he sees four fingers. O’Brien responds, “And if the party says that it is not four but five—then how many am I holding?” (249). When Winston once again replies, “four” he is given an electric shock. This is another example of the banking concept of education. The party expects that its citizens brainlessly absorb the information they are being presented with. Learning is not a discussion between two people but rather a demand of the passive acceptance of information. O’Brien, a man who embodies all of the party’s ideology and beliefs, cannot understand why Winston will not simply take in the information he is giving him. Winston literally cannot make himself

understand O'Brien, yet he is still expected to ingest and internalize what O'Brien is telling him. In this case, Winston and O'Brien are not equal partners. Instead, O'Brien has all the power and is attempting to fill Winston with the information that he believes Winston should know.

The World State and the Party both apply the banking concept of education however, the World State does so in a way that is more discreet and less invasive. Citizens in the World State never gain the ability to think. In terms of education, the World State is even more dystopian than the world of *1984*. In *1984*, we get the sense that people attended school at one point or another (Winston recalls his history textbook). In *Brave New World*, however, education is purely hypnopædia. People never learn how to discuss, analyze, synthesize, or problem-solve. Education involves no interaction. There are no books, no other students. It is a solitary and passive act. Therefore, the World State does a better job of applying the banking concept of education to its citizens. In turn, its citizens are even more mindless than those of Oceania, which is clearly the government's ultimate and primary goal.

### *Summation*

By analyzing *Brave New World* and *1984*'s very different applications of Foucault's, Cohen's, Plato's, and Freire's theories, we can observe the two societies' difference in values and to what degree they succeed in controlling their citizens. Even though they draw their power from the same ideas, their societies are run extremely differently. The World State prioritizes happiness therefore, its tactics of control are subtle and seek to contribute to the people's happiness. For example, soma hinders awareness (allowing the government maximum power) but at the same time ensures happiness—the World State would never threaten its citizens'

happiness. The Party, on the other hand, prioritizes control. To achieve and maintain the level of control that it seeks, the Party employs far more overt measures. It is less concerned with pleasing its citizens and more focused on earning their submission and reliance. As a result of these governments' different motivations and priorities, they apply the aforementioned theories in contrasting ways. Both governments manage to gain control of their citizens, yet the Party is forceful, even when it attempts to be sly, and the World State is very focused on administering its control in a way that does not draw attention to itself. Therefore, the World State is more successful at controlling its citizens as they are largely unaware of the extent of its influence, and the government keeps them in a constant state of blissful ignorance, consequently ensuring their obedience.

Governments such as those of North Korea and Cuba are effortlessly reminiscent of The Party. Their extreme censorship, lack of freedom and manipulation of the media paint pictures of societies that are clearly not free. Comparing our government, however, to the World State or The Party is far more difficult. It is easy to look at these two different societies and criticize their people for being so mindless and oblivious, yet we may be more similar than we care to admit. Prevalent NSA surveillance is akin to telescreens. The destruction of language (through the creation of Newspeak) can be compared to the increasing popularity and dominance of texting abbreviations and lingo. The encouragement of soma use is disturbingly similar to our society's growing dependence on prescription drugs. Today's advanced Assisted Reproductive Technology calls to mind images of the World State's genetic engineering. Essentially, it is important to note that, despite our status as a wealthy, democratic country, we are subject to some of the same traits as these fictional dystopias we love to berate. The ways in which we are

controlled and oppressed are sneakier and more inconspicuous than the ways in which North Korea, Cuba, and similar countries are oppressed. However, that certainly does not mean that we are safer or that we are immune to the consequences suffered by the people of *Brave New World* and *1984*. As I argued in this paper, it is the secretive, camouflaged methods of control that are the most dangerous. We cannot act only once we have become Oceania or North Korea. It is imperative that we remain vigilant of our discreet oppression, and that we act in our defense before it is no longer discreet.

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## Little Red Riding Hood's Defloration

### Caileigh Marshall

It is very common to believe Little Red Riding Hood is a naïve character, however her tale, as some fairy tale scholars would argue, explores themes of female sexuality, moral boundaries, and gender roles. The tale's key motifs (girl in the woods, red cape-like accessory, grandmother in a cottage, and a hungry wolf) have remained the same throughout the years, but, as Catherine Orenstein, a writer on culture, mythology, and power; explained in her book *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked*, "Fairy tales have remarkable mercurial properties. They adapt to the weather, to local fashions, and to the mindset of each new teller and audience."<sup>1</sup> In other words, fairy tales become what the current writer wants them to become. As the tale of Little Red Riding Hood evolved in regards to the treatment of women, so did society's attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and power. I will analyze the first literary version of Little Red Riding Hood by Perrault, the popularized Grimms' version, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century story "The Company of Wolves" by Angela Carter in order to see how these versions reflect the cyclical changes in attitude toward women's rights and sexuality.

Little Red Riding Hood was derived from two different oral sources in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century France: church legend and folk tale. The oral tale created by the Catholic church was meant to show children how strangers could be dangerous, more specifically relating to the superstitions about werewolves taking children wandering outside their homes at night. Jack Zipes, a professor and expert on fairy tales, wrote that "wolves...lived in the woods outside

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<sup>1</sup> Orenstein, Catherine, *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 12.

society and preyed upon humans,” though they were not directly related to the Devil until the late Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> The reasoning for the surge in Christian belief in werewolves during that time was “from a strident campaign by the Church to exploit folk superstition in order to keep all social groups under control.”<sup>3</sup>

The folk people, by contrast, used the oral tale of Little Red Riding Hood to celebrate a young girl’s coming of age, not as a cautious message about wandering in the woods. The tale was originally told by working women to young apprentice girls as a “sexual and social initiation” into womanhood.<sup>4</sup> Most authors in the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries who retold the tale interpreted the moral to be avoiding strangers in the woods. In the stories written by modern authors, however, there are numerous references back to the original meaning of the peasant tale through the praise of sexual exploration in adolescents and of a powerful female protagonist.

Sexual innuendos were at the core of the first literary version of Little Red Riding Hood. The first written tale was penned by Charles Perrault in 1697 as the story “Le petit chaperon rouge.”<sup>5</sup> The story was written for the French Court of Louis XIV, where “sexual indiscretions were notoriously indulged [in]” and where “wives made their husbands rich through their extramarital affairs.”<sup>6</sup> Sexual promiscuity was common among the upper class, so the story, as written by Perrault, had distinct sexual innuendos that the adult readers would understand and find amusing.

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<sup>2</sup> Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 67.

<sup>3</sup> Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, 70.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood*, 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

However, in spite of the seeming sexual freedom of the French court, the story's moral lessons dissuade sexual curiosity and promote victim shaming. Perrault's version of the story begins with the mother telling her daughter to take some food to her grandmother. The girl meets a wolf at the edge of the woods and he challenges her to a game. He takes the shorter of the two paths to reach the grandmother's house while Red takes the longer path. The wolf eats the grandmother and, when Red arrives, lures Red to undress and get into bed. The wolf then strips off his grandmother façade and "devours" Red. The story ends with a poem explaining the moral, how "young girls...should never listen to anyone who happens by," and how the "docile [wolves] are those who are most dangerous."<sup>7</sup>

The values of 17<sup>th</sup> century French nobility influenced Perrault's telling of the tale and forced him emphasize the necessity for sexual restraint until marriage. As seen in the tale, Perrault took a hopeful oral story of the initiation of a young peasant girl and turned it into a tragic and violent episode where the girl was to blame for deciding to sleep with a wolf. Perrault wanted to reinforce the accepted concept in French high-society that "an unchaste woman is as good as dead," or that losing one's virginity before marriage would make one single forever.<sup>8</sup> He also used the tale as a way to react to social concerns at the time, especially involving the rise of women's education in the Court and the feminism blossoming in the French literary salons for which he wrote his stories.<sup>9</sup> Perrault wrote his Mother Goose tales to "present a portrait of the duties and expectations governing the lives and relationships of the men and women of

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<sup>7</sup> Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, 93.

<sup>8</sup> Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

Versailles,” however the means by which he instilled those lessons involved blaming the victim for the loss of the victim’s virginity.<sup>10</sup>

The Grimm Brothers, in contrast to Perrault, disliked including sexual references in their stories. Their version of Little Red Riding Hood was written in 1812 as the story “Little Red Cap.” Because open sexual encounters were frowned upon during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the brothers purged the French implications of seduction in the tale along with Perrault’s sexually suggestive moral at the end.<sup>11</sup> They instead focused on representing the classic Victorian child who needed to learn obedience and on endorsing the necessity for a male patriarch in the family.

The male authority figure emerges through Wilhelm Grimm’s addition of the huntsman. The Grimm version starts similarly to the Perrault version, only the wolf entices Red to pick flowers while he goes to the grandmother’s house. The other difference in the Grimm version is the ending. Both the grandmother and Red are swallowed by the wolf, but then a hunter passing by hears snores and realizes that the wolf ate the girl and grandmother. The hunter cuts the wolf’s belly to free them and they all fill the wolf with heavy stones so that, when he woke, he would fall down dead.

Although Wilhelm Grimm basically eliminated any form of sexuality in his retelling of the tale, the treatment of women was clear when it came to who would be the hero and who would be the humbled heroine. Wilhelm Grimm’s addition of the hunter in the ending was to emphasize that “salvation only [came] in the form of a male patriarch” because “women were expected to be stringent and self-sufficient, yet dependent and self-denying.”<sup>12</sup> The Grimm

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Orenstein, Little Red Riding Hood, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Zipes, Trials and Tribulations, 40.

brothers had a male hero rescue the female victim from her own mistakes because they wanted to emphasize the importance of respecting the male authority figure in the family.

In addition to women having to submit to the male patriarch, children also were targeted by the Grimm brothers to learn lessons of discipline, piety, and obedience. Around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nuclear family of the German middle class was becoming commonplace. The Industrial Revolution brought families to the city and many children would work alongside their parents in factories, so lessons of respecting an authority figure and being disciplined were important for children to learn at that time.<sup>13</sup> The Grimm brothers used the tale of Little Red Riding Hood to instill lessons of male authority and piety for its later-version readers consisting almost exclusively of women and children.

Unlike Perrault and Grimm, Angela Carter did not want to promote a guilt-free wolf or a saint-like huntsman, instead she made Red the one to decide her own sexual fate. Carter was an English writer who took well-known fairy tales and changed the perspective of the story. In her 1979 story “The Company of Wolves,” she took a feminist approach and “reclaimed the heroine and her grandmother from male-dominated literary tradition, recasting the women as brave and resourceful, turning Red Riding Hood into the...sexual aggressor, and questioning the machismo of the wolf.”<sup>14</sup>

Little Red, as seen by Carter, is an armed and powerful female protagonist. Carter’s story opens with a second person point of view, explaining how the wolf became to be so feared and why the reader should fear werewolves. She then begins her version of the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, mentioning how Red had just entered puberty and was excited to venture out into

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<sup>13</sup> Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood*, 55.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 161.

the woods with her carving knife hidden in a basket because, although she was sure the wild beasts would not dare hurt her, she was well-warned about the dangers of the forest. “She has her knife and she is afraid of nothing.”<sup>15</sup> When she finds a very handsome young man, she talks with him. He offers to take her basket with the knife in it and she allows it. He boasts that his compass would take him to grandmother’s house faster than the path, so Red agrees that it is a bet and that if he wins he will get a kiss. The young man gets to the cottage first and, in front of the grandmother, strips down to reveal both that he is a werewolf and that he has “huge genitals.”<sup>16</sup> The wolf-man eats the grandmother, cleans up, burns the inedible hair, and gets dressed. Red comes into the cottage and realizes the danger she is in. She then begins to undress, throwing her clothes into the fire. She walks up to the wolf-man and laughs when he says he will eat her. She then throws his clothes into the fire and he turns into a normal wolf who she subsequently sleeps with.<sup>17</sup>

Whereas the Perrault version shifted the sexual blame to Red and the Grimm version completely eliminated sex, Carter used the oral tale’s original moral to create a story about a girl’s first sexual encounter and the normalcy of female lust.<sup>18</sup> Red’s personality in Carter’s version is quite different from the Grimm and Perrault versions. She is witty and wise, and although she made a bad choice in betting with the wolf-man, in the end she chose her own fate instead of being eaten.

Carter showed in her story that women had power over themselves and that it was the men, not the women, that needed to change. She took the “enduring cultural myth that women

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<sup>15</sup> Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, 285.

<sup>16</sup> Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, 289.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>18</sup> Orenstein, *Little Red Riding Hood*, 166.

tame men” and made the female character become the empowered one.<sup>19</sup> In the 1960s and 70s, women were embracing “beast feminism,” where women could have free love and hairy legs.<sup>20</sup> Red carries a carving knife in her basket and is not afraid of the woods, which is a much more masculine character than the Perrault or Grimm version of Red. Carter used the oral folk tale to explore the ways in which Little Red could become an empowered female protagonist who would decide her own sexual fate.

The attitudes toward women’s rights and sexuality has varied from disgraceful sexuality in the 1700s to reserved sexuality in the 1800s and finally to open sexuality in the late 1900s. The story of Little Red Riding Hood is a great barometer to show the cyclical pattern of acceptance and then denial with women’s rights and sexuality. It is important to recognize the cyclical nature of these attitudes about women in order to predict and possibly maintain the ideal level of women’s rights and open sexuality in the future.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 173.

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