

Alienating Punishment: Prisons in Science Fiction

Ariel Wetzel

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

English Literature

University of Washington

2014

Reading Committee:

Thomas Foster, Chair

Gillian Harkins

Rebecca Aanderud

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

English Department

©Copyright 2014

Ariel Wetzel

University of Washington

Abstract

Alienating Punishment: Prisons and Science Fiction

Ariel Wetzell

Chair of the Supervisory Committee
Professor Thomas Foster
English Department

This dissertation asserts that science fiction (SF) takes a commonplace, the prison, and estranges it to make it unfamiliar and subject to critical examination. The dissertation explores this claim through two subjects: the prison as an institution and the body of the prisoner. The institution is examined through a utopian (and dystopian) lens, as the dissertation claims that utopias, prisons are intentional communities designed to be homogeneous and orderly, as both utopias and prisons are thought of as "world apart." Upon closer examination, this dissertation demonstrates how that when the fictional prison is made unfamiliar, it is revealed to be a simultaneously utopian and dystopian space, a dysfunctional project of control and perfection. This offers a new interpretation of the utopian tradition, one where the prison is always present and integral to the utopia itself. Then, this dissertation turns to examine the treatment of the prisoner in SF. It shows that SF represents the prisoner's body as figuratively estranged through speculative disciplinary technologies, where incarceration is represented as literally alien. This might take the form of

virtual reality prison, where incarceration is experienced subjectively, or forced imposition into the gender binary. In both instances, the dissertation asserts, the prison imposes a mediated embodiment as punishment. This mediated embodiment can take the form of unwanted posthuman subjectivity, or it can take the form of forced gender-reassignment in which the prisoner's body becomes, as punishment, a gender she or he does not desire. Primary texts discussed in this dissertation include Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time, BBC's The Prisoner television series, Robert Heinlein's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, George Zebrowski's Brute Orbits, Franz Kafka's "In the Penal Colony," SciFi Channel's Battlestar Galactica, Nisi Shawl's "Deep End," Alfred Bester's The Stars My Destination, Kelley Eskridge's Solitaire, and Charles Stross's Glasshouse.

Dedicated to my family.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction: Using Science Fiction to Reconsider the Function of Prisons	1
Chapter 2: Worlds Apart: Prisons as Utopian and Dystopian Spaces	28
Chapter 3: Utopian Worlds Apart: Science Fiction Penal Colonies & Prisons-in-Space	73
Chapter 4: Punitive Posthumanism: The Mediation of Prisoner Embodiment	118
Chapter 5: Punitive Gender Reassignment as a Posthuman Punishment	166
Chapter 6: Conclusion: Science Fiction and Prison Abolition	202

Acknowledgements

Writing is never a solitary act, and I would like to acknowledge the communities that supported the completion of this dissertation. I would like to thank my teachers at Western Washington University, who saw the potential for a first-generation student to succeed in academia: Kathleen Saunders, Mary Cornish, Dawn Dietrich, and Lysa Rivera.

At University of Washington, my colleagues at Odegaard Writing and Research Center were indispensable. Thank you to those who helped me make sense of my early drafts, and provided a home on campus: Jenny Halpin, Kirin Wachter-Grene, Ben Hole, Allie Draper, and Ron Keller.

I would also like to thank those I met through the anti-budget cuts movement: Shon Meckfessel, Caitlin Palo, Chris Patterson, Jennifer Fletcher, Mike Hodges, Andre Ortega, Cindy Gorn, and Jacob Greenberg. You supported me in making sure I continued to make progress towards my degree during the height of the anti-budget cuts and Occupy movements.

I would like to thank Katherine Applegate and Michael Grant, for inaugurating my commitment for science fiction.

I would like to thank my Facebook crowd-source, on call 24/7 to answer all of my questions about writing and theory, no matter how esoteric.

I would like to thank my reading committee, Gillian Harkins and Rebecca Aanderud, for backing an out-of-the-box project. Most of all, I would like to thank my committee chair, Tom Foster, who saw the potential of my project when he plucked it from the pile of hundreds of graduate school applications.

Most of all, I would like to thank my family, who supported me through what otherwise would have been an isolating and lonely time. My parents: Liz and Craig Wetzel, my brother Logan Wetzel, my aunts Patti Wiegard and Terri Knudsten, and my grandfather Jack Wiegard. I would like to honor my family members who did not make it to see this day: my grandmother Donna Wiegard and my aunt Traci Wiegard.

Lastly, I would like to thank my partner, Lambert Rochfort, bore the pain of this project right alongside me. He read every draft, talked me through every period of self-doubt, and was the catalyst in the completion of this project. I would not have succeeded without him.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Using Science Fiction to Reconsider the Function of Prisons

Instead of inflicting these horrible punishments, it would be far more to the point to provide everyone with some means of livelihood, so that nobody's under the frightful necessity of

becoming first a thief and then a corpse. — Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*

A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. —Michel Foucault,

Discipline and Punish (202)

Introduction: but what would you do with the criminals?

Science fiction (SF) authors are in the business of imagining alternative worlds, arguably better, worse, or just different than our own. According to Joanna Russ, these worlds pair the “What If” question with the “Serious Explanation” of how the what-if functions came to be. As Russ paraphrases Samuel Delany, the serious explanation must not “offend against what is known to be known” (144). SF is known for being “about” the future. Yet, few SF authors would argue that they are *predicting* the future. Then, SF is not so much *about* future worlds as it is about the present. Ursula K. Le Guin, in her often-cited introduction to her deeply groundbreaking novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, wrote in 1976 that “Science fiction is not predictive; it is descriptive,” and that SF, like all fiction, is a metaphor. What distinguishes SF from other fiction is that the metaphors are space travel, alternative societies, and the future in order to make a social commentary about the present. (Why? Well, if it were so simple, Le Guin notes she would not have needed to write *The Left Hand of Darkness*.) One description of SF, as author and editor Judith Merrill notes, is what we might call the human condition: “stories whose objective is to explore, to discover, to learn, by means of projection, extrapolation, analogue,

hypothesis-and-paper-experimentation, something about the nature of the universe, of man, of ‘reality’.” (Jakubowski and Edwards 257). For Cory Doctorow, a twenty-first century SF author who also asserts he is not predicting the future, SF gives us the means to discuss the future in the present: “But the *really* interesting thing is *how* science fiction does its best tricks: through creating the narrative vocabularies by which futures can be debated, discussed, adopted, or discarded” (Doctorow “A Vocabulary for Speaking about the Future”).

SF examines a widely diverse range of “what if” questions, ranging from utopian and dystopian societies to speculative technologies like faster-than-light space travel. What if socialists waged a peaceful revolution—how would it happen, and what would the society that follows look like? What if the Christian right overthrew the US government—what would life be like for women, people of color, and queer people? What if teleportation were the next step in human evolution? What if humans colonized the solar system, or reached distant stars with faster-than-light space travel?

Such premises are familiar to voracious and even casual readers and viewers of SF. Darko Suvin, a father of SF literary criticism, calls the SF premise the *novum*, or new thing: the technological gadget or alternative society that signifies we are reading (or watching) science fiction. As Suvin notes, SF must deal with the social implications of the *novum*. Such social implications explored in science fiction might be systems of governance, education, health care, and notably: prisons and punishment.

One of the questions most commonly asked by SF, implicitly or explicitly, is, “In a world with X, what would you do with the criminals?”, with “X” being the *novum*. Many SF texts depict various forms of incarceration. This may be because penitentiaries, since their advent some three centuries ago, have become timeless and taken-for-granted in the popular imaginary; it

is difficult to imagine a society without them, even in science fiction. (Though not impossible—SF is one of the few places in the popular imaginary where we can think about radical alternatives to prisons, as I discuss in my conclusion.) SF asks, “What would you do with the prisoners?” in distant solar systems where humans have been overthrown by machines, such as the 2003-2010 television series *Battlestar Galactica*. Or, how would you incarcerate criminals when most humans can teleport, as Alfred Bester examines in his novel *The Stars My Destination*. Or, as in Charles Stross’s novel *Glasshouse*, technology has cured death and bodies can be changed as easily as clothing?

In these examples, changes to what we know as incarceration are a secondary effect to the *novum*. In other SF, the prison itself is the *novum*. In George Zebrowski’s *Brute Orbits*, it is sealed-off and abandoned prisons within hollowed asteroids. For Robert Heinlein, it is the moon as a penal colony in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. In the BBC series *The Prisoner*, the eerie “village” that incarcerates ex-spies is the *novum*. In *Solitarie*, by Kelley Eskridge, it is the virtual reality prison.

What is it about SF that makes it such a prime genre for extrapolating carceral practices? Prison is also an alienating experience, and in SF that alienation is extrapolated, whether the prisoner is removed from her world or even her body. For readers who are not incarcerated, SF represents an experience of carceral alienation. For readers who are prisoners¹, SF also delivers hope and a way out of their mess. SF prisons also tell us something about the society: what it regards as deviance, and how deviance is dealt with.

Why are prisons so common in SF? A simple answer would be that they are

¹ When I volunteered for Bellingham Books to Prisoners, SF was frequently requested by prisoners who wrote in asking for reading materials.

common in realist narratives as well. As John Bender demonstrates in *Imagining the Penitentiary*, the early novel was instrumental in the prison's conceptualization, popularization, and normalization. Since the development of mass media, images of prisons have become ubiquitous in popular culture as now-classic films like *The Hill* and *The Shawshank Redemption* meet critical acclaim and commercial success. "It is virtually impossible to avoid consuming images of prisons" (18), as Angela Davis accurately notes in her short book *Are Prisons Obsolete?*. The pervasiveness of prison narratives reaffirms the normative place of prisons in a modern American society. Realist prison narratives allow readers (who are regarded as outsiders, as non-prisoners) to visit the world apart as an outsider.

However, the prison in SF is cognitive—that is, a familiar modern institution that most readers will accept as a commonplace institution. Although the penitentiary is a recent invention, it masquerades as timeless, and is now a taken-for-granted social institution. As Michael Ignatieff notes in the opening lines of his influential book on history of prison reform, *A Just Measure of Pain*, "It is easy to take prisons for granted. For those who manage to stay out of trouble with the law, prisons and punishment occupy the marginal place in the social awareness reserved for facts of life" (xi). A well-developed SF world would include punishment alongside other commonplaces of a society, such as work, family life, hobbies, and health care. Accordingly, prisons are taken-for-granted in many SF texts, but not all, so much SF also imagines alternative ways to address behaviors and subject positions that a given society finds deviant. Like realist literature, SF normalizes the existence of the prison, but it also critiques the prison and begins to think of ways out of all of the problems a prison embodies and represents. While a realist prison narrative may also critique the prison, SF goes one step further in that the prison is also estranged. That is, it becomes alien and no longer a common place. It is SF's cognitive

qualities that also make the “norms of any age” become “changeable” (Suvin 7). The present and its norms are open to change.

Prisons and Utopias: An Origin

Sir Thomas More, social philosopher and political reformer (among other things), provided one answer to this big question in his 1516 book, *Utopia*, which is incidentally often considered the first SF text. In *Utopia*, More used satirical fiction to critique sixteenth-century English society and its government, and to offer his blueprint for a better way of governance and social arrangements. *Utopia* became the ur-text² of the genre of speculative fiction that took its name—punning *good-place* and *no-place* in Greek. Although *Utopia* promotes and does many things as a text, it is largely a treatise for universal public education because, as the epigraph above shows, More blamed the lack of public education for much of the crime in England. Through *Utopia*, More suggested what many social workers, policy makers, and reformers now believe: that combating poverty and inequality, not moral failings, would prevent the majority of crime. Although “utopian” has come to signify a naive idealist, More did not claim that there would never be crime in Utopia, but less of it with the implementation of what he believed to be a just society. As a proto-SF novel, *Utopia* is the first text to use imaginative fiction to attempt to answer the eminent question of what to do with individuals who transgress whatever laws their society

² Narratives of perfect worlds long preceded utopias, ranging from political visions like Plato's republic to religious paradises such as the happy hunting ground and shangri-la. Utopia built on these traditions, but also did something new. In the words of Suvin, "*Utopia* supplied the name because it supplies the logically inescapable *Ur*-model for alter literary utopias: a rounded and isolated location articulated in a panoramic sweep showing its inner organization as a formal, ordered countersystem which is at the same time utopia's supreme value" (95).

imposes.

Utopia was very much an applied novel. It was both satire and a call for change, and More's proposal for what ought to be done to punish criminals was at the time of writing quite revolutionary. More proposed hard labor—which he overtly called slavery—as rehabilitative punishment for crimes like adultery and vagrancy:

For the most part, slavery is the punishment even of the greatest crimes; for as that is no less terrible to the criminals themselves than death, so [the Utopians] think the preserving them in a state of servitude is more for the interest of the commonwealth than killing them; since as their labor is a greater benefit to the public than their death could be, so the sight of their misery is a more lasting terror to other men than that which would be given by their death. [...] [T]hose who bear their punishment patiently, and are so much wrought on by that pressure that lies so hard on them that it appears they are really more troubled for the crimes they have committed than for the miseries they suffer, are not out of hope but that at last either the Prince will, by his prerogative, or the people by their intercession, restore them again to their liberty, or at least very much mitigate their slavery. (Book II: Of Their Slaves, and Their Marriages).

While More's proposals may seem barbaric to a modern reader, it was revolutionary because, at the time of writing, the penalty for such crimes was corporal and capital punishment. His proposal that prisoners could be reformed through hard labor and hope of regained liberty was quite novel in sixteenth century England. As the founder of the genre, More began an important utopian tradition: proposing an alternative way of living. More's vision would be taken up by social reformers for centuries who would strive to create a "perfect" world of rehabilitative order within the walls of penitentiaries.

Utopia is the beginning of a dense genealogy. Historical and contemporary science and speculative fiction continues to engage questions of futuristic and alternative carceral practices. Suffice to say, penal planets, prisons in space, and virtual reality penitentiaries are common settings in science fiction literature and visual media. The dozens of examples of texts that fit under the broad umbrella of SF and feature incarceration span five hundred years and many different sub-genres of SF. Examples range from novels by canonical SF authors, such as Robert Heinlein, Phillip K. Dick, and Frank Herbert, to popular film and television such as the *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Aliens* franchises; this list grows even broader when one includes mental hospitals, panoptic surveillance of public and private spaces, and authoritarian regimes that expand the reach of the prison. Texts like the optimistic *Star Trek* franchise imagine how improvements to both technologies and social arrangements might facilitate a more humane incarceration. In other works, such as the blockbuster *Chronicles of Riddick* and high budget videogame *Mass Effect 2*, feature SF prisons as frightening, hellish, and dystopian spaces. In novels and short stories especially, we see the various inner-workings and failures of SF prisons from the prisoner's perspective. In this literature, such as Nisi Shawl's "Deep End" or Kelley Eskridge's *Solitaire*, something goes wrong: the prison fails to accomplish its purpose in any given story, whether that purpose is rehabilitation, punishment, or deterrence. These stories of the failures of incarceration provide critiques of incarceration and reveal the role that incarceration plays in maintaining a broader carceral state. Even authors of literary fiction, from Franz Kafka to Jonathan Lethem, have used speculative fiction to answer the question, "what would you do with the prisoners?"

The overall assertion of this dissertation is that: *SF takes the commonplace, the prison, and estranges it to make it unfamiliar.* I explore this claim through two focuses: the

prison as an institution and the body of the prisoner. I discuss the institution through a utopian (and dystopian) lens. Like utopias, prisons are intentional communities designed to be homogeneous and orderly. Both are thought of as “world apart,” but upon closer examination, prisons magnify and embody the structure of the broader society. When the fictional prison is made unfamiliar, it is revealed to be a simultaneously utopian and dystopian space, a dysfunctional project of control and perfection. This offers a new interpretation of the utopian tradition, one where the prison is always present and integral to the utopia itself. Within the prison, when the prisoner’s body is figuratively estranged through speculative disciplinary technologies, incarceration is represented as literally alien. This might take the form of virtual reality prison, where incarceration is experienced subjectively, or forced imposition into the gender binary. In both instances, the prison imposes a mediated embodiment as punishment. This mediated embodiment can take the form of unwanted posthuman subjectivity, or it can take the form of forced gender-reassignment in which the prisoner’s body becomes, as punishment, a gender she or he does not desire.

Why, and what is, science fiction?

All fiction is metaphor. Science fiction is metaphor. What sets it apart from older forms of fiction seems to be its use of new metaphors drawn from certain great dominants of our contemporary life—science, all the sciences, and technology, and the relativistic and the historical outlook, among them. Space travel is one of these metaphors; so is an alternative society, an alternative biology; the future is another. The future, in fiction, is a metaphor. —Ursula K. Le Guin

(introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness*)

As Angela Davis notes, prison narratives are commonplace. We see prisons represented in both realist and speculative texts. In the twenty-first century, such images of prisons come to

American homes primarily via television. For example, the conservative reality TV show *Lockdown* showcases the most “dangerous” criminals and details the security of “super-max” prisons in order to comfort viewers that the “bad guys” are locked away. As liberal antidote to reality TV, the Netflix-produced series *Orange is the New Black* as well as the Australian drama *Wentworth*, both dramatizations of women’s prisons, tell a different narrative of prisoners: in a low-security institution, prisoners are women who are “regular” people that have both made poor choices and had few opportunities. *Orange is the New Black* uses dark comedy³ to humanize prisoners and show how queer people, transgender people, and people of color are disproportionately incarcerated. Through the lens of the affluent, white, liberal protagonist, Piper Chapman, and her journalist fiancé, *Orange* reveals that the rehabilitative intents of the prison are a farce and thus implicitly calls for prison reform. In *Wentworth*, viewers quickly sympathize with Bea Smith, who was imprisoned for attempting to kill her abusive husband. *Wentworth* also depicts the warden’s struggle to rehabilitate the women while appeasing a public demanding that she cut social programs and be tough-on-crime. It is no coincidence that the more sympathetic portrayal of prisoners represents women, who are often thought of as victims rather than dangerous, “bad” people.

Viewing and reading such prison narratives, both documentaries and fictionalizations, is

³ *Orange is the New Black* verges on satire. Satire calls for critique and challenges the norms of the prison but not the prisons legitimacy. Satire doesn’t leave the real world: it has a limited imagination. It familiarizes the unfamiliar for laughs, reveals its ridiculous dysfunction through comedy, but satire *does not have a vision* or a way out (it does search for a solution—it is pure mockery). In the context of utopianism, what Tower Sargent calls “social dreaming,” utopia is vision and utopian satire adds critique (9).

not entirely unlike consuming science fiction because the reader, presumed to be a non-prisoner, can enter an unknown and imaginary world. Though Peter Caster, in *Prisons, Race, and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Film*, does not discuss science fiction in his analysis of prison films and literature, SF comes to mind when he describes prison narratives as “screens of the imagination” (xi) and subjunctive⁴ “imagined actualities” (xii) and shows that (non-SF) prison narratives create an imaginary world. Caster asserts that “actual prisons are closed off from visibility, thus creating a space for imagined interiors” (xi) of our fantasies of what prisons might be like. These fantasies are “the projection of what is both hoped and feared to be true of prisons, places that are by definition difficult to access—except by black men, who enter far too easily” (xi). By mentioning black men as those who have ease of access to the prison, Caster refers to the population in the United States most likely to be incarcerated; black men are implicitly excluded from the imaged audience of such prison narratives that detail the fantasies of their and other demographics imprisonment.

If all prison narratives are fantasies that reveal what readers and viewers want to imagine, why would SF prisons and prisoners deserve special consideration as their own subject of inquiry? One benefit of SF is that it does not claim to be realist. SF escapes a problem identified by Caster, that often prison narratives “Repeatedly and uncritically participating in fictions governed by the inexorable logic of ‘realism’ maintains long-held stereotype,” especially centuries of racism culminating in the mass incarceration of black men in the twenty-first century (xiii). Though SF is capable of upholding such stereotypes, SF does not claim to accurately represent reality, and

⁴ Delany calls SF the subjunctive, “*what could have happened*,” specifically what has not happened yet (dystopias and cautionary tales) and events that might happen (predictive SF) (*Jewel-Hinged Jaw* 10-11).

thus can break from some of the stereotypes found within realist prison narratives. SF also allows readers and viewers to visit a world apart, but it is not nearby, so it is safe. SF, too, offers a glimpse into an imagined world, and strives to realistically represent the imagined, but it never claims *not* to be imagined due to its cognitive qualities.

Nonetheless, it would be possible to consider the prison as an estranged place by discussing the multitude of realist texts; such scholarship would contribute to a much needed area of literary criticism. As Caster notes, literary criticism is not especially developed in the areas of prison literature in contrast to the importance of the prison in shaping American history and culture. When comparing the fictional film *The Shawshank Redemption* to the un-aired documentary *Maximum Security Prisons*, Caster notes that “The documentary [Maximum Security Prisons] would not have provided access to some unmediated ‘real,’ given that it, like *The Shawshank Redemption*, would feature the efforts of producers funding the venture, a director choosing and structuring scenes, editors building narrative continuity, and the rest of the production crew that make film and video such collaborative work” (xi). Even documentaries, claiming to be more authentic than fiction, do not offer an unmediated glimpse at life behind bars. SF, however, has the benefit of not claiming authenticity, even if SF writes realistically about very unreal acts of incarceration. This is a perspective on popular representations of incarceration that SF can offer that realist fiction and nonfiction cannot.

Realist fiction is also built on the myth that prisons are timeless institutions. What fiction *Orange is the New Black* and *Wentworth* have in common with nonfiction such as *Lockdown* is that they never challenge the existence of the prison itself. Such narratives allow viewers to safely (physically and ideologically) visit a world apart—a world that must always exist. Science fiction, in contrast, serves to defamiliarize the prison. Even when the idea of the prison is upheld in SF, it

is simultaneously questioned, and challenges the mythical timelessness and necessity of the institution.

For a brief example, consider Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, which demonstrates how SF defamiliarizes prisons. Although *The Dispossessed* does not directly represent incarceration, prisons, caging, and walls are nonetheless a central theme. The absence of prisons in the anarchist society on the planet Anarres draws prisons into examination by making them strange rather than commonplace. This defamiliarization of prisons is expressly captured in a scene early in the novel, when Shevek, the protagonist, is eleven-years-old. In Shevek's school, he and his playmates learn about prisons on their sister world Urras, and decide to play prison as a game. Shevek and his friends ask each other basic questions to discern the function of the prison: "a prison was a place where a State put people who disobeyed its Laws. But why didn't they just leave the place? They couldn't leave, the doors were locked" (34). The boys leave a friend in the prison for a day, and realize they had tortured him. They regard the experience as shameful and never speak of it again. (*The Dispossessed* is one of the few fiction texts that does not accept prisons as a norm whatsoever.) The characters are deeply transformed by being jailers and jailed, which represents how readers of SF can be transformed from reading SF.

To summarize, SF does what realist narratives do, but goes one step further. Moreover, I have chosen science fiction as the body of texts that I analyze because SF is three things simultaneously: it is extrapolative, literal, and metaphorical. Before I elaborate on this rationale, I will explain how I am defining SF in this project. Definitions and taxonomies of SF, like other genres of literature, are contentious⁵. Critics do agree that SF is more than a marketing category, but they have not reached a strong consensus of what features make up SF because there are

⁵ Contributing to such definitions in a meaningful way would be a dissertation in itself.

exceptions to any delimiting quality of SF. Although early definitions of SF—literature of plausible scientific extrapolation—accurately describe much of this literature, I am interested in sociological definitions that consider its function in the world (as opposed to analyzing SF aesthetically). When regarding SF as sociological, we can consider how literature functions as a metaphor for the moment of its production as well as the moment it is read.

I draw on sociological definitions of SF that regard the genre as a way to discuss the present. Author and critic James Gunn describes SF as “the literature of change.” As literature of change, SF imagines new technologies and/or ways of organizing societies, and much of SF is directly engaged in social change projects. For example, after its publication in 1888, Edward Bellamy’s utopian novel *Looking Backward* inspired over a hundred utopian communities known as Bellamy clubs. Members sought to manifest the future envisioned by Bellamy in his novel. More recently, Ernest Callenbass’s 1975 novel *Ecotopia* has inspired the Cascadia separatist movement that seeks to create an independent socialist and environmentally-sustainable northwest bioregion. Even more SF novels engage in social movements not as blueprints but as speculation and social commentary, such as Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Forty Signs of Rain*, which extrapolates the effects of global warming.

Likewise, many SF authors and critics have argued that SF is not so much literature *about* the future as it is literature about the present to help us *get to* the future⁶ all the while avoiding an undesirable tomorrow. Writing in the 1970s, Joanna Russ and Samuel R. Delany echo Le Guin with similar definitions of SF being concerned with the present. Darko Suvin, too, views SF as inherently transformative when he writes that it is a mirror, “not only a reflecting one, it is also a

⁶ Some, such as Kodwo Eshun, argue that SF is predictive in that SF inspires the future, and hegemonic forces have an investment in using SF to manifest their desirable future.

transforming one” (5). Later Frederick Jameson reiterates this when writes that SF does not “seriously attempt to imagine the ‘real’ future of our social system” but instead SF possesses the “function of transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come” (“Progress versus Utopia” 17). These definitions of SF are sociological because they regard SF as literature with an investment in commenting on both human societies and the technologies they produce *and* changing the material world. In short, SF is not simply predictions of the future, although much of SF does take place in a future to the author’s present. It is a guiding literature that uses metaphors of the future to enable new insights about the present.

Most sociological definitions of SF draw on or depart from Suvin’s formative book *The Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, where he thematically and formally defines SF as a genre. SF, for Suvin, induces a state of cognitive estrangement for its readers. Drawing on the playwright Brecht’s concept of the “alienation effect,” Suvin asserts that SF estranges in that it separates readers from the everyday because we recognize features of the story as different from our lived realities; the audience does not passively absorb a text but is critically aware of the text and act of reading. While broader speculative literature such as magical realism and fantasy also estranges readers, SF must also be cognitive in that the imaginative technologies, societies, and phenomena must be rational and scientifically plausible within the logic of the fictional world (in contrast to magical or supernatural explanations). A key formal feature of SF, for Suvin, is that it contains a *novum* (new thing) that signifies to the reader that this work of fiction exists in a different world. The *novum*, as I note in my opening, may be a device or social arrangement that signifies the world is different from our own.

The SF *novum* is often SF’s extrapolative quality. The *novum* takes an element of our own world—a technology or social phenomenon—to its logical extreme. Unlike realist fiction,

nonfiction, and poetry representing incarceration, the literature I analyze extrapolates prison technologies and social arrangements to their logical extreme. For example, in Eskridge's *Solitaire*, Jackal does time in a virtual reality prison where months pass experientially as years of solitary confinement. This novel extrapolates the ways in which prisoners describe time moving differently in prisons. These SF prisons exaggerate, rather than invent, current trends in incarceration. Extrapolating incarceration enables us to see the present with a magnifying glass so that we can critique and change present day practices, so that we can create a future where such carceral practices are unnecessary.

SF is unique in being extrapolative, but it is like other genres of prose literature in that it is both literal and metaphorical. Literature is literal in that some elements of the prose are to be read as an actual representation of events, dialogue, or images happening within the representational world. Literature is metaphorical in that dialogue, events, figures of speech, or the work as a whole may represent something else. What makes SF different is that there are different rules about what is literal *and* as Le Guin notes, SF tends to use different metaphors than non-SF. Samuel R. Delany explains how SF changes what is literal when he compares how one would interpret the same sentence in “mundane” fiction in contrast to science fiction. One such example is, “*Then her world exploded.*” In mundane fiction, this sentence would *only* be metaphor, whereas in SF, readers presume that a woman’s planet blew up (“Science Fiction and ‘Literature’—or, the Conscience of the King” 448). That is, what we would read this line metaphorically in a realist novel, because it is not physically plausible, should be read as an actual event in SF. To build on Delany’s example, a literal exploding world would metaphorically come to represent some larger theme or actual event, such as the loss of a worldview. Moreover, Delany’s example is extrapolative because it presumes that humans have colonized multiple worlds, something plausible but not currently practiced.

SF is important because it is metaphorical, literature, and extrapolative. What would be a metaphor in realist fiction or nonfiction, becomes the literal experience of incarceration in stories like *Battlestar Galactica*, where the prison is an actual spaceship. The spaceship can then come to extrapolate and represent the prison as a world apart. SF, then, is an ideal site for studying incarceration because it allows us to see how incarceration literally and metaphorically surveils, disciplines and writes on the bodies of prisoners, all the while taking current carceral technological practices to their logical extremes. The extremity of the SF prison draws attention to actual carceral practices.

Most of all, I use SF because it may be bold in what it imagines both by extrapolating carceral practices *and* in suggesting that prisons do not always have to be. Although social gains are rarely made in neat lines of teleological progress, SF is often “ahead” of other types of entertainment in challenging social taboos because of the cognitive dissonance created by setting a controversial story elsewhere. For example, Ted Sturgeon’s “The World Well Lost,” published in 1953, was one of the first SF novels with sympathetic treatment of homosexuality.⁷ SF about prisons might follow in the footsteps of SF with queer or LGBT themes and sympathetic characters by presenting alternatives to current carceral practices. As Suvin asserts, SF estranges what we take for normal because we must consider the commonplace from an outsider’s perspective.

Through cognitive estrangement, what is normal becomes foreign, and what is abnormal becomes

⁷ Sturgeon had no easy time finding a publisher, however (Garber and Paleo xviii), suggesting distribution may be no easy task. For another famous example, *Star Trek: The Original Series* featured television’s first interracial kiss. On the other hand, as Delany and others have noted, LGBT characters remained stereotypical for a number of years (which could explain texts that are reactionary or don’t go far in radical alternatives to incarceration).

accepted.

SF also is a genre that bridges many different audiences that it includes both literary and widely disseminated mass texts. Though most SF texts do not accomplish a massive audience, SF film, television, and videogames are consumed by millions of individuals across diverse demographics. As a part of popular culture, SF and popular attitudes shape one another. For example, Daniel Dinello notes in the introduction to *Technophobia! Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology* that

the actual development of technology and our response (or lack of response) to it are influenced by popular culture. Drawing a vision of the future from attitudes, moods, and biases current among its artists and their audience, science fiction not only reflects popular assumptions and values, but also gives us an appraisal of their success in practice. [...] Science fiction serves as social criticism and popular philosophy. Often taking us a step beyond escapist entertainment, science fiction imagines the problematic consequences brought about by these new technologies and the ethical, political, and existential questions they raise. (5)

As social criticism of popular philosophy, we can use SF to understand how texts with mass popularity, such as *Battlestar Galactica* or *The Prisoner*, serve as a popular (rather than academic⁸) commentary on the ethical, political, and existential questions raised by carceral technologies, new and old.

SF plays an important role in framing how we think about and discuss prisons. As Thomas Mathieson notes that in *Prison on Trial*, the “ideology of prison” is maintained through

⁸ Certainly, Dinello's claim also applies to literary science fiction that has received wide readership, such as Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Stephenson's *Snow Crash*.

the invisibility of prisoners (163). Increased visibility is the “Achilles’ heel” of the prison’s ideological function. Auli Ek, in her book *Race and Masculinity in Contemporary American Prison Narratives*, considers the role of literature in advancing Mathieson’s solution to mass incarceration. Ek, the only scholar (to my knowledge) to discuss SF prisons, in her chapter “The Future of Imprisonment: Contemporary Science Fiction and Documentary Film,” considers how SF can increase visibility of prisoners. SF, like other types of prison narratives, tells two stories: one of fear of criminals, and one of resistance to marginalization of criminals. The 1990s SF films she discusses, *Fortress* and *No Escape*—“are progressive in their critique of the current ideologies of imprisonment” yet “they remain conservative in their treatment of the issues of race and gender” (12-13). She argues that prison narratives are temporally and spatially displaced due to “cultural inability or social reluctance to see the present U.S. criminal justice system as it is” (17). It is also this temporal displacement that allows SF to be more critical than realist, contemporary prison narratives. Yet, I would use Ek’s point to emphasize that SF is not inherently the most critical genre, as the films she analyzes maintain dominant narratives of white, heterosexual masculinity. Nonetheless, even conservative SF shows a political unconsciousness as SF is the genre most posed to advance a critical perspective.

What is the scope of the “prison”?

I use SF to inquire into how we think about prisons and punishment—and what thinking about prisons and punishment tells us about our understanding of both utopia and the human body. But what do I mean by prison, and what will be the scope of a project interrogating the appearance of “prisons” in science fiction literature? Do I foremost discuss representations of actual buildings that house convicts, or do I also consider how imprisonment is used metaphorically to represent mental and physical barriers (as it is used in *The Dispossessed*) and to represent the Platonic notion

of the body as the prison of the soul? To keep the scope of this project sufficiently narrow, I focus on texts that primarily represent physical incarceration and punishment. At times, these texts allow us to extend the idea of the prison to its more figurative usage, as a metaphor for captivity and limitations, but in most instances I discuss presentations of physical institutions that house deviant individuals.

In its more narrow usage, the term “prison” signifies the specific site of punitive incarceration, where an individual is denied liberty after she or he has been convicted of a crime. Widening this definition, a “prison” can include a jail—where someone awaits sentencing—, an immigration detention center, or a mental hospital. Most broadly, “prison” is used synonymously with cage or captivity. In the western tradition, some of the earliest uses of the term “prison” appears in ancient Greek writing as both the site where arrested individuals are detained *and* a metaphor for limitations placed on humans by the materiality of their bodies and physical reality. As recounted by Plato, Socrates uses “φυλακή” or “phylake” (the general term for prison) to refer to the prison as both the site where arrested individuals were detained (in *Phaedo*) and the body as the prison incarcerating the soul of human beings (in *Cratylus*). In English, “prison” comes from the classical Latin, “prension,” which is the power to arrest. In post-classical Latin, “prension” refers to a place of captivity.⁹

Prisons, then, literally are a building that house people accused or convicted of a crime. Metaphorically, a prison can be a cage, as we see in translations of Plato and later Descartes, who both refer to the body as a “prison” or “cage” of the soul. In literature, to borrow from Mary Frese Witt in *Existential Prisons*, “a prison does not have to be a state penal institution or a cell with iron

⁹ Although there is evidence of punitive incarceration in ancient Greek and Rome, in Western cultures it is largely a modern invention.

bars" but rather any enclosed space "interaction among the points of view of the author, the character portrayed as imprisoned, and the reader or viewer. [...] A prison also may be defined through binary opposition as between open and closed, nature and artifice, motion and motionlessness, time and timelessness, power and powerlessness, prisoner and imprisoned" (14). The latter half of Witt's definition could include the broader carceral state, a state which is modeled after the physical prison. In practice, as Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*¹⁰ shows us, the prison extends beyond the literal walls of the physical building to serve a disciplining role in the society outside the walls of the physical prison.

The majority of theorists, including Witt, discuss the prison in the broadest sense (a metaphor for barriers and/or captivity). Caster notes that "theoretically informed analyses of literature typically employ *prison* to mean a general sense of confinement, rather than a specific material condition" (19-20). He attributes this trend to the popularity of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* as well as Jameson's 1972 critique of formalism, *The Prison-House of Language*. Such literary criticism, including Martha Duncan's *Romantic Outlaws, Beloved Prisons* (or Witt's book cited above), discuss prison as a trope and incarceration as an existential state. Caster's critique is that this analysis flattens the importance of historical and cultural context that surrounds narratives representing incarceration, while neglecting the bodily impact of incarceration (20).

¹⁰ No text has been more influential in how we think about prisons than *Discipline and Punish*, which challenges the timelessness of the institution and demonstrated how the prison became commonplace. Two other books published in the 1970s, however, were also instrumental in giving the prison a history: David Rothman's *The Discovery of the Asylum* and Michael Ignatieff's *A Just Measure of Pain*. Although I do draw on Foucault in this dissertation, I attempt to give equal voice to other scholars working on the history and cultural weight of the prison.

Although I am less interested in the metaphorical use of the term prison, I find it imperative to discuss both representations of *both* the physical spaces in which incarceration occurs, *and* representations of the ways in which the structures of the prison extend to control broader societies. Regina Kunzel, in defining the prison, explains why the prison should not be regarded as a single institution or definition:

If prisoners were not a homogenous group, neither was the prison a singular entity. That term is used to refer to a wide variety of institutions, including state and federal penitentiaries, minimum moderate, and maximum security facilities, city and county jails, adult and juvenile reformatories, and penal farms. [...] The prison constituted a literal space and was part of a larger penal system and *carceral imaginary*. (11 emphasis mine)

The carceral imaginary is the ways in which incarceration reaches beyond the walls of the physical prison both through disciplinary technologies *and* popular representations of incarceration in fiction, such as my chosen body of SF texts. The carceral imaginary includes the proliferation of images of incarceration through popular media *and* the physical ways in which prison regimes control societies outside of the wall of the prison itself. We see the latter in the work of Foucault's scholarship on the "carceral archipelago," which he describes as the transformation of public space into "defendable space" via walls and security systems. The carceral imaginary is not an exclusively academic concept. Writing in 1983, queer activist Mike Riegle, founder of Gay Community News' Prisoner Project, writes that "what's outside is inside" (419). This quote, simply put, describes how "what's going on inside is only an exaggeration and a distortion of what's happening right out here" in what some of Riegle's imprisoned friends called "minimum custody" (420).

Prisons have a history. They were created as a progressive reform away from corporal

punishment, but have become so normalized that it is hard to imagine life without prisons. Now, they are often described as though they have always been. As Kunzel writes: “Historians have made powerful claims for the historicity of the prison —an institution [...] that has become endowed with an aura of inevitability” (5). If prisons have not always been, and presumably will not always be, why are prisons such a staple of SF? The simple answer is that SF, like other literature and popular media, reflects the values of its authors and the conditions (as in materials plus values) of its production. However, unlike realist literature, SF does not simply make a move towards universalizing prisons. It enables critiques of prisons that are unique to the genre of SF due to the three traits of SF I outline above. Prisons have not always been, nor should we assume that prisons will always be. SF is a genre that can imagine that prisons will not always be.

Chapter Overview

In this first chapter, I have been defining what I mean by prison and what I mean by science fiction, and why we might consider representations of the former within the latter. The chapters that follow are divided into two areas: utopias (looking at the institution of the prison in science fiction) and embodiment (looking at imprisoned characters in science fiction).

My second chapter introduces the prison as a simultaneously utopian and dystopian space. SF and utopias share a history, as though each were a strand on a double helix circling around a rod we might call a timeline of enlightenment thinking that is rendered visible when we consider their shared histories as utopian (and dystopian) projects. I discuss three major ways that prisons can be thought of as utopias. First, the goal of prison design is often the creation perfect semi-closed social system that can correct, regulate, and rehabilitate its population. This system is thought of as a world apart, like parallel universes out of time with the outside societies. Second, whether a prison is utopian or dystopian is subjective. Prisons are utopian from the perspective of prison

designers, and dystopian from the experience of those incarcerated. Utopias are simultaneously dystopian because they depend on sameness and exclusion, and prisons embody many elements of archetypal dystopian societies of literature: surveillance, expulsion of undesirable populations, eugenics, medicating “deviant” behavior, and policing difference of intellectual and bodily difference. Third: the idea of a utopia is dependent on the idea of a dystopia. That is, a utopia needs somewhere to put those who do not fit, and needs an unpleasant place to define itself again. In other words, I assert prisons capacity serve as the dystopia that allows the utopian state to exist. Prisons do still physically remove prisoners from their communities, but the idea of the prison as a world apart is complicated. That there is no “outside” of the carceral state makes the “world apart” actually the world within. The carceral state does exclude marginal people from the “utopia” of the nation, but also makes them usable in the process. I support my argument with an analysis the BBC series *The Prisoner*, where the Village is simultaneously a utopian retirement home and dystopian prison. I also consider Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time*, where the realist present-day mental hospital is depicted as the dystopia in contrast to the utopian future the imprisoned protagonist visits.

In my third chapter, I extend my discussion of prisons as utopias to the figure of the penal colony, a prison that is literally a world apart. I argue that SF penal colonies extrapolate the historic institution, relying on space as a frontier in which “undesirable” populations can be deposited to ensure the “utopia” of the home world. I note that SF penal colonies depict both positive and negative “anarchies” that develop in an enclosed society that lacks a strong presence of a state and its prison guards. I consider Robert Heinlein’s *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, George Zebrowski’s *Brute Orbits*, Kafka’s “In the Penal Colony,” and the episode “Bastille Day” of *Battlestar Galactica*. I conclude that Heinlein’s novel has the most positive view of prisoners,

imagining prisoners as the subjects most prepared for self-governance and the creation of a libertarian utopia.

In order to show how prisons create posthuman carceral subjects, in my first fourth chapter, I explore how SF incarceration imagines a negative posthuman subject, where prisoners become unambiguously human as a part of their punishment. Often, this negative posthuman punishment takes the form of alienation from ones own body through punitive disembodiment in the Cartesian sense of a split between the interiority of a prisoner (the mind in some cases, soul in others) and body. In this chapter, I use Nisi Shawl's short story "Deep End", Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination*, and Kelley Eskridge's novel *Solitaire* as examples of disembodied posthuman punishment. I frame these readings within the history of both the history of incarceration and posthuman thought, showing they share the enlightenment premise that mind and body can be separated. While many independently note that both the prison and posthumanism are products of the enlightenment, the two have not yet been analyzed together. While this chapter continues to examine incarceration, it makes a critical intervention into posthumanism. Typically, posthumans are conceived of as the "endpoint" of transhumanism: evolved consciousnesses liberated from the meat of the body, the ultimate triumph of mind over body. As critics of posthumanism have noted, this vision of a posthuman future depicts posthuman subjectivity as a privilege for the elite. However, I highlight how SF imagines posthuman subjectivity as punitively assigned to marginalized subjects in the form of forceful separation of mind from body. Both "camps" of posthumanists see the posthuman as a liberatory figure. For abstract posthumanists, the posthuman can free our minds from the oppressive "meat" of the body and the inevitability of death. For materialist posthumanists, the posthuman (importantly) can demand we rethink oppressive legacies of liberal humanism. However, neither

considers how posthuman identity can be punitive as the prison imposes mediated embodiment that is contrary to how a prisoner desires to live in her or his body.

In my fifth chapter, I discuss the gendered implications of punitive mind/body dualism. I look at two phenomenon that reoccur in SF: gender non-conforming individuals being forced to inhabit binary gender and male cisgender characters being forced to live as women as part of their punishment. I revisit Nisi Shawl's "Deep End" as an example of the former. As examples of the latter, I consider Charles Stross's novel *Glasshouse*, the film *The Skin I Live In*, as well as the lesser-known novellas *Season if the Witch* and *Prisoners of Tiresias*. In this chapter, I ask: if the panoptic prison, as Foucault writes, policies "irregular bodies" (208) and assigns each individual what the state determines to be "his 'true' body" (198), how does SF imagine the state using disciplinary technologies to write hegemonic and binary genders onto the bodies of queer, transgender, and other gender nonconforming prisoners? How does becoming the subordinate gender add a layer of humiliation to punishment? How does the prison utilize cyborg technologies used to impose gendered embodiment through what Donna Haraway calls "the informatics of domination"? If SF exemplifies how the state uses the prison to separate mind from body in order to force prisoners to be embodied in bodies that the prisoners do not desire, I argue that the prison forces gender-nonconforming prisoners to live as the state's perception of physical sex within a narrow framework of binary sex and gender, where people with penises are men, people with vaginas are women, and anything otherwise or in between must be disciplined and reassigned a "corrective" body. This imposition happens literally in SF such as "Deep End" as prisons reassign identity to prisoners so that prisoner identities to match hegemonic notions of "body" and is extrapolated in SF where prisoners are literally uploaded and downloaded into new bodies. This SF further reveals that disembodied posthumanism is not the choice advocated by

transhumanists but a dystopian reassignment of bodies and identities.

In my conclusion, I analyze the use of SF metaphors and tropes in non-SF prisoner narratives. Because this could be the topic of its own dissertation-sized study, I just provide a few examples sampling the scholarship that could be done on SF metaphors in prisoner narratives. Additionally, to avoid dichotomizing prisoners as “bad people” / victims of circumstance, I consider how the material experiences of prisoners and the tactics of resistance practiced by prisoners represent prisoners as expressing agency in situations of limited freedom. I close by discussing alternatives to punitive justice and prisons by considering alternatives (and their limitations) in Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, Pat Murphy’s *The City Not Long After*, and Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*.

Although the subject of my inquiry—SF representations of prisons especially addressing the theme of utopia and embodiment—may seem quite a narrow topic, there is actually quite a large body of speculative literature dealing with incarceration if we include the wider net cast by criminal justice systems (policing, courts, mental hospitals, immigration detention, etc.) and punishment. I have selected texts by authors who are diverse in identity, the “waves” of SF to which they contribute, and political beliefs. The texts themselves represent diverse mediums in which SF is published (print literature, television, film, and graphic novels). Some of these texts are canonical in SF studies (such as *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, *The Stars My Destination*) while others celebrate wide popularity (*Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*). One short story, “In The Penal Colony,” while not typically considered SF, is a canonical short story. (I will argue that “The Penal Colony” is SF because the mechanism of execution functions as what Darko Suvin calls the “novum.”) What these texts do have in common is that they estrange the prison, in one way or another, and subject it to criticism,

transformation, and abolition.

Chapter 2: Worlds Apart: Prisons as Utopian and Dystopian Spaces

“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.” (Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, 1891)

“Utopia is useless unless one acts towards making it real.” (Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible*, 145)

Worlds Apart: Prisons as Utopian and Dystopian Spaces

The popular 1967 BBC television series, *The Prisoner*, is set in “The Village,” a picturesque community that, at first glance, is filled with cheerful, diverse inhabitants who are well employed, physically fit, and civically active. With its happy inhabitants, and its apparent lack of poverty and political strife, The Village is an ideal example of the denotation of utopia: “A place, state, or condition ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions” (Oxford English Dictionary). However, life in The Village is anything but utopian for *The Prisoner*’s protagonist, Number 6. Number 6 is a captive British ex-spy who must outsmart the antagonist-of-the-episode, rotating men and women named Number 2, who try and fail to extract national secrets from Number 6’s mind. The other residents may consider The Village to be a utopian retirement home for spies, but for Number 6, he is imprisoned in a dystopia. Unsurprisingly, The Village never becomes a paradise for Number 6 because he is always able to resist his captors and thus avoid indoctrination. The Village’s failure to assimilate Number 6 reveals that it represents an impossible ideal. Moreover, many other prisoners sporadically recall their previous lives as their brainwashing fails. The failure of The Village illustrates one major

connotation of the term utopia, “An impossibly ideal scheme, esp. for social improvement” (OED).

At its surface level, The Village is certainly an idyllic self-contained society. In the first episode, “Arrival,” Number 2 welcomes the sarcastic and rebellious Number 6 to his new home. On a helicopter tour, Number 2 lists all of the features of the Village: “Quite a beautiful place, isn’t it? *Almost like a world of its own...* We have everything here, water, electricity. There’s the council building; we have our own council, democratically elected” (emphasis added). Number 2 lists all of the features that make this self-contained world a pleasant, functioning society: amateur theater, restaurant, newspaper, social club, citizens’ advice bureau, and even a graveyard. These amenities make The Village a self-contained world apart. As a retirement home for spies, The Village might officially be framed as a comfortable place to house people who cannot live in the outside world.

Nonetheless, The Village is never utopian for Number 6 who, within minutes of awakening in his new apartment, realizes he is in fact in a prison. Number 6 explores a picturesque neighborhood with green parks, cheerful citizens, and frequent marching bands. Throughout the episode and most of the series, Number 2 tries to coerce Number 6 into revealing state secrets through integration into The Village community, constant surveillance by hidden cameras, and planted spies posing as prisoners sympathetic to Number 6’s escape attempts. However, Number 6, ever the self-possessing liberal humanist, is never tricked. Within the first episode, he learns that there is a dystopian underbelly to The Village complete with escape-proofing, brainwashing, drugging, complex surveillance systems, and a giant white balloon that smothers escapees. Despite the ubiquity of these disciplinary technologies and indefinite incarceration, Number 2 insists that integration into The Village will transform it into a utopia: “Tell us what we’d like to

know, and *this can become a very nice place*. You may even be given a position of authority” (emphasis added). In short, *The Prisoner* illustrates how a utopia and dystopia can be the same social system, depending on one’s subject position and relationship with the society. The conflict is that Number 6 refuses to accept his position.

The Village is a rest-home-cum-prison, significantly, to detain those who know state secrets and would otherwise have to be killed to ensure national security (for killing the prisoners would foreclose any future extraction of state secrets, if needed). Imprisonment is thus a security measure; though we never learn if The Village is run by the prisoner’s country or his country’s enemy, Number 6 and the secrets he stores in his mind are both imprisoned for the stability of the nation that runs the prison. As Number 2 rationalizes: “What we do here has to be done. It is the law of survival. It is either them or us.” In this case, The Village is a “dystopia” to preserve the “utopia” of the outside nation.

While *The Prisoner* is not unique in exploring the relationship between dystopias and utopias, I cite this series as my opening example because The Village is a representation of an intentionally-designed community that, significantly, doubles as a prison—and prisons (in the cultural imaginary) are an epitome of the slippage between the categories of utopia-dystopia (or the *ustopia*, to borrow from Margaret Atwood). Such intentional communities are a central part of the utopian tradition. The Village reminds us that it is difficult to imagine prison, especially in SF, without also imagining a utopia and dystopia. In the previous paragraphs, I describe three ways in which The Village embodies three aspects of utopias that are implicit within SF prisons: (1) utopias and prisons are both imagined as “worlds apart,” that is semi-self-contained social systems designed to theoretically improve the human condition of their residents; (2) prisons and utopias simultaneously and subjectively utopian and dystopian, that is whether the prison is a

utopia or dystopia depends on where the subject stands in relation to the community; and (3) the categories of utopia and dystopia depend on each other. That is, a utopia needs a dystopia to define itself against, as the outside world “needs” the prison as a foil in order to further the utopian aspirations of the nation state. Moreover, SF utopian-dystopian prisons, such as *The Village*, are not contained within the physical site of the prison, suggesting that the broader society is a “carceral state”—an analysis of power and discipline Foucault developed in *Discipline and Punish* and his later works. The discussion of the carceral state suggests that the utopia is also a prison: an inescapable place of control and conformity. When analyzing SF prisons as utopias and dystopias, we can see how material prisons are also thought of as utopian projects, and how the extension of the prison into the broader society can be analyzed in dystopian terms.

In this chapter, I analyze two science fiction prisons that slip between utopian and dystopian space: *The Village* in the aforementioned *The Prisoner* series, and the mental hospital in Marge Piercy’s feminist science fiction novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*. I argue that although these prisons are utopian in design (with the official goal of rehabilitating the criminal), the effect of prisons is subjectively dystopian for both those incarcerated *and* those outside of prisons who are controlled by the threat of incarceration and the panoptic surveillance and disciplinary technologies that extend the prisons disciplining power beyond the walls of the prison. This utopia is built on conflict, rather than a blueprint, and is thus what Tom Moylan calls a critical utopia. I first provide a rationale for why we should consider the utopian tradition in a project on science fiction prisons then briefly show how material prisons and the utopian literary tradition are both part of the Enlightenment project of social improvement. (Though a comprehensive history of the prison through the lens of SF studies is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I cite some examples of how material prisons, the referent for SF prisons, have been thought of as utopian and

dystopian.) I then unpack how SF helps us consider how prisons are both utopian and dystopian, and extend that analysis to the broader carceral state. I select *Woman on the Edge of Time* because the prison is within the “realist” (non-SF) portions of the novel. I read *Woman on the Edge of Time* differently than other critics: I read the present-day scenes are both realist and dystopian, which suggests that the 20th century United States is a dystopia.

When we think about prisons in the cultural imaginary, we can begin to think of them within these terms of the subjective utopia/dystopia. Prisons, in theory, are designed, managed, and “perfected” social spaces. In other words, prisons are utopian in that they are based on fictional ideals of uniformity and homogeneity created through rehabilitative discipline. When we consider the prison, we can extend the subjectivity of utopias and dystopias beyond literature because perhaps no other social institution more aptly reveals the subjectivity of utopia/dystopia than the prison. Broadly, utopianism in literature, as a type of science fiction, can help us see how the prison has been thought of as a utopian project. The shared history of prisons and utopian science fiction is perhaps most clear when we consider the tandem development of the prison and the utopia as siblings born of the enlightenment, as prisons and utopias have tended to be part of progressive reform projects (see my following chapter on penal colonies). In many ways, prisons reveal the subjective and dialectical relationship between utopias and dystopias, with utopias needing dystopias to be defined against, though utopias do not necessary *have* to be dystopian. Moreover, examining “utopias” provides a germane opportunity to consider how literature and social projects can intersect. However, by breaking down the false binaries of inside/outside, as well as prisoner/free, the prison no longer stands as a world apart. The prison is one physical site in the carceral state; the prison is accordingly the world within.

Utopia and Dystopia Defined

In this section, I overview the definitions of utopia in social theory and literary criticism so that I can then define utopia alongside the concept of the prison. “Utopia” invokes deeper traditions than the one-sentence definition I cite above; quite often, utopias are regarded as a sub-genre¹¹ of science fiction, as they have been by scholars such as Darko Suvin (as well as Lyman Tower Sargent), who grants that the utopian tradition is older than SF. Suvin writes that, “utopia is not a genre but the *sociopolitical subgenre of science fiction*” (61; emphasis in original). Though it is now the political subgenre of SF, Suvin considers SF to nonetheless be the descendant of utopia: “SF is at the same time wider than and at least collaterally descended from utopia; it is, if not a daughter, yet a niece of utopia—a niece usually ashamed of the family inheritance but unable to escape her genetic destiny. For all its adventure, romance, popularization, and wondrousness, SF can finally be written only between the utopian and anti-utopian horizon” (60-61). As SF, utopian literature possesses what Suvin famously calls the *novum* that signals it is a plausible society different from yet reflecting our own.

According to Peter Fitting, utopias and SF share core premises: “The intersection of modern science fiction and utopia begins with what I consider the conditional characteristic of science fiction, namely its ability to reflect or express our hopes and fears about the future, and more specifically to link those hopes and fears to science and technology” (138). Others, such as Russ, Lefanu, Barr, and Attebery “have pointed out the *utopian* possibilities inherent in SF for rethinking gendered arrangements and assumptions. SF also has the power to *make literal what is metaphor in other genres, a particular way of using language that is its distinctive feature*” (Vint

¹¹ Tom Moylan implicitly disagrees with Suvin and Sargent; he finds it reductive to call utopia a genre because it reduces utopia to its content. Moylan, utopia is more than a genre, but a literary form created by the very act of imagining utopia (39).

20; paraphrasing Delany), emphasizing the imaginative capacity of the utopian genre. Others, such as Tower Sargent, consider the utopian tradition to be broader manners of “social dreaming” than what is limited to the literary genre.

Many SF scholars, including those I cite above, use the term “utopian” to emphasize SF’s visionary capacity to articulate more just social arrangements; this is an essential part of utopian fiction. In many ways, SF is a utopian project when it critiques the author’s present and starts thinking through a way out, particularly with the critical utopian tradition that began in the 1970s. On the other hand, as many scholars have shown, utopias can be deeply problematic for universalizing one social arrangement, homogenizing populations, and excluding difference, which is why I (and many others) consider utopias to be subjectively dystopias.

Although utopia has its two fairly consistent definitions quoted above, it takes more consideration to classify utopias as an intellectual tradition, social movement, and literary genre. The utopian impulse is older than the term “utopia” that could now be retrospectively applied to analyze myths of early recorded human history. As Lyman Tower Sargent concludes, “The first eutopias that we know of we usually call myths, and they look to the past of the human race or beyond death. They have various labels—golden ages, arcadias, earthly paradises, fortunate isles, isles of the blest” (10). For Tower Sargent, the utopian tradition is “social dreaming” in both an ancient and cross-cultural tradition. Social dreaming is a deep and widespread human tradition of imagining and attempting to manifest a society more pleasant than one’s own. Social theory and activism, then, are also social dreaming. I find that social dreaming is an alternative framework for thinking about utopia that broadens what counts as “utopia” by linking it to social theory and praxis.

In literary criticism, utopia too is linked to praxis, though in more modest terms than social

dreaming. The term “utopia” most commonly describes the genre of speculative literature that articulates an alternative but plausible society to our own, but the utopia is not confined to one mode or medium. Nicole Pohl writes that utopias are a hybrid genre between “literary” and “political” writing, and thus polygeneric and polymodal (51). As a literary device that crosses genres and forms, they share “the desire to recognize, mobilize and transform” (52). Building on Pohl’s generous parameters, utopias can be defined as visions of qualifiedly better worlds, and these articulations can be found in multiple genres and mediums, and share an impulse to mobilize readers to manifest the said vision of better world. Unlike some other types of science fiction, utopian literature is usually set in our own world, but in a distant time or place.

Utopias also possess an aspect of impossibility, as noted by the second OED definition, that are only possible in representation. Frederick Jameson folds this impossibility into his analysis of utopian literature as paradox. In his essay “Progress versus Utopia,” he writes that “such texts then explicitly or implicitly, and as it were against their own will, find their deepest ‘subjects’ in the possibility of their own production, in the interrogation of the dilemmas involved in their own emergence as utopian texts” (156). Jameson claims that utopian literature is self-referential in order to interrogate its own genre conventions. Rather than just interrogate social problems, the utopia is a step further: it interrogates its own genre by performing the impossibility of utopia.

Despite the alleged impossibility of utopias, they have a history of enactment, whether it is for social change to enact social dreaming, such as the Edward Bellamy clubs of the nineteenth century, or for creating a regimented society, such as the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. (And so often, an enacted utopia is both at once.) Foucault calls the enactment of utopia the heterotopia (a term that has been taken up by human geographers such as Edward Soja).

Of utopias (and implicitly dystopias), Foucault writes that, “They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” whereas heterotopias “are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of *effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted*” (“Of Other Spaces”, emphasis mine). The prison is an instance of Foucault’s second example of heterotopia: a heterotopia of deviation, “in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (“Of Other Spaces”). The prison, then, is a utopia in practice in that it is the dumping ground for undesirables. The heterotopia becomes a referent for the prison in SF. The heterotopia is relevant to literary utopias because the heterotopia is the unreal and real simultaneously. Heterotopias also insist that the stable categories of utopia and dystopia can be subverted. The heterotopia is another way to think about the utopia as a dystopia as well as a way to analyze the function of utopia and its contradictory practice.

To turn to the other half the utopia-dystopia coin, dystopias are harder to define than utopias because there are fewer formal features defining “dystopian” imaginaries. In their broadest sense, dystopias are the opposite of a utopia: “An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible” (OED). However, this definition is inadequate because “bad” is an empty moralizing term; and moreover, an author could always imagine a *worse* society. Moreover, this definition “dystopia” could not be applied to real world examples that are not imaginary but certainly unpleasant places to live, which forecloses the utility of the term “dystopia” to understand social atrocities like the penitentiary. According to Claeys, the first evidence of the dystopian turn is “Satires upon Enlightenment conceptions of a life lived according

to the principles of reason” (110). As Darko Suvin writes, “Utopia explicates what satire implicates, and vice versa” (54).

Claeys helps delimit dystopias by insisting that they must be plausible within the author’s present, “feasible negative visions” (109) such as a dystopia caused by environmental disaster rather than alien invasion; the dystopia must be a society that could plausibly happen, given what we know about science, human societies, and technologies. The plausible, real world application of the term “dystopia” is useful in allowing us to consider how the prison functions as a dystopian social system.

Utopias also have a real world application as they are attached to social change. Like dystopias and science fiction in general, utopias must be plausible given what we know about the natural and social world. Tom Moylan demarcates three distinct waves in “the literary utopia,” emerging and then re-emerging during times of rapid social change. The first is early modern utopian literature begins in 1516 with Sir Thomas More’s eponymous *Utopia*, as well as political prisoner Tommaso Campanella’s *The City of the Sun* (1623) and Sir Frances Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627). According to Moylan, More himself continued the cross-cultural tradition of imagining better or alternative worlds (such as Garden of Eden, Buddhism’s Western Paradise, great plain Natives’ Happy Hunting Ground, and Plato’s Republic), but More is the first to indicate how his vision is historically plausible (3). These utopian texts were linked to the discovery and colonization of new worlds, often set on an island, and were even used as propaganda to colonize the Americas.

For its vision and attempt at transformation, the term utopia is also applied, usually pejoratively, to projects that try to manifest a given vision of a more-perfect society, hence the second OED definition of utopia cited above, “An impossibly ideal scheme, esp. for social

improvement.” Utopian is a slur against those whose vision for a better world is too much of a dream and too idealized, often glossing over serious concerns about how one would manage difference, dissent, and crime. (And it has been used as an insult at least since Marx and Engels, who considered utopian socialism to be counter-revolutionary.) In this view, at best, utopianists are naive idealists with nice ideas that would be impossible to implement. At worse, utopias are akin to dystopias, and utopianists are eugenicists bent on homogenizing populations and erasing difference at all cost. Although many scholars, authors, and activists find use in the concept of “utopia,” for many others “utopia” was discredited by the holocaust as well as the failure of authoritarian socialism. The critique of utopias as totalitarian developed in the 1950s when totalitarianism, practiced by both fascist and communist governments, discredited utopianism, as critiqued by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) and Jacob Talmon in *Utopianism and Politics* (1957).

I have identified two positions that may seem at odds: that utopias are visionary *and* innately dystopian. Are these views contradictory? Not necessarily. Although I am sympathetic with Talmon’s and Popper’s critiques of utopias due to their eugenicist application, I agree with Claeys, who reminds us that history has disproved that social theory is innately “totalitarian” or “dystopian”: “Many of us indeed live today in the utopias of the past, in circumstances vastly better than those most of our ancestors even dreamt of. Thus the liberal paradigm of universal opulence and stable democracy is itself also a utopian ideal, and itself susceptible to dystopian failure, both economically and environmentally” (108). Social theory, then, is utopian if utopias are an *improvement* rather than *perfection*. The socially-just visions offered by social theory are not ideals as in end goals but dynamic, changing ideals to be moved towards. Utopian visions can simultaneously possess homogenizing tendencies with a static end

goal *and* an impulse to create a dynamic better world. That utopias can do both is one way in which utopias are subjective and contradictory.

Although I do not agree that utopias are essentially and exclusively totalitarian, the subjectivity of utopias means that utopias *can* be totalitarian, as a “more perfect” vision could depict the ideals of any political theory. The view of utopias as totalitarian is, nonetheless, a useful way to apply utopianism to the prison, which might be the epitome of a totalitarian utopia. As Tower Sargent accounts, totalitarian-utopias use force to impose perfection: “Force will be necessary either because people question the desirability of the utopia or because there is disharmony between the perfect blueprint and the imperfect people” (24). Prisons impose an impossibly perfect system on imperfect people. Bear in mind that one official goal of this imposition is to reform prisoners for their own benefit and that of the greater good. Imprisonment is often used to remove those who are different and don’t follow the norms of the their ‘utopian’ nation—if utopias are homogenizing, prisons are a primary tool of that homogenization. As I discuss at length in my fourth chapter, forceful “reform” imposes liberal humanist embodiment upon those who have been excluded from liberal humanism. For now, it is suffice to say that prisons impose many of the ideals of a totalitarian government and physically embody Jeremy Bentham’s famous panopticon, the architectural ideal of totalitarianism.

Using Utopian Rhetoric to Think about the Prison

In this section, I consider how thinking and writing about material prisons invokes the idea of a utopia (and dystopia). Both the proposal of the penitentiary and the idea of the utopia originate in Enlightenment thinking; I briefly discuss the history of both ideas to show how SF prisons are also utopias/dystopias. Though I am not a historian, I would like to consider the history of the institution because (1) it is the referent for SF prisons and (2) shows how prisons are

thought about and discussed in public debate. (Regrettably, for scope, focus, and availability of research materials, I focus on Europe and the United States, though I do discuss Australia in the following chapter.)

Although the vision of an earthly paradise predates Sir Thomas More's 1516 novel, utopianism is a component of the Enlightenment and liberal humanism¹². As Nicole Pohl shows, utopian writing was a new genre that was a hybrid between "literary" and "political writing" (*Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* 51). This literature both entertained and promoted reform. As Pohl notes, "[u]topian thought was integrated into the multiple levels of Enlightenment political debates, and utopian elements were evident in various combinations of Enlightenment political writing" (71-72). The Enlightenment, also known as "the age of reason," was the philosophical and cultural movement in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe (and later the American colonies) that sought to improve human societies through reason, progress, and knowledge rather than faith. The Enlightenment picked up Renaissance thought of the preceding centuries, and continued to shift definitions of "human" away from those that were religiously based into what we now call "liberal humanism" or "the Enlightenment man." (The mind/body dualism that predicates the ideal enlightenment man will be further discussed in chapter 3.)

It is no coincidence that incarceration comes out of the same era as the utopia, for it shares many of the same logics and premises: improvement of the human condition through reason and scientific processes. Incidentally, an early example of such reforms shares an origin with the utopian tradition. As I note in this dissertation's introduction, More was one of the earliest

¹² It is significant to consider the utopian influence in the enlightenment, as utopian writing is a precursor to science fiction as a genre and transhumanism as a vision, as I discuss in my fourth and fifth chapters.

reformers and his writing is considered an essential predecessor to science fiction. He used his 1516 novel *Utopia* to criticize the enclosure of commonly held British lands and propose workhouses as a solution to displaced and idle peasants. The protagonist Raphael Hythloday, a citizen of Utopia who visits England, notes the plight of peasants who lost their livelihoods to enclosure. Many had taken to theft out of desperation:

When that little money is at an end (for it will be soon spent), what is left for them to do but either to steal, and so to be hanged (God knows how justly!), or to go about and beg? and if they do this they are put in prison as idle vagabonds, while they would willingly work but can find none that will hire them; for there is no more occasion for country labour, *to which they have been bred*, when there is no arable ground left. (More, emphasis added.)

Hythloday suggests an alternative to England's capital punishment and debtors prisons: paid labor for the idle poor and enslaved labor for the criminals. Hythloday serves as the mouthpiece of More, who, like other reformers, blamed agrarian reform for causing poverty that drove people to depravity, rather than weak moral constitution. To negate the impact of enclosure, individuals could be reformed one at a time in a way that contributed to their society: by working for the state.

Utopia was quite influential, and part of a broader reform movement, in promoting the development of workhouses in sixteenth century England. Prior to these sixteenth century "progressive" reforms, prisons were akin to contemporary American jails, which are holding cells for people awaiting their trial and punishment. These prisons were primarily used to house debtors until they repaid their debt and to ensure that convicts did not escape before their corporal punishment. The existing holding cells were expanded to include workhouses (also known as poorhouses), which put the idle unemployed to work and thus generated the revenue to fund their detention. These were euphemistically called Bridewells, after Bridewell Palace, a former

residence of King Henry the VIII that became the first workhouse in England in 1556. The popular support of workhouses lasted for two centuries, not because they were more “humanitarian” than the prior holding cells, but because they were self-sufficient and even profitable; workhouses took unemployable surplus populations and put them to work in what was essentially slave labor that paid for the cost of running the workhouse itself.

Workhouses were popular for two hundred years until they in turn became the subject of another wave of reform. While the institution may have been inspired and popularized by *Utopia*, in practice the conditions were more akin to a dystopian space. John Howard, who is often remembered as the first prison reformer, published *The State of the Prisons* in 1777. A part of the “philanthropist” reform movement, Howard, who described prisons as foul spaces, was deeply troubled by the mixing of “sorts” (genres/types) of prisoners; “debtors and felons; men and women, the young beginner and old offender” (15) co-mingled. This mixing ensured that “multitudes of young creatures, committed for some trifling offence, are totally ruined there” (21). In other words, eighteenth century reformers were alarmed by the filthy and heterogenous conditions where women and men mixed, vice abounded, and vagrants learned from those we now call hardened criminals, which was counter to a utopian ideal of homogeneity. This filthy mixing prevented reforming prisoners towards the goal of improving the human condition. Like the authors of utopian literature, Howard hoped his writing would inspire social change. In contrast to utopian literature written like the popular travel memoirs, Howard qualifies in his introduction that, “The journies were not undertaken for the traveler’s amusement; and the collections are not published for general entertainment; but for the perusal of those who have it in their power to give redress to the sufferers” (6). Unlike later prison memoirs, which were intended to be entertaining and sensationalist, Howard strives to educate and reform. The images of fowl water, absence of

sewers, lack of fresh air, and starvation are very dystopian (prescient of the prison for the blind in the novel *Blindness*).

Prison reform was a transatlantic movement as prisons arose and were reformed in American colonies and early United States. Utopian literature served as a propaganda to recruit colonists for the new world: “Various and competing schemes were expressed in the promotional literature which recruited Europeans to new continents by means of alluring descriptions of an idealized land” (Moylan 4). Many early colonial writing and oral traditions revealed the fraud of these utopian promises, such as James Revel’s song “The Poor, Unhappy Transported Felon.” Like Revel, indeed many colonists were penal colonists: debtors, indentured servants, idlers, and others expelled from England and relocated in the Americas.

As many of the early settlers were penal colonists, the punishment was both relocation and hard labor (which was profitable for colonial elites). According to Adam Hirsch, in *The Rise of the Penitentiary*, when colonists transgressed their society’s laws and norms, colonial communities often tried to draw offenders back into the community: “collective disapproval of the community rather than through private instruction” (33). However, as the populations grew, convicts became regarded as outsiders who needed to be removed from the population: “But the social context of rehabilitation was altered subtly: instead of seeking to draw the offender back into the community, as had the old public punishments, carceral punishment wrenched the offender *out* of a subculture that commentators perceived as inimical to honest society. *The situs of punishment shifted to the fringe because it was now intended not to integrate but to extricate offenders from their surroundings*” (Hirsch 45, emphasis added).

The American counterpart to the European philanthropists were the Jacksonian reformers. During this era, most Jacksonians were more pragmatic than earlier penal reformists; they believed

that some could be reformed, especially young first time offenders, while others could not be. Thus, prisons could only reduce crime but not prevent it. Some, however, were still enthusiastic about the prison's potential to not only eliminate crime but to "remake society" and provide "a suitable model for other social institutions" (Hirsch 66). These were now the majority of Jacksonian reformers, who actually used 'utopian' as a pejorative term "to dismiss extravagant criminological aspirations" (Hirsch 113). As Hirsch continues: "But if carceral ideology was not utopian, it did include an element of idealism which, from the vantage point of more recent criminological values, cannot fail to impress. Like their predecessors in the workhouse movement, proponents of the penitentiary hoped to control crime by *uplifting* criminals, just as many sought to elevate the condition of other depressed social groups" (113). Michael Meranze argues that American prisons can be thought of as "laboratories of virtue," which were hoped to contain criminality, believed to be a social disease, and reclaim the criminal's moral character. For Meranze, penitentiaries represented the growth of liberalism and democratic governance; "Penitential punishments promised an entirely new way of governing society—one based on spiritual engagement, not coercive violence; one that would reclaim rather than expel, that would preserve individual reputation instead of spreading infamy, and that would contain rather than extend the example of criminality" (3). These laboratories of virtue were intentionally-designed spaces that taught prisoners to work hard and submit to the law.

Disciplining Worlds Apart: How the SF Prison is both Utopian & Dystopian

In my introduction to this chapter, I laid out three qualities of utopias and dystopias: that they are worlds apart, simultaneously and subjectively both, and that you need the concept of utopia to have a dystopia (and vice versa). In this section, I expand on these generalizations and

further apply them to representations of prison to lead into a discussion of the carceral state. I also rectify tensions and contradictions between these three points, particularly the second and third.

My first point, that utopias and prisons are worlds apart, is the most straightforward. Both are intentional communities in that they are planned societies, which are typically thought of as worlds apart from the troubled ordinary society. Utopias are worlds apart because they are typically isolated, set elsewhere in space and time: “For a utopian society to be imagined it must be located somewhere other than the author’s own society” (Moylan 4). For example, in *Utopia*, the eponymous nation is a long-lost island. In later utopias, written after the age of exploration, the utopia is set in another time, such as Bellamy’s *Looking Backwards*, where the narrator falls asleep and wakes up in the future. Prisons, too, are often *thought of* as a world apart. As Regina Kunzel notes, “From their beginning, prisons were imagined to exist in a world apart” (225). For Kunzel, prisons are problematically regarded as preservations of an earlier era that can be studied as a snapshot into previous ways of living, as we see when the long-lost prisons are rediscovered in *Brute Orbits* (which I discuss in the chapter that follows). As worlds apart, prisons are regarded as elsewhere and elsewhere, atavistic places that could be studied to supposedly display how past humans once lived.

My second and third points are more closely related, yet contradictory. Many critics share my second point, the assertion that utopias and dystopias are subjectively defined based on an individual’s relationship to the social system—as well as the subjectivity of the reader. For example, Claeys writes, “Indisputably, thus, whether a given text can be described as a dystopia or utopia will depend on one’s perspective of the narrative outcome” (109). In his introduction to the dystopian literature anthology *Brave New Worlds*, John Joseph Adams echoes this sentiment: “Whether or not a society is perceived as a dystopia is usually determined by one’s point of view;

what one person may consider to be a horrible dystopia, another may find completely acceptable or even nigh-utopian.” Adams goes on to insist, “Many societies in fiction are depicted as utopias when in fact they are dystopias; like angels and demons, the two are sides of the same coin.”

Margaret Atwood coins a term that embodies the dependence simultaneity of utopias and dystopias, *ustopia*, “the imagined perfect society and its opposite—because, in [Atwood’s] view, each contains a latent version of the other” (65). In a dystopia, such as Atwood’s own novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the latent utopia is the past and the future. In a vision of a utopian society, the latent dystopia is found where the utopia sends those “people who somehow just don’t or won’t fit into your grandscheme” (84). Atwood identifies the latent dystopia as always having been present in the literary form: “As for the utopias, from Thomas More onwards, there is always a provision made for the renegades, those who don’t or won’t follow the rules: prison, enslavement, exile, exclusion, or execution” (86).

In utopian and dystopian literature, the experience of the “ustopia” is more subjectively experienced by prisoners such as Connie (whom I discuss below). The subjectivity of utopias/dystopias is an apt way to frame how incarceration is imagined because a prison is thought of as a closed community of intentional design with utopian ambitions: regulation, sanitation, all needs met, etc. However, from the perspective of a prisoner, as much of the fiction I discuss shows, a prison is undoubtedly a dystopian experience: quite unpleasant, a place of control, dysfunction, unmet needs etc. Moreover, what aspects of incarceration might be thought of as “utopian” have shifted. For example, nineteenth century prison reformers had a utopian goal of “perfect carceral solitude” that was considered “inhumane and impractical” by the progressive-era prison reforms of the 1920s (Kunzel 71).

My third point, that the idea of the utopia has always necessitated the idea of a dystopia, is

less widely shared. In typical chronologies of the dystopian genre, utopias precede dystopias. For example, Moylan argues that dystopian literature emerged as both socialist states and consumer societies “claimed to have achieved utopia.”. As a result, radical critique came in the form of dystopia, which Moylan defines as “narrative that imagines a society worse than the existing one.” While Moylan’s chronology may be accurate when describing literary genres, the idea of paradise is often paired with its antonym; to have the elysian fields, one must have tartarus. This is not universal, many religions do not have a hell, but in other cases the image of paradise contrasts the present world as the dystopia. For example, Sir Thomas More’s utopia was defined against his unpleasant present. When considering my third point, the prison shifts from utopian to dystopian in intent. In short, the outside world “needs” a prison to define the outside world as “free” (and theoretically coerce citizens into “lawful” behavior). The necessity of a dystopia to know a utopia is useful when we consider both the carceral state, as well as the breakdown between insider and outsider in texts like *The Prisoner* and *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Overall, these three generalizations might seem in tension with one another. If a prison might be depicted as a nation state’s utopian project, how can it also be a dystopian dumping ground that ensures the utopia of that same nation state? Or, to phrase the question differently, if the Village is simultaneously utopian/dystopian, how can it also be the dystopia defining the “utopia” of the outside nation state? I argue that in *practice* or *implementation* a utopian social system is subjectively *both* a utopia and dystopia. The prison as a world apart becomes a rationale to justify the prison’s supposed humanitarian function: prisoners have a time-out from their society to learn how to play nice. For those who have a life sentence, they are removed from their society to theoretically ensure the safety of those on the outside. However, the *concept* of utopia is (implicitly or explicitly) dependent on the existence of the concept of dystopia. (I should note I am

discussing the representation of implementation versus conception rather than material prisons

The necessity of a utopia to think about a dystopia is illuminated by Moylan's more recent work on critical dystopias. Since writing *Demand the Impossible*, Moylan has noted how utopian rhetoric has been taken up by U.S. presidents in order to promote anti-utopian projects. In his 2000 book *The Untainted Sky*, picks up Tower Lyman Sargent's term "critical dystopia" to understand what was happening in SF of the 1980s and 90s by authors like Octavia Butler, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Marge Piercy in 1991 dystopian/cyberpunk novel *He, She, and It*. (In *Demand the Impossible*, Moylan countered dystopias to be pessimistic and demobilizing.) Moylan writes that (responding to Ildney Cavalcanti), that critical dystopia "is precisely a textual form that leads *toward* Utopia by way of dialectical negation, for it negotiates the conflict between Utopia and Anti-Utopia, not in a way that displaces or diffuses that historical contestation but rather invokes Utopia within its own cultural intervention in a time when such oppositional impulses are suppressed or compromised" (191-192). Moylan sees critical dystopias as instrumental in manifesting utopian projects. Critical dystopias are necessary to help us find our way to a desirable utopia (in the positive sense of the term). I add that the relationship between utopia and dystopia functions in "negative" utopias such as the Village for utopias more generally, whether visionary or totalitarian, need a dystopia to be contrasted against.

Considering a subjectively utopian/dystopian society such as the Village also highlights the gap between practice and concept. At the higher level, in concept, the nation state is the utopia that needs the dystopia of the prison to define itself against and to locate its expelled, undesirable populations (while claiming to care for and rehabilitate them). In practice, however, the outside world is a "carceral state"—a society organized like a prison—which reveals that the society outside of the prison is simultaneously dystopian and utopian, much like the prison itself. To apply

this logic to *The Prisoner*, in theory the prison ensures the greater good and stability of the nation; the retired spies may not return to the general population, but they should be allowed to live out their natural lives in comfort, stability, and community. This utopian intent, however, does not become utopian practice. In *The Prisoner*, the prison is a failed conceptual utopia because it is subjectively a dystopian practice. The contradiction of the failed utopia functions differently than, say, the paradox of Jameson's paradoxical utopia. For Jameson, the utopia entails "[t]he repression of the negative" that reveals the contradiction of utopia" (154). *The Prisoner* reveals a different contradiction because it does not claim to be a purely utopian text (representing utopian intent *and* implication). Instead, a text such as *The Prisoner* positions the dystopia in this gap between intention and practice.

“What’s Outside is Inside Too”: The Carceral State

The Prisoner concludes with a breakdown the categories of outside/inside and utopia/dystopia, which reveals the existence of the aforementioned carceral state. The carceral state is a useful and necessary framework for understanding the relationship between the prison as a building, social institution, other social institutions outside of the prison, and ideology. In other words, identifying and analyzing the “carceral state” reveals how the structure of the prison extends beyond its walls—and how the prison-like arrangement of a broader society constructs the necessity of the institution. In Regina Kunzel's terms, “what’s outside is inside too” (195). The term “carceral state” is a synonym and extension of Michel Foucault's concept of the “carceral archipelago,” a metaphor for the chain of interconnected prison-like institutions that extend beyond the prison itself. For Foucault, the prison is isomorphic with these other state institutions, for it resembles the mental hospital, the school, and the military barracks. In Michael Ignatieff's terms (writing shortly after the publication of *Discipline and Punish*),

It was no accident that penitentiaries, asylums, workhouses, monitorial schools, night refuges, and dormitories looked alike, or that their charge marches to the same disciplinary cadence. Since they made up a complementary and interdependent structure of control, it was essential that their diets and deprivations be calibrated on an ascending scale, school-workhouse-asylum-prison, with the pain of the last serving to undergird the pain of the first. (214-215)

These institutions implore the prison's techniques of surveillance, order, and categorization: "We have seen that, in penal justice, the prison transformed the punitive procedure into a penitentiary technique; the carceral archipelago transported this technique from the penal institution to the entire social body" (*Discipline and Punish* 298). The transformation of procedure to technique explains how the punishment given through a prison becomes a model for disciplining an entire society through the prison's sibling institutions.

The carceral state, according to Foucault, accomplishes several major tasks. First, it allows continuity between institutions as individuals move between the hospital, the orphanage, the reform school, the social service agency, the military, the factory, the retirement home etc. Second, it allows for the recruitment of a class of delinquents, which ensures that poor individuals become gangsters—and snitches, scabs, and Pinkertons—rather than revolutionaries. This class of delinquents justifies the "need" for the police and the prison. Third, the carceral state "succeeds in making the power to punish natural and legitimate, and lower at least the threshold of tolerance to penalty" (301). That is, the carceral state legitimates the prison and its disciplinary power. Fourth, it creates the legal system and "judges of normality" (304): teachers, doctors, educators, social workers, who serve as eyes within a societal panopticon. Fifth, the carceral state enables the production of official knowledge. It aids (but does not create) human sciences' techniques of

“subjection and objectification” which “rendering the group of men docile and useful” to study, produce knowledge and dominant ideologies of individualism. According to Kunzel, the prison is “the quintessential symbol of the development and deployment of modern technologies of disciplinary power” (7). Sixth, the carceral state normalizes and strengthens the foundations of the penal institution. The carceral state is what enables the prison’s surveillance to be pervasive and normal. Like prisoners, those of us who are not incarcerated live within a panopticon, but unlike prisoners, few seem to mind because the surveillance is allegedly for our own good and the security of the nation state.

As Bender has shown (as I discuss in my dissertation’s introduction), the novel and other popular writing, such as nonfiction treatises written by reformists, were instrumental in the popularization and of the penitentiary and shaping how we think and talk about it. Fiction and popular media, too, play a hand in legitimizing the carceral state. Corporate media has played a hand in, for example, the American people’s acceptance of post-September 11th governmental surveillance that accompanies the erosion of civil liberties and privacy. The USA Patriot Act, FBI surveillance drones, and indefinite detention of “terrorists” are now taken for granted, and even these built on earlier programs, such as ESCHELON during World War II and COINTELPRO during the 1960s. Recently, the Edward Snowden leaks of June 2013 revealed that National Security Agency’s PRISM program, which monitors Internet traffic in real-time and collects stored Internet communications, and Xkeyscore program, which searches through vast databases containing emails, online chats and browsing histories of millions of people, and Britain’s Tempora programme (leaked by Snowden in June 2013). Obama’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) also extends the power of the carceral state to detain its citizens without charges or trial. Within the carceral state, those who prematurely reveal when the carceral

state breaks its own laws, such as Chelsea Manning, who was recently sentenced to 35 years in prison for her 2010 release of US government documents to Wikileaks, are hunted, captured, tortured, and incarcerated as traitors.

Despite this pervasive surveillance, I find it important to qualify that the existence of a carceral state does not equalize how we experience the carceral state. The carceral state is not abstract; it most concretely exists for those who are constantly in-and-out of the “justice” system, like those “delinquents” from Foucault’s first point: those in foster care, on parole, who must report to social workers, etc. Surveillance hurts me—a white cisgender professional—materially less than someone like Manning or any one of the 1 million incarcerated African Americans (NAACP). Nonetheless, the carceral state democratizes penal structures. By democratizes, I do not mean that we vote on penal structures, but that we both consent to them and horizontally experience their effects.

Fiction and media are cultural texts that normalize the carceral state, and this is not to say that fiction cannot do more, and we can read critiques of the carceral state in cultural texts, though these may never gain mass appeal for doing so. The revelation of the “carceral state” is what made the conclusion of *The Prisoner* so controversial. Many fans hoped for a tidy ending that answered the series’s central questions: why did Number 6 resign and who is Number 1, the individual pulling the strings? Fans got the answer to the latter question, and did not like the answer: in this final episode, Number 6 finally unveils the face of Number 1 he sees his own face, suggesting that he is the agent constructing his own incarceration. Moreover, the episode suggests that though one might leave the walls of the prison, one is never really free. The producer, director, and star of *The Prisoner*, Patrick McGoohan, explains in an interview, The Village “was meant to be [external and something we carry around with us all the time]. The external was the symbol, but it's within

us all I think, don't you? This surrealist aspect; we all live in a little Village.[...] Your village may be different from other people's villages but we are all prisoners” (Cult TV). This is exemplified by the final moments of the show: When Number 6 rejects an offer to become the prison’s warden, he finally escapes with the aid of the butler, a reoccurring supporting character. The butler enters a city building with an automatic door and the number “1.” Indeed these ending scenes strongly suggest that the prison is the outside world and that Number 6’s incarceration was a distraction from the carceral state’s existence. The rhetoric of prisons ensuring peace and safety of the greater population, then, becomes a distraction, a scapegoat, to mask the existence of a carceral state. The prisoner can never really escape the prison because the prison is not just the Village, but all of England. The distinction between outside and inside, and utopia and dystopia, is a false one. The dystopian prison encompasses all, though most people are the happy villagers, believing they indeed live in a utopia.

To say that the prison is inescapable is to have a very pessimistic (and dare I say dystopian) outlook on modern societies. The prison, then, is more than a dumping ground for surplus and undesirable populations to ensure the purity and homogeneity of the utopian nation state, as washed-up spies in *The Prisoner*. As Foucault asserts, “The carceral network does not cast the unassimilable into a confused hell; there is no outside. It takes back with one hand what it seems to exclude with the other. It is unwilling to waste even what it has decided to disqualify” (301). Prisons do still physically remove prisoners from their communities, but the idea of the prison as a world apart is complicated. That there is no “outside” of the carceral state makes the “world apart” actually the world within. The carceral state does exclude marginal people from the “utopia” of the nation, but also makes them usable in the process.

Dystopian Realism in *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Marge Piercy's classic feminist science fiction novel, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, depicts a mental hospital as both a dystopia and microcosm of the broader society, with the 1970s United States as a dystopian carceral state. In this 1976 novel, the mental hospital's inmates are among both the most marginalized people and those who must become utopian revolutionaries. The protagonist, Connie Ramos, is one such prisoner. As someone who is in-and-out of "the system," Connie is in a prime position to become a warrior for a positive future. She is a middle-aged Chicana woman living on public assistance who, at the beginning of the novel, had already lost both her husband and a lover to state violence, and lost her daughter to the foster care system. Connie's brother, Louis, convicts her to a mental hospital as a "psychotic" after Connie breaks the nose of her niece's abusive pimp in an act of self-defense that is re-framed as assault. During her incarceration, Connie time-travels¹³ 150 years into the future to Mattapoissett, a utopian village. Connie befriends her guide, Luciente, and learns that Luciente's world is only one potential future. After Connie both mistakenly travels to a dystopian future and becomes the involuntary subject of an experiment (in the present-day) that controls prisoners' minds, she comes to see herself at war and fights to ensure that Luciente's future will come to pass. She does so by poisoning her jailers.

Piercy's novel is a staple of feminist science fiction reading lists and syllabi. This novel is a representative example the 1970s wave of what Moylan calls "critical utopias," along with Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Samuel Delany's *Triton*, and Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*. Like Le Guin, Delany, and Russ, Piercy's work is directly in dialog with feminism and radical

¹³ Although time-travel signifies that this novel is generically science fiction, I find that the time travel is not the novum because Piercy does not detail how the time travel happens other than it being psychic abilities. Rather, the novum is the tension between utopia and dystopia as the site of struggle.

politics¹⁴. Moylan concludes that the critical utopian discourse of these four texts “becomes a seditious expression of social change and popular sovereignty carried on in a permanently open process of envisioning what is not yet” (213). These critical utopias revise the utopian tradition with ambiguity and self-reflexivity about the both utopian literature and and utopian social projects.

Woman on the Edge of Time is now typically read and taught as a feminist utopia in the tradition of 1970s revival of utopias. The novel has drawn critical interest in both women’s studies and science fiction studies. Most critics primarily focus on the utopian vision offered by Piercy. For example, Billie Maciunas sees Piercy’s utopia as an example of Sandra Harding’s postmodern feminist epistemology. In an essay entitled “Chaos and Utopia,” Elham Afnan reads Mattapoissett as the intersection between chaos theory and utopianism.

Most discussions of *Woman on the Edge of Time* focus on the novel’s utopia rather than its chapter spent detailing Connie’s life in the mental hospital. Most critics contrast Masapoissette with the dystopian future Connie mistakenly visits (a precursor to cyberpunk). An exception would be M. Keith Booker, who notes that like Sir Thomas More’s dystopian England, “*Woman on the Edge of Time* presents Piercy’s contemporary America as a society that is already a dystopia for marginal members of society” (339). Few critics have been interested in the novel’s realist chapters, though Margaret Atwood notes that when the novel was published most reviewers read it as a realist novel with unfortunate utopian dabbling that were at worst Connie’s delusions and hallucinations (Atwood’s review is reprinted in *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*). One of the few critics to analyze the present-day scenes in *Woman on the Edge of Time* is Marcia

¹⁴ However as Tom Moylan notes in *Demand the Impossible*, Piercy is the only author in this grouping who did not develop in the tradition of SF.

Bundy Seabury, who compares Connie to Frankenstein's monster as outsiders of science who are experimented upon. She concludes that both become murderers and thus monsters due to their mistreatment by their societies.

In this section, I revisit the relationship between utopias and dystopias to then argue that the mental hospital serves as a dystopia that both contrasts the utopian Mattapoissett and serves as a deliberate microcosm of the broader society. With the mental hospital modeling and intensifying the discipline and oppression of the broader society, the novel reveals that the broader society (1970s United States) is not only a dystopia but a carceral state. Moreover, Mattapoissett contrasts a second dystopia, a future that may come to pass if Connie and her allies do not succeed in their struggle for a better society. These two dystopias, the mental hospital and the undesirable future, illustrate how dystopias and utopias are imagined as mutually dependent on each other, but that the utopian future should not be thought of as destiny.

As I have asserted, prisons are worlds apart yet within our own. In *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the mental hospital removes those who are different, subversive, and heterogeneous and attempts to "cure" their difference so they can be returned to the outside world. Connie is taken from her home and imprisoned with other marginalized people, such as her friends Skip, a gay man, and Cybil, a witch. In this world apart, the mental hospital is a self-contained society with a complete staff and day full of activities, ranging from endless doctor's visits to arts-and-crafts. However, upon further reading, *Woman on the Edge of Time's* mental hospital does not fit neatly into a "world apart" because the novel is critical utopia that allows it to break down a simplistic imagining of a separate society within our own. Critical utopias both revisit and challenge the traditional tropes in utopian literature in order to articulate a more complex vision of a better, but not perfect, world. Because *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a critical utopia, it shows how the

prison is not the world apart it claims to be but rather is located within a carceral state.

Moylan reads Piercy's present-day chapters as realist, and counters that realism by breaking it open with a "radically alternative future" (126) and "The stage is set for the defeat of the imposed 'realism' of the status quo and the utopianism of the anti-hegemonic forces" (149). While I don't contest the realism of the representations of the author's present day, I find that Moylan overlooks how the present-day is dystopian in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Moylan aptly notes that the mental hospital in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, like the realist novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, "functions as a microcosm of the bureaucratic/capitalist system, with its attendant racism, sexism, and violence" (123). I agree with Moylan when he classifies the mental hospital scenes as "the realist images of present day oppression" (124) and asserts that Piercy casts "the dystopian images of a future in which the forces of profit and power prevail" (124) in the dystopian future that Connie visits. I agree that the present-day scenes are realist, though somewhat science fictional elements given the surveillance and radio-transistors, but I disagree that the *only* dystopia in the book is the one in the future. Through realism that captures the racism, sexism, and violence of the mental institution and the larger society it represents, in *Woman on the Edge of Time* the subjective experience of the mental patient-prisoner is one of dystopia—reinforcing my claim that dystopias are subjective. The dystopia, then, is regarded as a real social organization.

I read *Woman on the Edge of Time* as an argument that the original world—the 1970s United States—is the dystopia in a number of ways: there is extreme inequality, limitations on agency, and state surveillance. Piercy shows how many of the technologies and control mechanisms of the dystopian future begin in the originary world. Piercy uses the genre of dystopia to aptly show how the dystopian United States depends on institutional racism, sexism, and

classism—the three primary identities of 1970s intersectionality. These three identities converge to disproportionately punish Connie for mistakes that any person could make (substance abuse, hitting her daughter Angelina) combined with survival crimes (pick-pocketing, self-defense) and rebelling against her gender roles (attacking her niece’s pimp, refusing to be a victim). Connie’s mistakes, amplified by institutional racism, result from Connie hitting her daughter Angeline when she was down and out on her luck. For example: prior to the novel, Connie falls into a deep depression after her lover Claud, a blind musician and pickpocket, dies in prison. Claud volunteers for a medical experiment with the hope it will reduce his sentence, and as a result dies of hepatitis. Connie views Claud as a victim of “all the institutions that would punish [Claud] for being black and blind and surviving” (61). During her depression and a binge on drugs and alcohol, she neglects and hits her four-year-old daughter. The state tricks her into giving her daughter up for adoption, telling her it is temporary foster care while Connie receives treatment. Instead of treatment, Connie finds that she is essentially incarcerated in the mental hospital. The present-day portions of the novel chronicle her second stint in the hospital. The experiences of Connie, those she loves, and her fellow inmates show how institutional racism and a lack of economic opportunity creates a dystopia for those on the margins.

The major way that *Woman on the Edge of Time*’s mental hospital attempts to “correct” the prisoners is through the creation of cyborg prisons. In order to find better ways to control of patients, the doctors “transistorize” the inmates by broadcasting radio waves into their heads in order to control their moods. Connie’s friend Sybil articulates the experiment as “Control. To turn us into machines so we obey them” (200). The doctors operate first on Alice, another friend of Connie. Alice is housed for unruly behavior that is transgressive of her role as a black woman—in her terms, she does what she wants, and the doctors are jealous of her autonomy and

deviance of social norms (199). For her transgressions, she is labeled “violent.” As the biggest threat, the doctors operate on Alice first:

You see, we can electrically trigger almost every mood and emotion—the fight-or-flight reaction, euphoria, calm, pleasure, pain, terror! We can monitor and induce reactions through the microminuturized radio under the skull. We believe through this procedure we can control Alice’s violent attacks and maintain her in a balanced mental state.” The radio will be feeding information and telemetry straight into the computer once we’re in the institute, and Alice will be able to walk around the ward freely. (204)

The doctors forcefully create a cyborg out of Alice, in a “cost-effective” feedback loop with a computer that regulates her emotions—and all this is done while she is on display for television cameras documenting the experiment. “When she tried to fight back, the monitor turned off her rage and left her confused” (261). The machine kills agency, to an extent. With Skip, a young white man imprisoned by his parents who hope to cure his sexual orientation, the researchers attempt to provoke him into attacking them. However, “The violence-triggering electrodes did not cause [Skip] to attack them, as Alice had. Instead he turned from them and drove his fist into the wall. He pounded his head on the wall and before the attendants could force him down, blood oozed from the bandage” (263). The control behavior doesn’t work on Skip because he still has some agency... and he is a gentle person to begin with. Skip represents actual “treatment” imposed upon gay inmates of mental hospitals and prisons in the 1970s. As Kunzel notes, gay mental patients and prisoners were given succinylcholine, a muscle-relaxant that causes feelings of suffocation, along with nausea-inducing medications, and electroshock therapy as punishment for practicing their identity (218). This reference to real inhumane treatment of people who identify as homosexual shows how Piercy is historically informed and identifying dystopian practice in her

present. Significantly, the use of science fictional technologies, plausible but not far-fetched, makes the mental hospital a dystopia. This dystopia attempts to homogenize patients as a way to mitigate their differences that were disrupting the perfection of the ‘utopian’ outside world.

The mental hospital incarcerates a woman punished for standing up for herself in a racist, patriarchal society, and attempts to use technology to turn-off rebellious behavior. The choice of a mental hospital, rather than a traditional American prison, serves as an apt focus on incarceration because mental hospitals, in official discourse, drop the “punishment” part of incarceration to focus on the “rehabilitation.” In practice, as *Woman on the Edge of Time* clearly demonstrates, the rehabilitation is dropped in favor of developing cutting-edge ways to punish and control marginalized people. The mental hospital is a laboratory reminiscent of what activist Frank Tannenbaum stated in the 1920s that prisons were “the great laboratory of human psychology that can be found. It compels men to live social lives... under *unsocial* conditions, and it therefore strains to the breaking-point those things that come naturally to people in a free environment” (quoted in Kunzel 7, emphasis mine). Presumably, the techniques perfected in this “great laboratory” would be applied to the larger population, which is why Connie is in an essential position in the struggle for liberatory futurity. Luciente illustrates the high stakes: “It’s that race between technology, in the service of those who control, and insurgency—those who want to change the society in our direction. In your time the physical sciences had delivered the weapons technology. But the crux, we think, is in the biological sciences. Control of genetics. Technology of brain control. Birth-to-death surveillance. Chemical control through psychoactive drugs and neurotransmitters.” The procedure performed on the inmates is part of broader mechanisms of the carceral state, which are first implemented and perfected through experimentation on prisoners (as supported by the doctors’ quips about cost efficiency and public safety).

If Connie and her contemporaries fail, the technologies being developed in the mental hospital will be applied to the greater population. During one of her visits to the future, Connie unexpectedly visits a dystopian future filled with extreme body modifications, sexism, pollution, and wealth disparity. Connie learns that Luciente's future is not predestined and that Connie and other twentieth century disenfranchised people must fight to manifest the utopian future. As Luciente explains to Connie, "Those of your time who fought hard for change, often they had myths that a revolution was inevitable. But nothing is! All things interlock. We are only one possible future" (177). This point of tension—which future will prevail—suggests that time is subjective in that there is not a linear path (in this passage it is a critique of Marx's revolutionary destiny of the proletariat). While many classic utopias (such as William Morris's *News From Nowhere*) depict a peaceful, fated progression to a static and perfect system, Luciente's society is an ongoing revolution. In addition to having a society built with institutionalized continuous change (discussed below in point three), they must fight to ensure their own existence not only in the present war with the unseen others who inhabit the moon and Antarctica, but with the past. Connie, as a prisoner, is on the front-lines of this war for the future. As Connie nears her own turn at the mind-altering operation, she reaches out to Luciente and instead mistakenly travels to the dystopian future that will prevail if Luciente's timeline is erased. Significantly, Connie visits this world after she witnesses the effect of the operation on Alice. A new person is the guide, this time a young woman named Gildina who has been surgically altered to the point of a "cartoon of femininity" (288); she has had her body changed to match representations of ideal womanhood. Gildina is so alienated from her body that she can't even remember how to walk. After browsing a catalogue of "sense-all" films, Connie says, "Men and women haven't changed so much" (294) and recalls Times Square (this book was written before Time Square was gentrified). The

surveillance leads to a “supercop” covered in weapons to bust in on Gildina and Connie. He attempts to arrest Connie. He informs Connie that her guide is simply a “dud” who is “Cosmetically fixed for sex use” (299). Connie stands up to him and defends Gildina. “It was wonderful to feel so confident facing a sort of cop” (299), and he is puzzled by her lack of fear. The cop explains that he is not tempted by women. “That’s why we don’t need many of you useless cunts now-on. Nothing inessential. Pure, functional, reliable. We *embody the ideal*. We can be destroyed—not by you duds—but never averted, never deflected, never distracted. None of us has ever been disloyal to the multi that owns us” (299, emphasis added). Corporations own cyborgs that police subversive behavior, and they’ve been altered to be essentially unsubvertable. Connie asks him what multi stands for, and he can’t define them. Gildina pips in, “Multis own everybody” (300). The guard says, “Now we all belong to a corporate body. Multis. Like that contracty soon to be dismantled into the organ bank. Like I belong to Chase-World-TT” (300). The multi, the extrapolation and consolidation of multinational corporation as a legal subject, owns all in this dystopia. This future is the world of Luciente’s enemy if that enemy were to prevail: “This could not exist simultaneously with Mattapoissett. Could not. Or else they were at war and she had ended up somehow in the enemy camp” (293). But Connie is not behind enemy lines; there is no room for a simultaneous utopia/dystopia—only one future can prevail. Moreover, because *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a critical utopia, the categories of utopia and dystopia are not simply paired together in a binary, but they are deconstructed. These themes are later extrapolated in Piercy’s 1992 novel, *He, She, and It*.

This potential future extrapolates Connie’s present, both the mental hospital and the dystopian society of which it is a microcosm. We see the dystopian carceral state extend outside of the mental institution when Connie, as an outpatient visits her assimilated brother Louis (formerly

Luis) for Thanksgiving. It is Louis who collaborates with his daughter's pimp to incarcerate Connie. Louis home is like a prison: Connie is locked in her room, constantly surveyed, works unpaid labor, and is fed leftovers like she is a house-slave. Louis lords over his family, policing his wives' and daughters' behavior, and even the fish swim in a "glass prison" (354). This strictly-monitored visitation shows how indistinct the boundaries between prison and free world—Connie is permitted to leave the mental hospital but is never free enough to escape.

Connie's outpatient weekend not only collapses the distinction between free world and prison, but the distinction between the present and dystopian future that may come to pass. During Connie's visit to Louis's family home, the women in Connie's family melt together, all drugged: "We are not three women, Connie thought. We are ups and downs and heavy trunks meeting in the all-electric kitchen and bouncing off each other's opaque sides like shiny pills colliding" (359). Connie sees herself and her female relatives as nonhuman under the patriarch (Louis) who controls their bodies. The women use drugs to cope, only one out of the three consenting. Connie's sister-in-law dopes to stay thin and cope with a difficult husband. Connie's niece is given drugs by her pimps so they might better control her, while Connie is medicated to control her supposedly aggressive and dangerous behavior. These women echo, or anticipate, Gildina, and this scene is a prelude for the world to come—the world Connie must fight to prevent.

I have discussed the dystopian worlds articulated by *Woman on the Edge of Time*, both the present day and Gildina's future, but this novel does more than critique. As a critical utopia, it also offers ways out of the pressing inequalities it highlights. As a sub-genre of SF, (critical) utopias extrapolate on the present more so than predict the future in order to demonstrate why we should want a way out of the dystopian present. As Bill Ashcroft writes, "Critical utopias are not so much concerned with the future as much as with sketching the present and our ways out of it. Vision and

critique are deeply implicated” (418). If we apply Ashcroft’s assessment of critical utopias to *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the present day scenes serve as critique, and the future serves as a vision of one non-proscriptive alternative. As *Woman on the Edge of Time* concludes with Connie going to war to ensure a desirable future, the novel is very much concerned with “our ways out of [the present]” (Ashcroft 418). Significantly, the present-day site of critique is the mental hospital, which serves as a critique of both incarceration *and* the broader carceral state, as I elaborate below. Thus, I find that through revealing the present as dystopia, critical utopias offer critique; they analyze *why* we would want a way out of our present problems.

Woman on the Edge of Time, as a critical utopia, provides both a critique of the carceral state and a vision for alternatives. Moylan, whose *Demand the Impossible* is a major touchstone in utopian studies, defines critical utopias as:

A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as a blueprint while preserving it as a dream. Furthermore, the novels dwell on the conflict between the ordinary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated. Finally, the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within the utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives (10–11).

Woman on the Edge of Time conforms to Moylan’s definition blockquoted above. First, the novel shows an awareness of the limitations of the accusation that utopians novels are blueprints for a better world. Luciente’s future is just one possible future because there is no linear path to liberation nor revolutionary destiny. Through this awareness, *Woman on the Edge of Time* deconstructs and complicates the binary between utopia and dystopia. Second, the novel dwells on conflicts between the utopia (Mattapoissett) and dystopia, Connie’s ordinary world, a dystopian

future she visits, and the vestigial enemies that the people of Mattapoisett battle, in order to show the stakes of social change. Third, the utopian future is built on institutionalized change as an antidote to the troublesome homogeneity of the earlier, “blue-print¹⁵” utopias. It should be noted that Moylan refutes critics of utopias who claim that the earlier utopias are blueprints and totalizing, but I find that novels like *Looking Backward* can be read as blueprints. (Though Moylan dedicates a chapter to *Woman on the Edge of Time*, he does not discuss how his definition applies to this novel.) In critical utopias, “The future is never certain. Utopia is never fixed once and for all” (Moylan 148), and this is especially exemplified by importance of struggle in the absence of revolutionary destiny.

As Moylan notes in the citation above, the critical utopia is not a blueprint for a perfect world, but rather focused on the conflicts that is the catalyst for social change. In this framework, *Woman on the Edge of Time* is not an instructive novel, but emphasizes the stake of the struggle: a future worth living in. As Luciente tells Connie, “We must fight to come to exist, to remain in existence, to be the future that happens” (197-198). Luciente does not tell Connie how to fight, simply that she must. Connie escapes the dystopia and thinks, “So that was the other world that might come to be. That was Luciente’s war, and she was enlisted in it” (301). This visit to a possible future allows Connie to see herself as a soldier in a way, and prepares her to fight.

As a critical utopia, *Woman on the Edge of Time* avoids absolutes of the earlier generation of utopian writers. It takes up H.G. Wells’s 1904 assertion that, “Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of

¹⁵ It should be noted that Moylan refutes critics of utopias who claim that the earlier utopias are blueprints and totalizing, but I find that novels like *Looking Backward* can be read as blueprints.

stages,” Luciente’s world is not static but rather builds on institutionalized dynamism through diversity and change, as well as choice and participatory/direct democracy. When Connie marvels at the simplicity of Luciente’s life, Luciente replies, “But we like it this way! [...] We’d change it if we didn’t like it, how not? We’re always changing things around.” Villages are modeled after various cultures, and Luciente’s is Wamponaug Indian, modeled after “the life the ancestors led here on this continent before the white man came conquering” (70-71). However, Luciente’s people are careful not to mythologize a nostalgic past, “There was much brought that was useful. It has taken a long time to put the old good with the new good into a greater good” (71).

Piercy also envisions difference and disagreement as healthy aspects of a community. In the words of Luciente, “Our common politics give running room for disagreement [...] I like to be clear about political distinctions” (211). One such political debate is how much artificial genetic improvement should be implemented in the conception of new fetuses; the Shapers—whom we might read as transhumanists—want to genetically engineer improved humans. The mixers, including Luciente, want the current level of technological intervention in the conception of fetuses—just screening for birth defects. As one Mixer, White Oak, tells Connie, “We don’t think people can know objectively how people should become. We think it’s a power surge” (226). The mixers, however, are not technophobes, as the people of Luciente’s society are integrated with their Kenners as prosthetic memory and do use genetic screening for moderate human “improvement” through eliminating birth defects. Luciente describes the Kenner in terms of constructing a cyborg identity, although nobody in her village considers herself a cyborg: “I feel naked without my kenner. It’s part of my body. I only take it off to couple or sleep.” Were the Kenner to be lost or destroyed, Luciente reports that she would “lose two-thirds of [her] memory” (327). This is a positive construction of cyborg identity, showing how Piercy is careful to not to

demonize technology while she contrasts the technological control of Alice and Skip.

As a critical utopia, Piercy's novel is significant in that it uses the form of utopia, through the SF premise of time-travel, to imagine a world with no jail, no courts, no police, etc. She does not claim that theft, assault, and murder wouldn't happen, but such problems are resolved in creative ways, outside of the state. Luciente's world is one that institutionalizes heterogeneity and dynamism to ensure that the utopia does not become the totalitarian nightmare of critics like Popper and Talmon. The result is a world that is depicted as not perfect but quite pleasant.

Undoubtedly *Woman on the Edge of Time* is an invaluable contributions to critical utopias. However, it also represents a particular vision situated in a specific historic moment: that of radical feminism in the late 1960s and the 1970s, complete with its problems¹⁶. To generalize (admittedly reductively), radical feminists tend to view patriarchy as the central form of oppression. An early radical feminist group, the Redstockings Collective, famously wrote in their 1969 manifesto that:

Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives. Our humanity is denied. Our prescribed behavior is enforced by the threat of physical violence.

For radical feminists, though they believed that capitalism must be overthrown, patriarchy was the original oppression from which all other oppressions stemmed, including racism. A core belief of

¹⁶ M. Keith Booker describes *He, She, and It* as embodying late 1980s pessimism about the women's movement while showing more patience and less anger than *Woman on the Edge of Time* (or Russ's *The Female Man*).

radical feminists is that patriarchy socially constructs gender, and gender must be abolished along with patriarchy. All women share patriarchal oppression in common, and thus are members of a sisterhood with all other women. Women's role as child-bearers was an accident of biology that held women in their subjugated position. One of the founders of the Redstockings Collective, Shulamith Firestone, famously proposed in *The Dialectics of Sex* that infants be produced in artificial wombs in order to be free of the biological basis for the oppression of women. Firestone envisioned a "cybernetic communism" that is manifested in *Woman on the Edge of Time's* vision of collective childrearing and technologically-aided reproduction.

Radical feminism has been thoroughly critiqued by women of color feminists and other "third wave" feminists who took to task the idea of universal sisterhood. As bell hooks writes, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, many women of color did not find it politically viable to consider the men in their communities to be their oppressors. According to hooks, the anti-male sentiments of radical feminism "have alienated many poor and working-class women, particularly non-white women, from feminist movement. Their life experiences have shown them that they have more in common with men of their race and/or class group than with bourgeois white women" (69-70). Angela Davis, too, takes radical feminists to task for perpetuating the myth that black men rape white women. Of Firestone, she critiques: "Racism in general, so Firestone claims, is actually an extension of sexism. Invoking the biblical notion that '... the races are no more than the various parents and siblings of the Family of Man,' she develops a construct defining the white man as father, the white woman as wife and mother, and Black people as children. Transposing Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex into racial terms, Firestone implies that Black men harbor an uncontrollable desire for sexual relations with white women. They want to kill the father and sleep with the mother" (*Women, Race, & Class* 181). Davis

rightfully critiques a radical feminist position that perpetuates the liberal humanist paradigm that, however paternalistically, places white men above white women, and white women above black people.

Such a radical feminist analysis of racism can be captured within a scene where Connie's hosts explain their cultural identity. Bee, who becomes Connie's lover, explains that, "Wamponaug Indians are the source of our culture. Our past. Every village has a culture." Connie is reminded of her lover Claud, who physically resembles Bee. She replies to him:

"I suppose because you're black. In my time black people just discovered a pride in being black. My people, Chicanos, were beginning to feel that too. Now it seems like it got lost again."

Luciente started to say something but visibly checked herself.

Bee beamed, ambling toward another tank where he opened the viewing port. "I have a sweet friend living in Cranberry dark as I am and her tribe is Harlem-Black. I could move there anytime. But if you go over, you won't find everybody black-skinned like her and me, any more than they're all tall or all got big feet." He paused, looking intently at a small embryo, fully formed and floating just at his shoulder level. "At grandcil—grand council—decisions were made forty years back to breed a high proportion of darker-skinned people and to mix the genes well through the population. At the same time, we decided to hold on to separate cultural identities. But we broke the bond between genes and culture, broke it forever. We want there to be no chance of racism again. But we don't want the melting pot where everybody ends up with thin gruel. We want diversity, for strangeness breeds richness."

What now might seem dated about this passage is that it addresses when racism as based on

perceived biological difference; in Piercy's future, biology (skin color) does not matter. As Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha reads into the subtext of Piercy's vision: "Piercy is arguing that cultural difference and people's belief that such differences are genetic is the birthplace of racism, *the* reason why racism exists—not capitalism, colonialism, Christian supremacy, etc." (Brown).

However, as Hardt and Negri argue in *Empire*, race-as-biology is a modern view of racism. Under postmodernism, what they call imperial racism is based on cultural difference. They write: modern anti-racism positions itself against the notion of biological essentialism, and insists that differences among the races are constituted instead by social and cultural forces. These modern anti-racist theorists operate on the belief that social constructivism will free us from the straitjacket of biological determinism: if our differences are socially and culturally determined, then all humans are in principle equal, of one ontological order, one nature. (191)

For Hardt and Negri, the problem with social constructivist activism is that social constructivists believe that racism is still based on biological essentialism, whereas what Hardt and Negri call "imperial racist theory agrees that races do not constitute isolable biological units and that nature cannot be divided into different human races" and thus "our entire society can appear to be against racism, and that imperial racist theory can appear not to be racist at all" (191-192). That is, empire no longer views race as biological, but cultural.

Piercy published another science fiction novel, a decade and a half later, that avoids some of the problems in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. This book, *He, She, and It*, is the subject of Moylan's follow-up to *Demand the Impossible*. Moylan finds that *He, She, and It* moves beyond the critical utopia and set in the future, "she can take a cooler and more totalizing look at current conditions and explore ways of moving forward that activists and theoreticians—perhaps caught

in the limitations of nostalgic agendas or the pressures of immediate disputes—may not be ready or able to acknowledge or imagine. Like Robinson and Butler, she offers her readers a critical dystopian elsewhere that charts new political directions, but in her imaginative space those directions are more confrontational and successful than many people would dare to dream or hope for” (249).

Chapter Conclusion: Is Utopia Visionary or Totalitarian?

In this chapter, I have discussed two views of utopia: that utopias are totalitarian and that utopias are important tools for social change. When I suggest that an institution or society can be subjectively utopian and dystopian, it may seem that I am siding with those who argue that utopian visions are inherently totalitarian programs and thus actually dystopias. While I do assert that utopian projects *can* be dystopian in practice, as prisons show, I do not believe they *have* to be. I believe that utopias are still important parts of social change so long as we take the lesson learned from critical utopias like *Woman on the Edge of Time* that visions of the future must be flexible, adaptable, and built on valuing differences. Dystopian literature, like the prison scenes in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, offer a critique of an author’s ordinary world. But critique is insufficient to bring about social change; utopian vision is an important and essential mobilizing tool in convincing individuals that another world is possible and desirable. Significantly, some visions now seem dated, such as Piercy’s 1970s radical feminist vision, where “men” breastfeed children and babies are grown in vats. However, the lesson to learn is not a specific vision, but that one should have a vision, just not one we rigidly follow. We need utopian visions to help us out of our dystopian present.

Those who believe that the prison has no such place in a socially just world, prison abolitionists, as well as other social justice activists, still must shake off the accusation that

fighting for a just world, a world radically different than our own, is “utopian” and thus impossibly ideal. For example, S. Lamble writes that prison abolition is not “an appeal to a utopian ideal. Abolition is a broad-based, practical vision for building models today that practice how we want to live in the future tomorrow” (252). Prison abolition is not utopian, then, precisely because prison abolitionists believe their vision can become reality and have a strategy to get there. But what else are we to call broad-based and practical models for how we could have a world without prisons, if not utopian? Perhaps Tower Lyman-Sargent’s term “social dreaming” would be a less offensive term. I take up the importance of prison abolition again in this dissertation’s conclusion, but for now I will say that social dreaming is a long-standing tradition of envisioning a better future so that we know what it is we are fighting for. Social dreaming does not always have to be a blueprint, but inspire us to be better than we are. Social dreaming can help us continue to build upon the denotation of utopia without the rightfully-problematic connotation.

Chapter 3: Utopian Worlds Apart: Science Fiction Penal Colonies & Prisons-in-Space

Utopian Worlds Apart: Science Fiction Penal Colonies & Prisons-in-Space

In my previous chapter, I show how we might think of prisons—past, present, and future—as utopian and dystopian spaces. In that chapter, I discuss penal colonies as a component of the prison as a world apart. Here, I show how we can think about penal colonies as utopian and dystopian places. Because penal colonies have been abandoned as a widely-used punishment, fiction about penal colonies is typically set in an era other than the author’s present, be it historic fiction or science fiction. Science fiction, in addition to imagining speculative carceral technologies, imagines how these punitive penal technologies might be practiced on penal planets, prison ships, and prisons-in-space. Science fiction authors ranging from Robert Heinlein to Corwainer Smith have imagined penal planets, as well as television series such as *The Outer Limits*, *Blake’s 7*, and the *Star Trek* series. It is no surprise that SF texts so often depict penal colonies; if prisoners are to be sent elsewhere, the plausible “elsewhere” is outer space.

Prisons-in-space take penal colonies to their logical extreme. In the twenty-first century, if a nation wishes to deport its criminals and put them to work elsewhere, that elsewhere must be off-world. The prison-in-space imagines under what circumstances prison reform might require the revival of a penal colony. As Foucault asserts, prisons are by nature always in reform: “Prison ‘reform’ is virtually contemporary with the prison itself: it constitutes, as it were, its programme” (234). Prison reformers are incredibly adaptive and dynamic, as “The prison has always formed part of an active field in which projects, improvements, experiments, theoretical statements, personal evidence and investigations have proliferated” (Foucault 235). If a prison is always a failure and always in the process of reform, which failure calls for a prison-in-space as

punishment? If prisons by nature practice new technologies, why return to an old technique: deportation? Speculative technology facilitates the return of the penal colony.

Although penal colonies may be seen a departure from the topic of penitentiaries, they are an important ancestor in the history of incarceration, as penal colonies and penitentiaries were developed in the same era of Britain's punitive reform and were competing alternatives to capital punishment. Like prisons, they physically remove convicts from their communities and place them in bondage—forced labor for a negligible wage. A prison-in-space extrapolates the practice of penal colonies in order to examine differing relationships between the ordinary world and its prisons, often as the story's conflict. One such relationship is that of the “utopia” of the nation-state and the “dystopia” of the prison, as I unpack in my previous chapter. Penal colonies, like the penitentiary, are projects that do not fit neatly into the categories of utopia or dystopia but share logics of both. Although only a minority of Britain's criminals and poor were exported to Australia, Britain used the threat of deportation to Australia like a dystopia to threaten its poor into good behavior. However, for many of the British subjects shipped to Australia, the penal colony was a more like a utopia where they could get a fresh start. They, in turn, had to be kept in line with the fear of a secondary prison.

In this chapter, I briefly consider the history of penal colonies in terms we could think of as simultaneously utopian and dystopian. Although exile was long practiced, and France had penal colonies until the 1950s, I focus on Australia to narrow my historical comparison. Various penal colonies were quite different in form, purpose, and motive, so it is difficult to make cross-historical comparisons. I find the language of utopia and dystopia, and the relationship between the two, to be useful to think about the history of Australia. I do not argue that colonial Australia was a physical utopia or dystopia but that the history of Australia helps us think about the relationship

between punishment and utopias. Penal colonies declined for a variety of diverse reasons specific to each instance, but their overall decline represents the decline of colonialism and enclosure of frontiers. Both made sending prisoners to a remote *elsewhere* unfeasible. I then overview four fictional texts in this chapter: Kafka's "In the Penal Colony," an episode of Ronald D. Moore's 2003-2009 *Battlestar Galactica*, "Bastille Day," George Zebrowski's *Brute Orbits*, and Robert Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. I consider each of these penal colony's relationship with its original world, the reliability of technology in solving problems, the depiction of prisoners, the "routineness" of the penal colony/ship presented, and the ways in which the penal subjects demonstrate agency (if at all). These texts are not predicting that there will one day be outer-space penal colonies. As I note in this dissertation's introduction, SF is not typically a "futurist" venture. Instead, it takes present (or in this case, historic) practices to their logical extreme. The prison planet, or prison ship, imagines how nation states might reclaim and extend this historic practice of sending prisoners *away*.

The fantasy of returning to penal colonies is not simply nostalgia for a "better" method of punishment; Australian penal colonies did have a record of "reforming" convicts due to the new economic opportunities available to deported convicts that built Australia's colonial infrastructure. Some of SF's return to penal colonies comes from a desire to see punishment that actually accomplishes the prison's alleged mission of reform.

In this chapter, I consider how SF imagines how penal colonies can be viably restored through the speculative technologies of space-travel. I argue that penal colonies are more literally a world apart than prisons: they are islands or continents removed from the nation. I show how SF allows for another fantasy: that of a prison with an absentee state and its guards. The "what if?" question asked by this fiction is, "what if prisoners ran their own prison?" These texts depict

diverse scenarios, ranging from stable-if-harsh self-governance to chaotic, murderous collapse of social order. The SF I discuss offers two versions of “anarchy” as an answer. The first is a Hobbesian state-of-nature (the slanderous use of “anarchy”) where prisoners have lost their humanity. “In the Penal Colony” and *Brute Orbits* both explore this scenario. The second option is a more positive anarchy where prisoners regain their humanity through self-governance and political autonomy, as represented in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. *Battlestar Galactica* teeters between both options, before briefly settling on prisoner self-governance.

Penal Colonies: Science Fiction’s Historic Antecedent

In order to analyze representations of penal colonies in SF, it is useful to briefly consider the real-world practices upon which SF penal colonies are based, as well as the reasons for their decline, so we can see how SF extrapolates this historical institution. Penal colonies were a type of punitive exile, largely reserved for the poor. The scholarship on penal colonies is thin in contrast to that on penitentiaries; James J. Willis asserts that the history of transportation has been overlooked in favor of theorizing about the penitentiary in the works of Michel Foucault and Michael Ignatieff. Although motives for penal colonies are complex and varied, historians provide two major explanations for Britain’s sustained use of punitive transport. First is the belief that criminality is innate and inherited, so removing the criminal meant curing social ills in the home country. Second is that the colonies needed laborers, and criminals filled the colonies with cheap skilled and unskilled workers who could build the empire’s colonial infrastructure.¹⁷ Although

¹⁷ These generalizations apply primarily to Australia. In the example of transport to the Americas, A. Roger Ekirch argues that transport was not a deterrent because offenders were removed from public view. Nor was it to fill the colonies with laborers. He argues that it is primarily for expulsion of criminal elements (19), which is concurrent with the motives for

scholars disagree over the purpose of transportation, Robert Hughes (writing specifically on Australia) summarizes its most board purposes: “The proponents of British transportation had hoped that, broadly speaking, it would do four things: sublimate, deter, reform and colonize” (582). In other words, transportation would civilize criminals, prevent future crime, reform criminals, and populate a nation’s colonies.

Transportation was most popular with the British empire, and was introduced by King James I in 1615, when he declared that “justice be tempered with mercie” so offenders could perform “profitable service to the Commonwealth” (quoted in Spiernburg 67), though it was not routinely practiced until the Transportation Act of 1718 (Ekirch 17). Although Australia is more widely remembered as Britain’s penal colony, Britain deported convicts to the Americas for over fifty years in the mid-eighteenth century. A. Roger Ekirch, one of the few historians of penal transport to the American colonies, estimates that Britain sold over 30,000 penal laborers to private contractors in the Americas between 1718 and 1775 (23). Only after the American revolution did Australia became the site of British penal transport. The colonization of Australia shortly followed the British parliament’s passage of The Penitentiary Act in 1779, the reform legislation co-written by prison reformer John Howard, author of the treatise *State of the Prisons*. Howard sought to both reform workhouses and decrease the crimes that warranted execution or exile. Historian John Bender notes that The Penitentiary Act prompted reform of county and town jails, to model the hygiene and monastic solitude I discuss in my previous chapter, by the 1780s (23). In contrast, penal historian John Hirst finds that the Penitentiary Act was too expensive to implement on a large scale, and Parliament thus favored colonization (“The Australian Experience” 264). He reports that Britain exported 187,000 convicts to Australia between 1788

transport to Australia.

and 1815 (“The Australian Experience” 266). Joanna Innes and John Styles, however, argue that lawmakers found *both* transportation and imprisonment to be suitable intermediaries, which they call secondary punishments within the broader penal system, between capital punishment and whipping or branding. As they write, “The history of English penal policy from 1660 and 1800 is largely (though not exclusively) a story of the alternation of these two in favor of the changing (mainly growing) role assigned to such secondary punishments within the penal system at large” (417). Both penitentiaries and transportation were alternatives to capital punishment under the “benefit of the clergy,” which allowed those convicted of non-violent property offenses to read a passage from the Bible to escape the death sentence¹⁸ (Beattie 141-2).

Hirst was among a handful of Australian historians in the 1980s that showed interest in the importance of the penal colony in Australia history. His book, *Convict Society and Its Enemies*, was followed by Robert Hughes *The Fatal Shore* and Stephen Nicholas’s edited anthology *Convict Workers*. These historians worked to complicate the popular imaginary that Australia was founded by a majority of hardened criminals and prostitutes (Nicholas and Shergold 3). Although the French would later establish their own penal colonies, Hirst suggests that Australia is the only true penal colony for it is Australia alone where “convicts [had] been sent to found the society in which they were to endure their punishment” (“The Australian Experience” 264). For Hirst, British ministers planned that convicts become “a self-sufficient peasantry” that would grow its own food (“The Australian Experience” 267).

As in my previous chapter, we can use the categories “utopia” and “dystopia”—and the relationship between the two—to think about historic penal colonies. As new worlds, penal

¹⁸ A. Roger Ekirch notes that the benefit of clergy was frequently ignored (16).

colonies could be viewed as both. To deter crime in Britain, Australia¹⁹ must be viewed by the public as an unpleasant place. Supporters of transport propagandized that the Australian colonies were a horrible places. However, after a few decades, stories made their way back to Britain of convicts making an honest living and becoming middle class, something that was not possible in England. Thus convicts sought to go to Australia, for “[w]ithin twenty years, the richest people in the colony were ex-convict merchants and bankers” (Hirst “The Australian Experience” 268). Ex-convicts were even granted legal rights that they would not have in Britain, “Since convicts composed three-quarters of the original population of New South Wales, they were given legal rights denied to convicts in Britain” (Hirst “The Australian Experience” 267). These legal rights included the right to sue, the right to give evidence in court against their own overseers, and the right to own property. In all, ex-convicts succeeded in Australia because they had the opportunity to succeed when removed from the impoverishing conditions of post-agrarian-reform Britain.

The first generation of transports also experienced relative freedom of mobility. For thirty years, “no convict was subject to anything approaching an institutional regime of confinement or punishment” (Hirst “The Australian Experience” 272). As transport became desirable to many of Britain’s poor, we could think of Australia existing as a utopia in their imaginations. However, this was a problem for British lawmakers because a desirable penal colony interfered with its function as a dystopian deterrent for crime. In response to criticism, in the 1820s, physical prisons were built in Australia that were removed from the colonial cities, the most well-known being Port Arthur in Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania). Colonial officials also implemented

¹⁹ As I discuss in the introduction to this dissertation, the Americas were described as a utopia to recruit colonists. It is unclear if this contradicted the use of transport of the Americas as a deterrent for crime.

chain gangs to terrorize colonists into lawful behavior.

Only a small minority of convicts were housed in Australian penitentiaries or served in chain gangs, but the conditions were horrific. Because Port Arthur is still standing, Hirst believes that it has come to unfairly represent the penal experience in Australia. He argues that Port Arthur is actually “quite unrepresentative of convict life” although it significantly represented “the attempt to modernize the system of transportation and make it conform to the principles of its critics, the proponents of the penitentiary” (“The Australian Experience” 282). Such critics included Jeremy Bentham²⁰, who advocated for penitentiaries in Britain, with his infamous panopticon, rather than transport. Hughes, in contrast to Hirst, emphasizes the importance of Port Arthur and other penitentiaries: “[Penitentiaries like Norfolk Island and Macquarie Harbor] held a minority of convicts but they were absolutely integral to the System: they provided a standard of terror by which good behavior on the mainland of New South Wales (or so the authorities hoped) would be enforced” (xiv). The secondary penitentiaries, then, served to terrorize transports, ex-convicts, and their freeborn decedents into lawful behavior. The prisons could deter crime in

²⁰ Although Jeremy Bentham's panopticon was not manifested in his lifetime, his designs were implemented on transport ships to Australia to reduce transport fatalities: regulations for order, cleanliness, and captains' conduct. A naval surgeon was required to accompany each ship. Ironically, Bentham's own recommendations debunked some of his objections to penal transport, "the supposed dangers and uncertainty of convict voyages" (Hirst "The Australian Experience" 265-266). Bentham also argued that the penal colony was "costly, uncertain in the punishment it inflicted, unlikely to reform because those employing convicts were interested solely in profit, and unable to deter because punishment took place at a distance" (Hirst "The Australian Experience" 274).

Australia, and in turn make Australia once again a crime deterrent in Britain.

The decline of penal colonies is equally complicated, and thorough exploration of the topic is beyond the scope of this chapter. Clearly, the American revolution ended penal transport to what would become the United States. Penal transport to Australia ended due to unpopularity from non-convict creole populations, who saw convicts as driving down their wages. The penitentiary grew in popularity in Britain, where transport was viewed as inhumane.

The cause of decline most interesting to me, one interested in the relationship between the idea of a “utopia” with the idea of a “dystopia,” is that Australia worked *too well* at reforming criminals. As Hughes aptly notes, prisoner transport was “social amputation” based on the belief that criminals manufactured crime. However, “Transportation had to fail in this, because the causes of crime lay further back in the social system: in poverty, inequality, unemployment and want, and in laws that had relentlessly created new categories of ‘transportable’ crime” (582). Ironically, penal colonies *did* offer the opportunity for reform for the colonists themselves, and that was a problem for British lawmakers because opportunity failed to deter crime. I would emphasize that convicts were successfully “reformed” not because convict labor changed their constitution, but because they were reformed from the inescapable poverty of their home country and were given opportunities to earn a living. This was at great expense to the aboriginal peoples of Australia, whose experiences were not explicitly present in the scholarship on Australian penal colonies. (Unlike historic penal colonies, the SF I review conveniently depicts habitats free of indigenous populations.)

Penal colonies on a large scale ended when Australia closed its ports to transportees. However, penal colonies continued on a smaller scale, more accurately described as island penitentiaries than colonies. France took up penal colonies after the British discontinued them, but

French penal colonies were “a rigorous and distant form of imprisonment,” (Foucault 272), an over-seas prison rather than a colony populated by exported prisoners. France finally closed its last penal colony, Devil’s Island, off the coast of Guiana, in 1953. The United States still operates the island prison Guantanamo Bay, on Cuba, as of this writing.

Historic penal colonies share some form and function with modern penitentiaries. Like penal colonies, American-style penitentiaries remove marginalized populations from their communities and force prisoners to labor for the profit of the state and corporations. If Hirst is correct that penal colonies were not intended to reform convicts, we might compare them to American late-twentieth century prisons, which have abandoned the guise of reform in favor of mass incarceration: “The concept of ‘rehabilitation’ has ceased to have any conceptual or practical meaning, as prison and post-release educational and vocational programs have been eviscerated” (Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock xiii). Since U.S. President Reagan’s “tough on crime” program, prisons have become more like penal colonies in function: a way to remove undesirables and put them to work. However, even prisons are figuratively worlds apart, they still exist physically and figuratively within the carceral state. Due to the foreclosure of “frontiers”, the practice of penal colonies is unlikely to be revived unless one turns to outer space, which is where science fiction comes in: it imagines how the colonial project of penal colonies might continue if outer space is a new frontier in need of settlement.

“In The Penal Colony”: A More Perfect Dystopia

The community depicted in Franz Kafka’s 1919 short story, “In the Penal Colony” (*In der Strafkolonie*)²¹, initially resembles a historical penal colony: the short story’s unnamed penal

²¹ I use Ian Johnson's translation, which contains a few changes from the original 1948

colony is a tropical settlement belonging to a European nation, where the colonists are free to move about but must follow strict rules. This story, along with Kafka's larger body of fiction, is often regarded as dark, surrealist, and sometimes nihilistic, containing themes of alienation and hopelessly unnavigable bureaucracies. Though Kafka is rarely read as a realist author, few consider his work to be science fiction. It might accordingly seem an unusual text to include in a discussion of penal colonies in space. I use "In the Penal Colony" as both an example that more closely resembles the historic institution while simultaneously possessing some of the formal features of SF. Nonetheless, I read "In the Penal Colony" as SF because it features a *novum*—in this case a speculative disciplinary technology—and its social implications. I interpret "In the Penal Colony" as doing two things significant to my discussion of SF penal colonies: (1) it shows and breaks down the utopia/dystopia binary and (2) complicates the figure of the visitor.

In this short story, a foreign man known as the Traveler visits his unnamed European nation's penal colony, established on a tropical island. The Officer, a colonial bureaucrat, proudly introduces the Traveler to a machine that carves a criminal's sentence into the body of the condemned for twenty-four hours, in the last twelve of which the condemned experience a spiritual thrall. The Officer asks the Traveler to persuade the colony's Commander to save the machine. The Traveler tries to remain impartial, but finds the machine appalling, and refuses to help the Officer. The Officer realizes that the machine is to be decommissioned, and inserts himself into it so he can have the mystical experience of those executed. However, the machine malfunctions and quickly stabs him in the head.

translation that is most widely read by English-speakers. Namely, the Explorer becomes "the Traveller" in Johnson's translation. For me, the label traveler best fits the "outsider" figure of utopian fiction.

There is a hearty amount of scholarship on “In the Penal Colony” from nearly every critical orientation. Scholars have read and taught “In the Penal Colony” from perspectives of modernity studies, law and literature studies²², postcolonialism²³, psychoanalysis²⁴, reader response²⁵, presentism²⁶, post-structuralism²⁷, postmodernism²⁸, and even feminism. Many scholars focus

²² See Lida Kirchberger's "In the Penal Colony' or The Machinery of the Law." She argues that in the machine's failure, it is "shown to be the embodiment not only of a fictitious legal system in force on a remote island, but also of the familiar metaphor of the machinery of the law."

²³ In addition to Paul Peters's "Witness to the Execution: Kafka and Colonialism," see Karen Piper's "The Language of the Machine: A Post-Colonial Reading of Kafka," read the short story as post-colonial. Piper locates “In the Penal Colony,” first written in 1914, with the height of colonialism, the year when 85% of the earth was held as a colony of some sort.

²⁴ For an example, see James S. Whitlark's essay "Kafka's Parodies of Sexual Homicide."

²⁵ See Yoseph Milman's "The Ambiguous Point of View and Reader Involvement in Kafka: A Reader Oriented approach to *The New Castle* and 'In the Penal Colony.'" He emphasizes the importance of the subjective reader's participation in reading "In the Penal Colony" alongside Kafka's *Castle*.

²⁶ James Conant, in "In the Electoral Colony: Kafka and Florida," and Susan Marks, in "Torture and the Penal Colony," read "In the Penal Colony" in dialogue with twenty-first-century historical events, the contested 2000 presidential election in Florida and the torture of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers in Abu Ghraib, respectively. Scott McClintock, meanwhile, uses "In the Penal Colony" to discuss the precarious legal status of the detainees in the United States' island prison of Guantanamo Bay.

²⁷ Michael Hoquist, in "Metropole and Penal Colony: Two Models of Comparison," uses

on the island itself, while others consider the significance of the apparatus. It is no surprise that critics would be drawn to discuss the machine that literally writes sentencing onto the body of the condemned. This relationship is significant for those interested in what punitive “justice” does to the body of the condemned, as well as the relationship between body and machine. For example, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari note that, “the machine seems to have a strong degree of unity and the man enters completely into it” (8). For Judith Butler, writing on the body presupposes the *a priori* existence of a body that must be destroyed in order to create historic values (130).

Neither Deleuze and Guattari nor Butler got beyond naming “In the Penal Colony” in passing, but use it as a touchstone for entering a machine and discursively destroying the body, respectively.

Ollivier Dyens, too, discusses the body’s integration with the machine, in this case the officer: “the tortured officer (who has ‘saved’ the machine by voluntarily feeding it his own body) ends up

Kafka's short story to show the impossibility of the object/subject binary. Other post-structuralists focuses on the deconstruction of the discursive and physical body. For example, Marc Kipness argues that “In the Penal Colony,” like Kafka’s other short stories, is story about material embodiment, “the pain and suffering of the flesh” (47). See also Richard T. Gray's "Disjunctive Signs: Semiotics, Aesthetics, and Failed Mediation in 'In der Strafkolonie.'" Gray concludes that "In the Penal Colony" represents the failure of interpretive mediation and "presents a scathing critique not only of the idealistic fantasies of semiotic immediacy and aesthetic mediation, but also of the acts of narrative mediation concretized in Kafka's own fiction" (~45).

²⁸ Steven Taubeneck advocates reading and teaching “In the Penal Colony” as postmodern in order to account for its irony and interpretations that go against the grain of reading the story as emblematic of modernity.

withdrawing from his world into a new territory, where both his body and existence are reformulated, where he becomes one with the machine” (65). Even the protagonist of Haruki Murakami’s novel *Kafka on the Shore* is fascinated with the mechanism, privately confiding that “I was talking about something very real. Kafka’s complex, mysterious execution device wasn’t some metaphor or allegory—it’s actually *here*, all around me” (54). Murakami’s protagonist’s thoughts harken back to the carceral state, which is not a metaphor but an analysis of the functions of power.

Though no scholarship (to my knowledge) regards “In the Penal Colony” as SF, some do discuss themes of technoculture and mechanization. Dyens gets the closest when he suggests that Kafka wrote at a precise moment between the advent of SF and the advent of modern technoculture. Dyens argues that machine-bodies make the world intelligible in the tradition of 1980s cyberpunk (65). I find that “In the Penal Colony” can be read as SF because the machine serves as the story’s *novum*. The machine is a social experiment prompting the question “what if?” about both a piece of technology and “utopian” social arrangement of the broader penal colony. The SF-style *novum* in “In the Penal Colony” is found when the Officer lovingly describes just how his “new thing” works: “The one underneath is called the Bed, the upper one is called the Incriber, and here in the middle, the moving part is called the Harrow.” He goes on to detail, in detail, the twelve hour process in which the sentence is written on the convict’s body, including the last six hours of euphoria. This apparatus is reminiscent of what Foucault says of the panopticon: “a marvelous machine” that “produces *homogenous effects of power*” (202, emphasis added).

Though the short story possesses a *novum*, what cognitive features allow it to be read as SF rather than fantasy or, in contrast, realism? “In the Penal Colony” estranges colonialism. At first glance, the tropical setting of “In the Penal Colony” would allow the story to be read as set on the

French penal colony Devil's Island, in the middle of its century-long operation at the time of Kafka's writing. The corporal punishment certainly resembles that of British colonies, which Michael Meranze describes as, "Before the American Revolution, Pennsylvania deployed a system of public punishments modeled on English criminal sanctions. Through corporal and capital penalties, the state seized the body of the condemned and directly inscribed its sanctions on the body. These penalties were not only inflicted in the open; they were openly corporal" (3). However, as Paul Peters notes in the essay "Witness to the Execution: Kafka and Colonialism," the penal colony is "in fact quite unlike any penal colony ever known," including Devil's Island (407), because the structure does not resemble any historic penal colony. Though Peters does not consider the story SF, he believes that the landscape of colonialism is concealed by "estrangement"²⁹ in the Brechtian sense (404)—the concept of estrangement Suvin uses in his definition of science fiction as literature of cognitive estrangement. Peters's claim that the unnamed colonial experience is estranging rather than realist (or cognitive, to use Suvin's term) might be an unexpected one. However, the penal colony is not supposed to represent a specific historic moment, but a phenomenon (such as colonialism) extrapolated and taken out of time and context.

To demonstrate that the penal colony is representative of colonialism as a whole, the characters in "In the Penal Colony" are known only by their profession, and their physical features are only minimally described. Peters suggests that the nameless island functions as "a kind of all-encompassing and universal name, which serves to fix and transfix within their apparent namelessness not only the place where the story unfolds, not only all the characters within it, but

²⁹ Kafka influenced magical realists such as Borges, whose writing is estranging but not typically considered cognitive.

indeed all that which occurs in the narrative itself" (407). The unnamed colony and characters lead Peters to suggest that "colonialism is this unspoken and unspeakable 'name' which stands veiled at the centre of Kafka's title and his text, waiting to be unmasked" (403). Unmasking the names would reveal "an actual historical topography" that is "the landscape of colonialism." Like the unnamed characters, the penal colony and nations are unnamed. Which country, and which era, are irrelevant because "In the Penal Colony" comes to stand for the trans-historical and non-particular practice of penal colonies, a widely but diversely-implemented practice of penal colonies.

To add to Peter's interpretation, I find that the figure of the Traveler, a trope of utopian fiction, serves as a grounding character for readers to identify with as they learn about the apparatus along with him. In this story, the Traveler, or outsider, is an archetypal character in utopian literature, who reveals that the utopia is a dystopia³⁰. In classic utopian fiction, such as *Utopia* or the later *News From Nowhere* or *Herland*, a traveler from the author's era and nation—the originary world—visits the utopia. At first, he or she is appalled by the utopia, but throughout the narrative, comes to accept it as better than the originary world, and returns to his or her own world to spread the good word of utopia. The traveler figure is the character the reader is to identify with, and along with the traveler, the reader should come to see the utopia as a logical

³⁰ "In The Penal Colony," shares formal features with dystopian fiction. In dystopian narratives, often someone from within the dystopia comes to "wake up" and realize his own society is undesirable and unjust, and usually (unsuccessfully) resist. For example, in Zamyatin's *We*, typically classified as the first dystopian novel, the protagonist D-503 comes to realize that the One State is actually a planet-wide panopticon. D-503 attempts to join a liberation movement, but fails and is lobotomized.

and just way of arranging a human society. Even *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the 1970s critical utopia I discuss in my previous chapter, follows this structure: Connie time-travels to a utopian future and thinks surely there must have been some disaster for humans to have returned to living in small, simple farm villages. However, upon more visits, she realizes that Mattapoissett is a potential utopian future, and realizes the stakes of ensuring this future comes to pass.

The Traveler's role as impartial observer can be observed by how the Traveler's assessment of the civility (or lack there of) of the apparatus affects the politics of the penal colony:

The Traveller thought about the situation: it is always questionable to intervene decisively in strange circumstances. He was neither a citizen of the penal colony nor a citizen of the state to which it belonged. If he wanted to condemn this execution or even hinder it, people could say to him: You are a foreigner—keep quiet. He would have nothing in response to that, but could only add that he did not understand what he was doing on this occasion, for the purpose of his traveling was merely to observe and not to alter other people's judicial systems in any way.

The Traveler here attempts to serve the role of an impartial, objective outsider (which of course is a fallacy within the story—the Officer notes that the Traveller will immediately have sway). Like an anticipation of postmodern relativity (the belief that everything is culturally relative and therefore no moral judgments can be made, especially by outsiders), as an outsider the Traveller can make no moral judgment. The Officer challenges the false neutrality of the Traveller: “You are biased in your European way of seeing things” (17). In short, like traditional works of utopian fiction, “In the Penal Colony” is set on an island and features a character who is a traveler, visiting from the ordinary world, in this case an unnamed European country.

In addition to estranging readers while grounding them through the Traveler, “In the Penal

Colony” can also be read as a world apart in the sense of the “utopian” prisons I discuss in my previous chapter. The penal colony is officially a model society executing experimental punitive technologies upon those ejected from the home nation. As the Officer tells the Traveler, the mechanism was designed by the previous Commandant, the chief officer of the colony, as a part of his self-contained, perfect system:

“Have you heard of our previous Commandant? No? Well, I’m not claiming too much when I say that the organization of the entire penal colony is his work. We, his friends, already knew at the time of his death that the administration of the colony was so self-contained that even if his successor had a thousand new plans in mind, he would not be able to alter anything of the old plan, at least not for several years.”

Despite the Officer’s idolization of his earlier Commandant, the traveler soon learns that both the machine *and* the colony are in disorder: “Also a sprocket in the Inscriber is excessively worn. It really squeaks. When it’s in motion one can hardly make oneself understood. Unfortunately replacement parts are difficult to come by in this place.” The apparatus that kept order decays under the new Commandant’s regime. By the story’s present, the apparatus fails to maintain order in the colony through the spectacle of public corporal punishment, returning to what Thomas Hobbes famously theorized was the state of “man” prior to the state:

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing

such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

The Traveller represents anxiety that without the order of a strong governing state, the penal colony would collapse into a poor nasty and brutish place.

Penal colonies are worlds apart more literally than the penitentiary because they are islands removed from the owning state. As in other SF, especially utopian propaganda literature, the traveler figure is a visitor from the reader's world or present day is an outsider serving as a preset surrogate for the reader. What is "normal" to The Officer is foreign to the Traveler, and the reader can experience the *novum* as the Traveler does. (However, we later learn what is normal to the Officer is not the status quo in the penal colony, as the machine goes out of fashion and ends up killing him). That the island is a penal colony built around speculative technology further suggests we consider the short story as a dys/utopia. Moreover, the device fits within the prison's enlightenment history because the machine adheres to mechanistic guidelines. "In the Penal Colony" is an apt example of a failed utopia. Because utopian fiction is a sub-genre of SF, the Traveler is a figure who helps the reader be oriented and not entirely estranged. In addition to being a "utopia," the speculative punitive apparatus invites "In the Penal Colony" to be read as SF.

With "In the Penal Colony," not only the traveler comes to despise what he takes for granted, but the entire colony has come to despise the machine, which they see as atavistic. As the Officer tells the Traveler, "This process and this execution... have at present no more open supporters in our colony. I am its single defender and at the same time the single advocate for the legacy of the Old Commandant." The Officer is nostalgic for an earlier era when "the entire valley was overflowing with people" and "the whole society—and every high official had to

attend—arranged itself around the machine.” This decay stems from the atavism of the apparatus, an inversion of progress. The machine initially seems to carry on its social function even without the social support; however this proves to be untrue when the officer is instantly killed by the machine and robbed of the death he desires: 12-hours of inscription. Without the support of the colony, the machine fails to create the spectacle of public punishment.

With the decaying penal colony comes the dehumanization of its inhabitants. The residents of the penal colony become indistinguishable and interchangeable. When the Condemned Man is freed from the machine and spared from execution, he jokes with the Soldier:

The Soldier and the Condemned Man were keeping each other busy. With the tip of his bayonet the Soldier pulled out the Condemned Man’s shirt and trousers which were lying in the hole. The shirt was horribly dirty, and the Condemned Man washed it in the bucket of water. When he was putting on his shirt and trousers, the Soldier and the Condemned Man had to laugh out loud, for the pieces of clothing were cut in two up the back.

Both are foolish, one-dimensional, and tropes rather than human. The Traveller sees them this way. As the story concludes, he boards a boat and is pursued by the Soldier and Condemned Man. The Traveller fights them off with a rope so they do not leap aboard his boat. The Traveller flees the island rather than compassionately helping to rescue them, not wanting to be trained by the sub-human inhabitants of the penal colony.

In short, “In the Penal Colony” estranges colonialism and its penal colony. The figure of the Traveller allows readers a vantage point to enter this strange and dysfunctional society, experiencing it alongside the Traveller. The Traveller learns that the colony is anything but progressive, and with a nearly-absentee government, the colony decays into chaotic disorder. Moreover, that the Officer is killed in a failed spectacle suggests that the penal colony is *not* a viable

institution. The convicts and colonists demand nothing; they are depicted as unintelligent and less-than-human. The penal colony dehumanizes them.

Prisoner Autonomy in *Battlestar Galactica*

Although not the touchstone text that is “In the Penal Colony,” the 2003-2009 television series *Battlestar Galactica* is a popular subject of cultural studies and media criticism with a few dozen articles published over the last decade³¹, though to my knowledge no scholar specifically discusses the episode “Bastille Day.” In this episode early in the first season, the spaceship called *The Astral Queen* becomes self-governed by the prisoners.” The show details how the humans attempt to maintain a military and civilian government as they are persecuted by their creations, the synthetic lifeforms called cylons that destroyed all human civilizations. The crew of the eponymous ship and the civilian government face a different threat to their survival each episode. “Bastille Day” episode begins by carrying over from the previous week’s crisis, when a cylon sabotaged the fleet’s water supply. Now, water has been found, but it is on a harsh ice moon, and with most of the human species dead, there is no surplus labor pool to extract the frozen water. Because *Battlestar Galactica* is interested in characters and their conflicts rather than SF gadgets, it offers no easy, gadget-based technological solutions, the crew of the ship must often solve their problems through politics and social arrangements. Lee Adama, a military officer and son of the commander, remembers the survivors include a ship full of prisoners who were being transported

³¹ Many scholars discuss themes of gender, race, reproduction, torture and terrorism, and posthumanism and immortality. A few, Van Leavenworth, in “Utopia, Relationality and Ecology: Resurrecting the Natural in *Battlestar Galactica*,” considers how utopia, as both a better world and an impossible dream, serves to ideologically demarcate the humans from cylons.

to receive parole. *The Astral Queen* is not a strict penal colony because it resides within close proximity the non-incarcerated citizens. Nonetheless, I regard it as a penal colony due to its status as a separate-self contained (and mobile) world.

In "Bastille Day", due to a water shortage, the colonial fleet needs the labor of the 1,500 incarcerated individuals, all men, aboard the *Astral Queen* to harvest water from a dangerous ice moon. Off camera, Adama, commander of *Battlestar Galactica*, approaches President Laura Roslin to propose using prison labor. The scene cuts in with Roslin's reply: "Slave labor." Adama replies that the criminals have been sentenced to hard labor and this is a physically dangerous job and that "this is not for civilians." Previously, individuals were categorized as civilians, military, and cylon. The legitimate, state honored humanity of the former two is never questioned, but now we have another category: prisoner. The prisoners are not seen as civilians by Commander Adama, which is an important dehumanizing demarcation in a universe where the line between human and nonhuman is essential to the survival of the human race, and is of course (to question such boundaries) blatantly crossed as the humans and their enemies, the cylons, question how different they really are. The *Astral Queen* is not strictly a penal colony because it is not designed for long-term incarceration, but it effectively becomes one when the prisoners are unable to leave.

Whereas Commander Adama is quick to pragmatically see the prisoners as objects, useful tools for labor, his son, Captain Apollo, has a more liberal approach to dealing with the problem of *Astral Queen's* prisoners. In the same scene, Apollo points out to his father that these men were traveling to parole hearings, "which at least implies they may be ready for release." Apollo sees prison as a means of rehabilitation to put misfits back into functioning society. Apollo is a reformist; he expects the prisoners to willingly work towards freedom but doesn't challenge the structures that categorize prisoner/civilian. In college he read the prisoners' leader Zarek's banned

book (which Zarek had smuggled out of prison) and found it "radical, challenging." He tells Zarek, "It made me question some things I'd accepted before without thinking." Zarek correctly guesses that Apollo has never been inside of a prison before. No surprise: Apollo is college educated, from a privileged family with his father a commander and grandfather a lawyer, and nepotism informed Apollo's promotions as much as his talent. Having only considered prisons in theory doesn't translate to mastering them in practice.

Apollo's theoretical notion of the prisoner is immediately complicated when he arrives as a representative of the military. He gives a speech to the prisoners of the *Astral Queen*, expecting them to willingly work to earn points for freedom; Apollo expects the prisoners to consent to work. But Zarek, as their leader, is unwilling to offer such consent. They'll work if ordered, but as Zarek tells Apollo, "They're not my men, they belong to you. I belong to you. You own us. You're the master, we're the slaves." Like President Roslin, Zarek invokes master/slave rhetoric to describe his own conditions (the word slave signifies race, although Apollo and Zarek are both played by white actors, and the *Battlestar Galactica* doesn't have our categories of race construction). Zarek says explicitly what prisoners are, property of the government and military under a capitalist economy. In the "real world" prison industrial complex, prisoners are also property forced to work for pennies on the hour and essentially slaves. Prisoners are property, as well, as an income for the corporate run prisons that get paid per bed.

Apollo tells Zarek that people are under the threat of dying if his prisoners don't work, which normalizes prison because alternatives are unimaginable. Zarek then leads Apollo into admitting that freedom is *earned*, and at that moment the prisoners on *Astral Queen* revolt and through a bribed or sympathetic guard, seize control of the ship. Zarek's demand is to be treated like men, not animals--he's resisting the dehumanization put on his people. But his demands aren't

just for the prisoners, he wants freedom for the humans he's been denied to be a part of when he says that, "These demands are made not for me or for the former slaves held on this ship, but for you, the people, the survivors of the holocaust and the children of humanity's future." One of his demands is the resignation of Laura Roslin because she was not elected by the will of the people.

Of prison revolts, Foucault writes that prison revolts of the 20th century were "revolts against an entire state of physical misery" (30). He goes on to argue that prison revolts were not merely about the state of misery within the prison, but the prison's "very materiality as an instrument and vector of power; it is this whole technology of power over the body that the technology of the 'soul' ... fails to either conceal or to compensate" (30). Technologies of the soul are those social forces ("educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists") that construct the virtual category of the soul that imprisons the body. Tom Zarek revolts against not that he's imprisoned, but the social conditions oppressing the humans in the colonial fleet. (Never mind the cylon threat.)

In "Panopticism", Foucault writes that segmented surveillance presents the illusion of control during a time of chaos. The implied lateral invisibility of separate cells is supposed to guarantee order: "If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot" (200). Cylons represent disorder, and the regimented life in the military, civilian government, and prison are "traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing... immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears a distinct way over all individual bodies--this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city" (198). The segmentation failed to control the disorder brought by the cylon holocaust because Zarek successfully organized a political reform (he wants the old government back). Alternatively, the prisoners may be poorly segmented because they're on a transport ship that is not designed for long-term incarceration.

Apollo ultimately forces the government to commit to holding elections when Roslin finishes the late president Adar's term. As a one man hero, Apollo also leaves the ship in the hands of the prisoners, giving them autonomy over their own vessel. The *Astral Queen* actual works as an autonomous prisoner run ship. The sovereignty of prisoners may only be a reform, but considering the limited access to resources or even the category of human, granting Zarek his rights seems moderate in the face of the cylon threat. Zarek gets his election, Roslin and Adama get their fuel.

While many of the texts I have cited are accessed by specialized audiences, there is also science fiction that is consumed by an audience of millions that puts critiques of the prison industrial complex outside of the academy such as *Battlestar Galactica* and the BBC series *The Prisoner*. "Bastille Day" features alternative methods of resistance, which I find significant because diverse methods of resistance would be needed in order to abolish the prison industrial complex. Otherwise, reforms will continue to be adapted by the monolithic global powers in which the prison industrial complex is intertwined. Zarek ultimately abolishes state run incarceration in gaining autonomy of his own people. Zarek works to resist within the limited options available to them. Both regain humanity within texts that question how desirable a category of humanity may be. Science fiction imagines liberation in the future as a site of liberating the present. In implanting narratives of working alternatives to prisons, prison abolition becomes viable in public discourse, which is necessary for prison abolition to become a reality.

Because *Battlestar Galactica* is science fiction, it can offer more sympathetic motives for political prisoners than in realist scripted television. However, the format of television also allows the writers to neglect developing the fullest implication of political themes; even in a show such as *Battlestar Galactica* that features plot-arcs that transcend seasons, plotlines are dropped due to

changing writers, feedback from critics and fans, and pressure from the television network to change the direction and feel of a show in an attempt to boost ratings. Consider what becomes of Zarek and the residents of the *Astral Queen*: in the fourth season, Zarek is revealed to be a self-serving manipulator who uses rhetoric of democracy to promote his own agenda: personal power. Zarek is initially ambiguous, but becomes a nearly-evil character when he manipulates a military officer into staging a coup and then orders the murder of the civilian government. The residents of the *Astral Queen* side with the mutiny, and the ship once again becomes a prison. While “Bastille Day” offers a temporary utopian solution, that prisoners run their own ship, this is undone later in the series when it is revealed that their leader only wanted power, not autonomy.

Battlestar Galactica estranges our own society; the television show stresses the similarities between the Twelve Colonies and twenty-first-century liberal democracy, with the occasional reminder that we are watching science fiction, with the majority of characters worshiping the Greek pantheon rather than an Abrahamic god. The prisoners demand humanity through labor and enfranchisement (in a series where humanity is defined by *not being a cylon*). The series temporarily depicts the penal colony as an autonomous space that conveniently ensures the outside nation can survive.

Brute Orbits: Prisons in Space

George Zebrowski’s³² novel *Brute Orbits*, published in 1998, depicts a mid-twenty-first century future in which prisons are relocated to hollowed asteroids called “Orbits” or colloquially as “the rocks.” The orbits allow the distance of space to serve “as a better prison wall” (2) by

³² Though Zebrowski has been an industrious novelist during his four decade career, his work has not be subject to literary criticism.

removing violent individuals, undesirable populations, and political dissidents alike. To appease a public angered that escaped prisoners stole and crashed a shuttle into Lawrence, Kansas, prison officials eject the orbits into space for thirty years. They are scheduled to return after 30 years, but the project is abandoned and the prisoners are left for generations. On the sex-segregated worlds, the populations die out, and on the mixed-sex worlds, the prisoners' descendants decay into degenerates. Because there will not be new orbits sent out after the initial startup of the program, they do not serve as crime deterrents on earth in the tradition of transport as a crime deterrent in eighteenth century Britain. The other functions of the penal colony and penitentiary—a labor pool, crime deterrent, and site of reform—are abandoned in favor of vengeance and social amputation.

In *Brute Orbits*, the return of the penal colony is the next step in the project of ever-changing prison reform. Overcrowding and cost make the revival of penal colonies an economically viable penal reform in this scenario. Like historic penal colonies, the orbits remove unwanted populations and put them to work. The convicts mine the asteroids that make up their prisons, and are supervised by guards. However, the labor function of the penal colony is abandoned when the rocks are sent into space: “Once a habitat was inserted into its cometary orbit, all costs and cruelties of previous penal servitude would end for the duration” (6). The reformers consider this is a necessary sacrifice, trading the profit from penal labor against the cost of running the asteroids. They also willingly abandoned the guise of reform. The character Tasarov, a humanistic criminal who masterminded a prison-break on earth, sees the isolation as the ultimate punishment:

[Tasarov] never forgot that this Rock was a punishment prison, as many had been before it. No rehabilitation, no escape possible, no guards or authorities to blame; yet it seemed that

some men were seeing it as rehab, as something better than a vendetta against lawbreakers, better than the vengeance of capital punishment. (188)

Linking the orbits to Alcatraz in this passage, Tasarov believes that isolation with no hope for escape is the ultimate punishment. He notes that over half the prisoners who left Alcatraz did not re-offend, frightened into cowardice.

Like the “utopian” prisons and prisons in “utopias” of my previous chapter, *Brute Orbits* examines the relationship between the “dystopia” of the prison to maintain the “utopia” of the ordinary world. Consider the excerpted speeches and journals by Judge Overton, Chief Justice of the Orbits. In a speech, Judge Overton defends the program with rhetoric of utopianism and humanitarianism: “Think of them as sheltered islands where life goes on” (3-4), where prisoners can organize and police themselves while living comfortably in barracks and surviving from food replicators. However, the utopian rhetoric gives way to the real intent of the prison: creating a binary that separates the criminal from the lawful: “We only sought to separate the worst from the best, nothing more” (21). Here, the orbits serve a political function: they figuratively (but not literally) remove the criminal elements of earth societies so that those earth societies can start over and do better. Judge Overton admits criminals are created by society, but this is necessary to prevent further criminals from being created: “By shipping them out, we broke their influence. Sure, in some profound sense we created their kind, but there was nothing else to do except get rid of them and start over” (22). Judge Overton, a spokesman for the state, absolves the state of responsibility for caring for the criminals it created in favor of deportation.

Tasarov, too, views the prisoners as cut off from the human organism. Six years into his incarceration, he thinks, “He sometimes woke up in the middle of his night, and saw humanity as a single vast creature with billions of heads, its arms and legs struggling with itself. A piece of that

creature had been amputated, placed inside this Rock, and sent out to strangle itself in the darkness” (198). This amputation is permanent for Tasarov and the other prisoners are already dead: “the death penalty was perfection in itself” (190). Indeed all the prisoners have the death penalty to die of mortality when the Rocks are “accidentally abandoned.” Crime is amputated, and the criminal populations slowly die through their inability to reproduce³³.

Removing individuals from their community is a powerful punishment, but even then, prisoners find ways to resist the effects of their punishment. As Tasarov notes, one must believe in the legitimacy of the society that is punishing him in order to have the effects of that punishment cut deep: “And one had to feel that it was justice; if one did not, or could not, then the law could only imprison or kill one’s body, leaving the spirit that resisted untouched, unashamed, and unrepentant” (30). The prisoner needs to believe in the laws and society that punish him, or incarceration only punishes the body. Prisoner agency, then, is in the ability to not buy into the system.

However, permanently ejecting prisoners so that they will never again have contact with the outside world destroys any agency that might be practiced in refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the system. This is because there is no audience for the prisoners’ acts of defiance; if Tasarov and his followers did not feel justice, there was no impact of their untouched spirits. As inmates incarcerated on an all-male asteroid, they could not even lead a legacy for future generations that might be rediscovered. At best, the prisoners can try to radio earth and hope their propaganda is heard (68). The radio broadcasts unified the prisoners, as “They had developed a

³³ The convicts received a double death sentence because while they are gone, humans on earth develop technologies that extend human life by centuries. They are excluded from posthuman immortality.

solidarity of **striking back**, of not simply taking what had been handed to them and showing the authorities their stoicism” (72, emphasis mine). Tasarov thinks this “courage” won’t last long, at least not past his third year of incarceration. The broadcasts not only give hope and purpose to the prisoners, but they seem effective in reaching earth because Warden Sanchez severs the radio link with earth, killing the purpose the prisoners found in broadcasting. The prisoners lose their ability to even shame their jailers (122).

Tasarov shares Judge Overton’s view that criminals are created by their society, but only to an extent. Rather, he believes that criminality is an element of the human condition. Those in prison are those who were foolish enough to be caught or too poor to buy legal and physical protection. From Tasarov’s point-of-view, “Certain kinds of criminality could be prevented, and that would eliminate most crime. But [Tasarov] was certain that even a very advanced social system, one that gave its citizens nearly everything they needed, leaving them nothing to covet, might still harbor the creative criminal, one who would undertake special projects simply because they were possible. Could that kind of enterprise be socially engineered out of human beings?” (189). Tasarov, then, asserts that a truly utopian society would prevent most crime through equitable resource distribution. Those that still remained criminal could adaptively be put to work.

Tasarov is not entirely off the mark when it comes to the civilization that develops after his exile. The last third of *Brute Orbits* tells of the rediscovery of the orbits in the twenty-second century, a peaceful and enlightened society. Medical development has indefinitely extended the lifespan of humans, who are now effectively transhuman³⁴: “As the century of bio-engineering

³⁴ *Brute Orbits* contrasts Zebrowski's 1979 novel, *Macrolife*, where posthumans have abandoned nature to live in space.

found its way, offering control of reproduction and general health, natural selection became increasingly irrelevant as a method for human betterment. Human-kind was quickly moving toward physiological improvement through its own efforts, outside the bloody default settings of nature” (230). Nature is conquered and obsolete: the progress narrative of evolution is disrupted by a new kind of technological progress as human agency permits these transhumans to shape their own species. In contrast, the prisoners in the orbits have doubly been granted the death penalty. Not only were they left to die alone, but they were excluded from benefiting from life-extending technologies.

Moreover, criminals are dealt with creatively and humanely. Crime still exists in this future, but it is anachronistic: “Odd crimes still existed in remote places on Earth and in various settlements throughout the solar system; but in the great urban centers of offworld habitats and surface communities, *a better grade of human being was being born and raised*. Some said it was a wolf in sheep’s clothing, with wool so thick that even the wolf rarely guessed his own true nature” (232 emphasis added). This future confirms Judge Overton’s suggestion that removing the criminal element of a society will allow a fresh start in order to enable the development of an enlightened future. Their society is utopian in part because they removed the criminals.

The surviving orbits are regarded as a time-capsule by Ibbey and Justine, two explorers in the twenty-second century, seek to enter Orbit Five, one of the orbits that had both female and male prisoners, and thus descendants that may have survived. They justify their rescue with hopes of finding an earlier society, somewhat preserved. As Regina Kunzel notes, in another way of being outside of time, prisons were regarded as isolated, enclosed separated spaces that preserved earlier times, customs, and social arrangements: “Prisons were often represented as hermetic institutions in which residues of past and more primitive sexual cultures persisted and

thrived” (Kunzel 6). The inhabitants would be specimens of pure, unmodified, mortal humans, something lost by Ibbey and Justine’s time. An opponent to opening up the Rocks asserts that the prisoners are so anachronistic that they best be left alone: “They are not like us, but from another time. It would make them unhappy, or even do them harm, to be contacted by us” (246). This politician presents a supposed humanitarian concern, but in actuality he is against bringing a relic from the past into the utopia.

If *Brute Orbits* has a thesis, it is that prisons are not fully worlds apart, even when amputated from humanity. The unnamed narrator, in giving a history of the future, critiques the notion that prisons, the orbits included, are worlds apart: “The permeable interface between society and its prisons had not been abolished, only slowed; the curiosity of the thoughtful persisted, irritating human sympathies as a drop of water slowly wears away mountains” (8). The narrator insists that the prison is not really a world apart because it fails to truly remove prisoners from the population. This point is confirmed by the novel’s conclusion, when the orbits are eventually reopened and their inhabitants are invited to rejoin the now-enlightened humanity as repayment for their ancestors’ exile.

In *Brute Orbits*, the asteroid colony is the *novum*. The idea of the prison is estranged, more than the idea of the penal colony, which is already distant and unfamiliar to contemporary readers. The prisoners briefly demand humanity through their radio broadcasts, but when those are shut down, they give up and have nothing to live for. The novel directly suggests that penal colonies are not a rehabilitative solution to crime because they decay into a more extreme Hobbesian state of nature than that of “In the Penal Colony.” However, they are depicted as necessary to remove the dystopian elements of a society so a strong utopia can be established. Only then can the colonists be re-integrated.

The Moon is a Harsh Mistress

The final text I discuss in this chapter is Robert Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*³⁵, published in 1966, which is perhaps the most well known science fiction penal colony. It also is the text that depicts convicts and their society the most optimistically, for the colonists are best posed to revolt and self-govern themselves. *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* begins in the mid-twenty-first century with an established penal colony on Earth's moon populated by criminals and their descendants. These colonists grow grain that is shipped to feed the growing billions on Earth. Throughout the novel, a cadre of revolutionaries realize Luna will run out of resources, so they lead a revolution that kicks out the Lunar Authority, and become an autonomous nation. The cadre consists of Mannie, a pragmatic computer technician politicized early in the novel, Professor de la Paz, a renaissance man and "rational anarchist," Wyoming, a party organizer, and Mike, a sentient computer. Like much of Heinlein's other fiction, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* explores an alternative social organization, particularly through the Professor, and is one of Heinlein's libertarian-capitalist visions. The condition of the penal colony made from Earth's undesirables make it a unique circumstance to produce libertarian-capitalism even before the removal of Lunar

³⁵ *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is often taught and discussed alongside Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Samuel Delany's *Triton*, which were published within a ten-year period. However, *Moon* is typically excluded from the category of critical utopia due to Heinlein's right wing political affiliations. Neil Easterbrook links these three novels as being about an individual's relationship with the state (44), and compares each novel's version of anarchism, with Heinlein's being the most conservative. Donna Glee Williams, too, compares *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* with *The Dispossessed*'s formal similarities but differing political orientations.

Authority. Like Zebrowski, Heinlein is an explicitly political writer, with social commentary as central to the novel as its plot.

This novel most closely recalls Hirst's definition of a penal colony, a society where colonists found the society in which they are to spend their punishment. Though *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is not as widely discussed as *Starship Troopers* or *Stranger in a Strange Land*, critics have noted the similarities between Luna and Britain's penal colonies. Donna Glee Williams compares *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* to British penal transport to the Americas and Australia: "Settlement by transported convicts tends to leave an area with a tradition of perverse pride in its misfit ancestors. The myth of descent from the toughest, most individualistic, least compliant fraction of society becomes part of the civic identity that glues the heterogeneous young society together" (164). Neil Easterbrook, too, links *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* to Australia and the Americas. The colony provides resources for the motherland, and is "a place of exile and isolation, but also a new frontier—attracting anyone with sufficient courage, regardless of ethnicity or nationality" (46). While Britain's colonies did provide better opportunities for many settlers, opportunity was not as widely available as it was in myth. In *Moon*, however, the Lunars do practice racial equality. Indeed the Lunar colony represents equality across identity in a way the colonial myth was not historically practiced.

The conditions of the penal colony weed out Loonies (as the colonists affectionately call themselves) who are unfit for the moon's lawless and harsh environment, leaving only those fit for self-governance. Soon after exile from Earth, Loonies learned how to rule themselves because they were forbidden to have laws and the warden would not interfere in their affairs so long as grain shipments were delivered. As Mannie recalls, this lawlessness was efficient and benefited the warden: "Warden's bodyguard had never been large even in earliest days. Prison guards in

historical meaning were unnecessary and that had been one attraction of penal colony system—cheap. Warden and his deputy had to be protected and visiting vips, but prison itself needed no guards” (118). Manny is proud of their history of equilibrium, recalling that “My Grandfather Stone claimed that Luna was the only open prison in history. No bars, no guards, no rules—and no need for them” (23). Those who transgress unwritten social norms are “eliminated” out the nearest airlock:

One first thing learned about Luna, back with first shiploads of convicts, was that zero pressure was place for good manners. Bad-tempered straw boss didn’t last many shifts; had an ‘accident’—and top bosses learned not to pry into accidents or they met accidents, too. Attrition ran 70 percent in early years—but those who lived were nice people. Not tame, not soft, Luna is not for them. But well-behaved. (28)

Straw-bosses, those who tried to boss other prisoners around, found an untimely death, and bullies soon followed. Those that remained were polite and civilized (25). Mob justice seems to rule successfully, as Manny retrospectively recalls, “Oh, different today, but was 2075 and touching a fem without her consent—plenty of lonely men to come to her rescue and airlock never far away. As kids say, Judge Lynch never sleeps” (48). Women, a minority, are a commodity that men are eager to protect. Vigilante mob justice prevents rape. In day-to-day interactions, men constantly whistle and snap at “fems” to show their respect, which the women seem to find flattering rather than obnoxious³⁶. If one is eliminated, for crimes like unpaid debt or kissing a

³⁶ Easterbrook and Williams regard *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* as a sexist and masculinist text, respectively, for its portrayal of Wyoh. I agree with their critiques, and find that the novel’s proposed preventions of patriarchal violence, benevolent sexism, to be unconvincing.

woman without her consent, are common, but there are consequences: “If you eliminate a man other than self-defense, you pay his debts and support his kids, or people won’t speak to you, buy from you, sell to you” (165).

Even prior to the revolution, there are no taxes, police, or public services; the Loonies get along without police, and provide education and health care through the free market. Families provide a social safety net for their own; because men out-number women two-to-one, most families are anything but nuclear, whether they are polyandrous, clan-based, or, like narrator Manny’s own family, line-marriages with new spouses periodically marrying into an established family. As Mannie explains to Terrans, “A good line marriage is immortal. [...] Line marriage is the strongest possible device for conserving capital and insuring the welfare of children—the two basic societal functions for marriage everywhere—in an environment in which there is *no* security, neither for capital nor for children, other than that devised by individuals” (261). Alternative kinship organizations, then, serve as a survival mechanism in a world with both a harsh environment and harsh (yet allegedly fair) market.

As I note above, the Loonie self-sufficiency and self-governance makes them well-prepared to run their own colony by the end of the novel, when Lunar Authority no longer exists and Luna is her own nation. With the Lunar Authority replaced by a small parliament, life on Luna becomes quite utopian: in addition to maintaining their libertarian ways, the Loonies are now paid a fair market price for their grain. Impoverished Earthlings freely migrate to Luna to find work, where they join the Loonies in health and longevity associated with Luna’s low gravity. (Indeed, as the novel is utopian, one must suspend some disbelief to accept the benevolent free market.)

This book portrays criminals sympathetically and fully human, but not quite idealistically.

Manny, like many of his people, is proud of his criminal heritage that dates back to earth's past, where an ancestor was hung as a witch, another was a pirate, and a third was among the first to colonize Australia. Of those who settled Luna:

My one grandfather was shipped from Joburg for armed violence and no work permit, other got transported for subversive activity after Wet Firecracker War. Maternal grandmother claimed she came up in bridge ship—but I've seen records; she was Peace Corps enrollee (involuntary), which means what you think: juvenile delinquency female type. [...] Other grandmother was Tatar, born near Samarkand, sentenced to

‘re-education’ on Oktaybrskaya Revolyutsiya, then ‘volunteered’ to colonize in Luna. (13)

Manny's ancestors were a mixture of political prisoners and those who committed survival crimes, but he does not see them as victims, but strong individuals well suited to the harsh but rewarding life on Luna. The Loonies share this revolutionary fortitude with the prisoners and mental patients in the present-day scenes in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Another similarity with *Woman on the Edge of Time* is that technology fixes many social problems for those in the utopian future. In *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, Mike, the sentient computer, can overcome most obstacles. He creates an avatar, Adam Selene, that is a public face and martyr for the revolution. He also spies on the warden and many colonists, reporting on the warden's activities and lists of spies, and nearly murders the warden during the coup d'etat by cutting off the oxygen to his home. Even long after the revolution, when Luna no longer needs Mike, technological fixes for new problems appear, such as a drug that allows Loonies to return to Earth, thus ending their physical exile.

Although most of the revolution's obstacles are overcome by technology (in this case), another obstacle is that the Loonies are not patriotic. This becomes a problem for Manny and his

cadre: “Never was a time, even at last, when all Loonies wanted to throw off Authority, wanted it bad enough to revolt. All Loonies despised Warden and cheated Authority. If you had mentioned ‘patriotism’ to a Loonie, he would have stared—or thought you were talking about his homeland. [...] But Luna? Luna was ‘The Rock,’ place of exile, not thing to love” (117). Loonies are willing to revolt, but not willing to die for the cause because there is no nation, monarch, or religion unifying the Loonie culture. Despite political prisoner ancestors, “We were as non-political a people as history ever produced” (118), as Manny recalls, noting he was as apolitical as most Loonies until he found a reason to care, “circumstance pitched me into it” (118), that is, Authority goons attacked a party meeting. “Wyoh and her comrades had tried to push ‘patriotism’ button and of nowhere—years of work, few thousand members, less than 1 percent and of that microscopic number almost 10 percent had been paid spies of boss fink!” Mannie continues. “Prof set us straight: Easier to get people to hate than to get them to love” (118). Even after the Party seizes Luna, “Loonies in and out of Party had no interest in ‘patriotic’ work unless well paid.” (200). Where technology did not offer a solution, political manipulation did, with a combination of financial compensation and anti-warden propaganda.

Heinlein depicts another strength of the Loonies: their mixed race heritage³⁷ that explicitly results from their status as a dumping ground for undesirables. Mannie explains early in the novel that, “Great China dumped what she didn’t want there, first from Old Hong Kong and Singapore,

³⁷ The moon also has utopian race relations: all are mixed-race past the first generation due to most women having multiple lovers. In contrast, Earthlings still care about race. Heinlein uses the perspective of the traveler, Mannie, to comment on race relations in the United States, Heinlein’s country: “Is mixed-up place another way; they care about skin color—by making point of how *they* don’t care” (253).

then Aussies and Enzees and black fellows and marys and Malays and Tamil and name it. Even Old Bolshies from Vladivostok and Harbin and Ulan Bator” (30). Later, the Loonies embrace their heritage as a refuge for the unwanted, and invite immigration. As leverage, on Prof’s stowaway/diplomatic visit to earth, he offers to maintain the penal colony as a dumping ground for earth’s undesirable populations: “[Mannie] is proud of his descent from four transported grandparents. Luna has grown strong on your outcasts. Give us your poor, your wretched; we welcome them. Luna has room for them, nearly forty million square kilometers, an area greater than all Africa—and almost totally empty” (228). The condition, however, is one that the Federated Nations will not agree to: “Once an immigrant sets foot on Luna today he is a free man, no matter what his previous condition, free to go where he listeth” (228). The Federated Republic chairman replies by admitting that the prison is a dumping ground: “It is our humane way of getting rid of incorrigibles who would otherwise have to be executed” (228). Heinlein, significantly, imagines a utopia built on undesirables who would be cast out of a traditional utopia. As Mannie notes, few willingly immigrate themselves, but most are forced or convinced to immigrate to the moon: “they thought of forcing or persuading others to emigrate to relieve crowding—and to reduce their own taxes” (252) while in denial that, according to Mannie, the poor breed faster than they can be offset onto Luna.

The stake for the Loonies is to ensure their futurity: sustainability. The Loonies, at the beginning of the novel, mine for ice and grow grain they catapult to earth to feed Earth’s 11-billion-and-growing population. As water has become more difficult to collect, Prof predicts that Luna will run out of water and receive no replacement from Earth. Mike, the self-aware computer, calculates the consequences: food riots followed by cannibalism within seven years (94). Mike calculates a one-in-seven chance of survival if only they follow his scientific

calculations for planning a successful revolution.

Heinlein's socialist youth may influence the vision he proposes through Prof, who advocates the formation of a revolutionary vanguard party. He tells Wyoming, the only female member of his cadre: "Wyoming dear lady, revolutions are not won by enlisting the masses. Revolution is a science only a few are competent to practice. It depends on correct organization and, above all, on communications. Then, at the proper moment in history, they strike. Correctly organized and properly timed it is a bloodless coup" (76-77). Prof, along with Mannie, Wyoming, and the sentient computer Mike, form such a party and orchestrate the revolution. Moreover, Prof considers revolution to be scientific with the aid of Mike's calculations (88).

In most prison and penal colony narratives, the panopticon is on the side of the warden, authority, or state. However, in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, the largest contributor to the success of the colonists' revolution is that the panopticon is on their side. The participation of the sentient computer ensures that Manny, Wyoh, and Prof have access to Mike's widespread nervous system" (113) and can see and change information intended for the Warden, including the names of the warden's spies. Manny is briefly troubled by this, but is impressed by Mike's capabilities:

Always keep touch with Mike, let him know where you are, where you plan to be; Mike would listen if he had nerve ends there. Discovery I made that morning, that Mike could listen at dead phone, suggested it—discovering bothered me; don't believe in magic. But on thinking I realized a phone could be switched on by central switching system without human intervention—if switching system had volition. Mike had bols hoyeh volition.

(113)

Mike has an avatar named Adam Selene whom he generates through a simulation. After the Lunar Authority is usurped, Adam Selene declares himself "Chairman of the Empency Committee

of Comrades for Free Luna” and, without election, promises his rule is only temporary: “you will opt your own government. [...] I hope you will comply willingly; it will speed the day when I can bow out and life can get back to normal—a *new* normal, free of the Authority, free of guards, free of troops stationed on us, free of passports and searches and arbitrary” (194). He also promises that life will return back to normal, minus the authority—after all the Lunars learned to govern themselves when Authority forbid them to have their own laws. However, this is a bit utopian because Selene is a benevolent dictator who willingly cedes his position. We are to find this believable because Adam is an alter ego of Mike the sentient computer, and thus, somehow, incorruptible.

Around the arrival of Stu, an affluent earthworm tourist, we start to hear more explicit explanations of the Luna society as Manning rescues him from elimination and begins to recruit him to the Luna liberation movement. The explication typical in earlier utopias, then, is saved for the middle of the novel. Furthermore, when Manny and Prof sneak to earth to win sympathy from earthworms, we see more comparisons between the utopian penal colony and the dystopian originary world. This allows us to consider how the penal colony is subjectively utopian and dystopian (building on the previous chapter). In addition to the technological fix (reminiscent of earlier utopias, where technology fixes social problems), life on the moon cures again. As Mannie reports, “Nobody knows how long a person will live in Luna; we haven’t been around there long enough. Our oldest citizens were both Earthside, it’s no test. So far, no one born in Luna died of old age, but that’s still no test; they haven’t had time to grow old yet, less than a century” (242). The end of the novel jumps to a few generations later, when Manny is a centenarian and still feels young as he explores a new frontier in space.

The Moon is a Harsh Mistress has many “nova” signifying that it is science fiction: the

moon is colonized, Mike is a sentient computer, and Manny has a cyborg arm. However, what the novel estranges are the commonplaces that Heinlein so openly despises: taxes and a government that does anything more than protect the “free” market; with his politically explicit exposition, the novel clearly advocates libertarian-capitalism. Significantly, Heinlein finds those typically thought of as the dangerous thugs and lumpenpreliterate are *the most* positioned for self-governance³⁸. It is the state, with its laws and its taxes, that prevent Heinlein’s convicts from experiencing their fullest humanity. *Moon* is finally a novel that depicts the penal colony as viable. The absence of government and hearty constitution of hard-working criminals facilitates Heinlein’s libertarian-capitalist vision.

Conclusion: Original Worlds vs. Revolutionary Prisoners

Do SF penal colonies produce utopias? The simple answer is: sometimes. For Kafka, who is playfully nihilistic, penal colonies are never viable, as the institution of colonization is called into question. However, in the other three texts, utopias exist in varying forms. In

³⁸ If ex-criminals and their children, in the absence of a state, are best posed to create a utopia, is that utopia over when the residents establish their own government? Ken MacLeod suggests as much; he reads Manny’s exploration as seeking a new utopia because the revolution “actually succeeds in setting up a democratic state, which destroys the stateless capitalist anarchy which the colonists already enjoyed under the Warden’s distant rule. They had utopia, had they but known it, and by the end there’s nothing for a good revolutionary to do but move out to a new frontier of the asteroid belt” (MacLeod 246). MacLeod sees Heinlein as placing the utopia in the frontier, and once that frontier is organized, the possibility of utopia is closed. However, I find it important to note that, by my assessment, the post-revolutionary society is *not* democratic, as the society is governed by those with the wealth and leisure to pay-to-play government.

“Bastille Day,” the brief stint of prisoner-self-governance allows the civilian government to function and survive. In *Brute Orbits*, the prisoners are a dystopian sacrifice to create a utopia. In *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, the utopia is the prison itself.

These four penal colonies are born from differing crises. In Kafka’s short story, the penal colony is a trans-historic fixture of colonialism. In *Battlestar Galactica*, circumstance creates the prison ship, as prisoners traveling to parole hearings become permanently housed in their transport ship. In *Brute Orbits*, the penal colony exists because technology allows it to be the solution to an alleged crime epidemic. In *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, the technological ability to colonize the moon and the need for labor facilitates the revival of a penal colony.

The conflicts in these texts are struggles between the penal colony and what utopian critics call the originary world. In *Battlestar Galactica*, the originary world was destroyed, but the rest of the colonial fleet becomes the outside world (the civilian government and military). The convicts use hostages as leverage to demand autonomy. Both the convicts and the government are happy with the exchange of labor for self-governance of the *Astral Queen*. In *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, too, the Loonies and the earthworms reach an agreement after the Loonies show force. Luna will continue to ship grain, so long as they are an independent nation sufficiently compensated by the rules of the free market. *Brute Orbits* departs from this relationship and resolution. The prisoners attempt to resist their imprisonment, and assert their humanity, through their radio broadcasts, but their broadcast equipment is remotely disabled, and they are left to die alone; only earth benefits from this resolution. In contrast to these three texts, we never see the originary world in “In the Penal Colony,” and even the Traveler is from another nation than the penal colony’s motherland. The conflict between the originary world and the colony plays out, nonetheless, between the new Commandant and the Officer, loyal to the old Commandant. The

new Commandant represents progress and reform, while the Officer is willing to die to maintain the penal colony's function as spectacle.

Of the four texts I have discussed, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is the only example that represents a penal colony running smoothly as planned (in the novel, prior to the revolution). Mannie believed that the Lunar authority was unfair, but was content with his existence until he realized that his society would meet ecological disaster if it did not revolt. In the other three examples, we never see the penal colony and its technology function as its advocates promise it should. With "In the Penal Colony," readers only learn about the execution filtered through the machine's lone spokesman, the Officer. When the Officer voluntarily enters the machine to experience a euphoric death, the machine malfunctions and denies him the experience; we never see a representation of the machine functioning as the Officer describes. In *Battlestar Galactica*, the annihilation of the outside world left prisoners in transport in a state of limbo. In *Brute Orbits*, the outside world abandons the prisoners, leaving them to die, and in some cases their ships to break down and life support fails. The latter three examples all represent decay, whereas *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* depicts a revolution *so that there will not be* decay.

In all, Heinlein's novel has the most generous depiction of prisoners. The Loonies are smart, resourceful, and when they cannot solve a problem on their own, technology conveniently aids their purposes. Accordingly, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is the most optimistically utopian of these examples. Though Heinlein's right-wing economic program, as well as his depiction of women as sweet but emotional commodities, excludes his work from the label of critical utopia. Nonetheless, like *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Heinlein depicts prisoners as the most revolutionary subjects fit to herald the utopia. Unlike Piercy's novel, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* shows readers how to get there. Though Heinlein is clearly not proposing that his novel

is futurism (that the events will actually take place), it is a political tool to promote his libertarian politics.

Chapter 4: Punitive Posthumanism: The Mediation of Prisoner Embodiment

Introduction: Transhumanism and a Copied Criminal

Wayna, a black political prisoner and the protagonist of Nisi Shawl's 2004 short story "Deep End," consents to travel aboard the *Psyche Moth* in order to colonize the planet Amends. There, Wayna and some two-hundred thousand other political prisoners will settle the town of *Jubilee* (ironically named after the Jewish year of celebration), have children, and live out their natural lifespans. Like Wayna, these prisoners are people of color of a variety of ethnicities, punished for rebelling against the members of a white upper-class. By this summary of this short story, "Deep End" may sound like an extrapolation of a penal colony for political prisoners, reminiscent of eighteenth century trade unionists sentenced to Australia by the British government, except with spaceships making the one-way trip to a new planet rather than ships traveling to a distant continent.³⁹ However, Shawl adds a considerable complication to her story of exiled political prisoners. Readers learn early in the story that "Wayna was an upload of a criminal's mind. The process of uploading her had destroyed her physical body. Punishment" (12).

As an "upload," Wayna's primary punishment is not that she must live out her life on a penal colony. This is certainly an aspect her punishment, but the primary punishment is that Wayna's original body is destroyed and she must then download into the new body: the blank, white-skinned clone of an unknown member of the economic elite against whom Wayna rebelled. Wayna is not the same woman who committed a crime; rather, she is a copy of the information pattern that made up that woman's consciousness. Her fellow prisoners share her fate;

³⁹ I will identify a genealogy of penal colonies in SF in my next chapter.

downloading erases their ethnic and racial diversity as they enter the white bodies of clones. The punishment for Wayna is not just that she leaves behind her old world and life, but that she leaves behind her old body as her body is destroyed and reassigned.

“Deep End” does not predict that prisoners will one day colonize a planet called Amends, or that prisoners will one day be uploaded and downloaded. Rather, “Deep End,” like most SF, extrapolates the writer’s present, in this instance the logics of carceral practices. Shawl uses SF to make literal what is a figurative premise of modern “rehabilitative” punishment: that the mind and body are separate, regulatable entities. That is, the process of incarceration treats the mind and body as separate entities in a Cartesian sense, where the body is separate from and secondary to the incorporeal mind. In “Deep End,” like a growing body of twenty-first century SF, a person and her body are not unique as in the only individual of a kind. Nor is the body and consciousness inseparable; one premise of such posthuman SF is that technological innovation might allow the mind to be copied, live in virtual worlds, and download into new cloned bodies. Both mind and body can be copied, together or separately.

“Deep End” makes literal the mind/body dualism that is a premise of modern western incarceration and the Enlightenment tradition from which punitive incarceration comes. For the last two centuries, a major goal of incarceration has been to punish the criminal’s body (ranging from corporal punishment, to forced labor, to the denial of liberty and mobility) so that the mind (or sometimes soul) of the prisoner can be “saved” through rehabilitation. SF extrapolates on this historic trend rather than predicts future carceral technologies. Consider examples from popular SF television of such dualistic punishment. “Deep End” echoes a 1969 episode of Doctor Who, “War Games.” In this episode, the Time Lords punish the second Doctor (Patrick Troughton) by forcing him to regenerate into a body he does not desire (the third Doctor, played by Jon Pertwee).

Changing bodies becomes punishment. In an episode of the series *Star Trek Voyager*, “Ex Post Facto,” Lt. Tom Paris is convicted of murder and must virtually inhabit the body of his victim daily, when he relives the murder by his own hand. In other examples, the body sleeps while the mind experiences a subjectively long sentence. In *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*’s “Hard Time,” as well as *The Outer Limit*’s “The Sentence,” convicts experience their sentence subjectively for years while incarcerated in a virtual reality prison. This theme of virtual reality prison is taken up by one of the novels I analyze in this chapter, Kelley Eskridge’s *Solitaire*. I also discuss Alfred Bester’s *The Stars My Destination*, in which humans are housed in darkness to prevent their bodily autonomy. This SF features a variety of speculative punishments, but they all depict punitive forced alienation from one’s own body. Like “Deep End,” these texts utilize the genre of SF to imagine what incarceration or punishment *could do* (rather than will do) to the minds and bodies of prisoners given futuristic technological means.

An uploaded and downloaded person, like Wayna, is one type of the “posthuman” subject, a vision of future humans envisioned by SF authors, futurists, and critical theorists. That Wayna is such a posthuman is the short story’s estranging device that signified this story is SF. As a posthuman, Wayna would not be recognized by an early twenty-first century person as an unambiguous member of our own species. “Posthuman” is a broad term encompassing both new definitions of the human subject and speculation (or caution) about what might proceed the human species. A copied and uploaded human consciousness is a type of immortal and disembodied subjectivity both anticipated and desired by the sect of posthumanists who call themselves “transhumanists.” In contrast to SF authors, who write about the present through metaphors of the future, transhumanists are futurists: they seek to improve the human condition, and thus become “posthuman,” through technologically modifying the body. The transhumanist vision is

utopian, telling of a human future where technology has cured death and scarcity. However, a prisoner like Wayna is not the archetypal posthuman subject because her posthuman identity is not a choice to be celebrated. As critics of transhumanism⁴⁰ such as N. Katherine Hayles note, the transhumanist vision inadequately addresses the material inequalities that divide who has access to technologies that improve quality of living and the human lifespan. Although (to my knowledge) critics of transhumanism have not commented explicitly on how prisoners fit into their future, presumably prisoners, as economically dispossessed people, would be excluded from a transhumanist utopia of immortal uploads. An effect of excluding prisoners from the transhumanist vision of immortality would be new form of capital punishment as prisoners are left to die at the end of their natural lifespan, while everyone else lives on.

Transhumanists and others who celebrate posthumanism tend to consider the advance towards a posthuman subject desirable, while Shawl, as I show in this chapter, frames the desirability of such a condition as ambiguous for Wayna. The story does not celebrate or condemn the technology that can copy and download a person, but critically considers how such technology might be used to maintain or extrapolate oppressive social relationships—and the ways the disenfranchised navigate such oppression. Although transhumanist thinkers tend to celebrate technological progress with only a token amount of caution and criticism, “Deep End” and the other SF I analyze in this chapter grapple with transhumanism, revealing critical limitations to the desirability of such a posthuman so-called “endpoint.” I qualify endpoint because transhumanists do not consider the posthuman to be a finite point in evolution, but something that continues to

⁴⁰ Hayles does not use the term transhumanism in her book *How We Became Posthuman*, but later writes that transhumanism is what it was she critiqued (“Wrestling with Transhumanism”).

evolve and change. I hope to make a critical contribution to the study of posthumanism by considering a critique of posthumanism not addressed by Hayles: that posthumanism can be an externally- and forcefully-assigned identity for those with the least privilege. In the case of prisoners, the SF depicts a negative, punitive posthuman subjectivity. I return to “Deep End” in my following chapter, when I discuss the implications of forceful downloading for the transgender character, Thad. In this chapter, I use theories of posthumanism, transhumanism, and technological embodiment to ask: how can SF help us think about technological interventions on the prisoner’s body? This chapter offers a brief overview of both prison reform and posthumanist thinking in order to highlight the shared premises of both traditions: Cartesian mind/body dualism, as well as teleological progress and rationalism.

In this chapter, I argue that science fiction extrapolates this process of disembodiment-as-punishment to enable critique of actual carceral practices. I have found that the transhumanist vision of a posthuman subject, with both its promises and limitations, provides language to understand how posthuman subjectivities are *forced* upon prisoners. I argue that posthuman technologies seem to estrange penal dualisms but actually reproduce (or duplicate) it.

The first half of this chapter takes a detour as I highlight the legacy of “rehabilitation” that targets the soul instead of the body of the prisoner. Then, I overview two competing visions of “posthumanism,” the first being transhumanism, which shares the same premises as incarceration, and conceives of a posthuman future as abstract and immaterial. I then explain how critical posthumanists, like Hayles, value embodied and finite subjectivities and critique transhumanism. I overview these competing posthumanisms in order to discuss SF in which incarceration imposes an undesirable posthuman identity on current prisoners. Critical posthumanism is interdisciplinary scholarship invested in critique of “the problematic of the humanist subject with

its traditional repercussions on questions of agency, identity, power, and resistance” (Simon 3). Critical posthumanists contest the hierarchical binaries associated with liberal humanism that are unintentionally reinforced by abstract posthumanism, such as nature/culture, self/other, male/female, human and non-human (Simon 4). Hayles asserts that if we conceive of the posthuman as finite and embodied, the posthuman subject can depart from oppressive traditions it unintentionally reproduces when thought of as infinite and disembodied. Though Hayles and other posthuman theorists have considered the posthuman (and its cousin, the cyborg) can be liberatory figures, they have not considered how posthuman can be a forcefully inscribed identity for marginalized people such as prisoners. I find that incarceration and prisoners have not been of interest to posthumanists (both celebratory and critical) because the prisoner is not the archetypal posthuman subject, as cultural posthumanists note, the “posthuman” subject tends to be privileged. However, the texts I discuss suggest that prisoners are more likely to be posthuman because they are subject to posthuman technologies and identities. This ascribed form of embodiment is involuntary and punitive, and as a result punitive posthumanism alienates prisoners from their own bodies. Through prisoner agency, the penal mind/body dualism is transcended.

I overview these debates in posthumanist thinking with examples from Alfred Bester’s *The Stars My Destination*. In this section, I first use Bester’s novel, which depicts incarceration in a posthuman society, to distinguish between abstract and material posthumanisms. *TSMD* critically depicts a transhuman future and thus is part of the cultural posthumanist project. Accordingly, I argue that abstract posthumanism fits within the traditions of incarceration and liberal humanism outlined above. Moreover, I use *The Stars My Destination* because it depicts posthuman incarceration that exemplifies the mind/body dualism that premises the prison. Then, I discuss Kelley Eskridge’s *Solitaire*, where “doing time” is served in cyberspace. In this novel,

year-long sentences stretch out to years subjectively experienced by the inmates in virtual jails. I show how Jackal, the protagonist, “hacks” her virtual reality jail to transcend the virtual prison of the mind. Finally, I return to Shawl’s “Deep End” to unpack the significance of Wayna as a “copy of a criminal’s mind.” My analysis of these texts will set up a discussion of the use of corrective dis/re-embodiment in order to police gender transgressive behaviors, which I will analyze in the following chapters. Although I use literature to frame the genealogies I summarize, this chapter is largely a historical overview in order to frame my analysis of science fiction in the chapters that follow.

Reformed Bodies and Rehabilitated Souls: An Enlightenment Project of Human Improvement

A brief overview of the history of Western incarceration reveals the premises of the historic and modern institution: rehabilitation, human improvement, and most importantly mind/body dualism. In this section, I overview these premises to show how they have always been present within prison reform, and I later revisit these premises to show how they are rendered visible by SF’s depictions of posthuman punishment. In other words, this section shows how the trends in science fiction are historic so that we can see how the history of the prison and the history of liberalism are jointly reflected in SF. The goal of this section is not to provide a thorough historiography of instances of dualistic thinking in prison reform, but only to provide evidence that this is a historic context being picked up in the SF.

As I note in my second chapter, the punitive forms of incarceration that began with the sixteenth century workhouse and evolved into the penitentiary were generally considered part of the liberal project of progressive reform and an overall improvement of the human condition. Before reform, criminals were jailed not as punishment but to ensure they did not flee.

Punishment itself ranged from exile to a penal colony, to public torture such as flogging, branding, or locking in stocks, to capital punishment by hanging, burning, and drawn-and-quartering. As Angela Davis writes, imprisonment is not new, but the penitentiary as a “rehabilitative” institution is new; “imprisonment was regarded as rehabilitative and the penitentiary prison was devised to provide convicts with the conditions for reflecting on their crimes and, through penitence, for reshaping their habits and even their souls.” Davis continues: “the penitentiary was generally viewed as a progressive reform, linked to the larger campaign for the rights of citizens” (*Are Prisons Obsolete?* 26). Advocates for prison reform on both sides of the Atlantic included philanthropists, sociologists, humanitarians, and Quakers. Reformed prisons were modeled after monasteries with the supposed goal of rehabilitation through order and cleanliness in order to heal the soul rather than punish the body. According to Michael Ignatieff, “Between 1770 and 1840 this form of carceral discipline ‘directed at the mind’ replaced a cluster of punishments ‘directed at the body’—whipping, branding, the stocks, and public hanging” (xiii). I am especially interested in this shift from focus on body to mind as a historic goal of incarceration because it demonstrates how a logic of incarceration is that the interiority and exteriority of prisoners are separate entities subject to regulation. It is this dualism I see taken up by SF such as “Deep End,” that depicts mind/body dualism as alienating punishment.

The modernist-era Europeans who first proposed penal reform believed that criminals and unemployed people could be reformed and even improved through hard labor that taught their bodies the routine of hard work. Servitude as retribution for crimes has both utopian and enlightenment roots as More used *Utopia* to propose the English workhouses that would later become modern prisons. In *Utopia*, Hythloday claims his alternative (modeled after a fictional Persia) will provide a better system of punishment because prisoners are motivated by both reward

and fear of punishment. Hythloday asserts that the slaves work for liberty (in this case, the right to sell one's labor for a wage), and the unemployed work for a wage. Both are also motivated by fear of physical punishment, whipping, and for slaves, death. Hythloday's words show a belief that labor can change the constitution of criminals: "None are quite hopeless of recovering their freedom, since by their obedience and patience, and by giving good grounds to believe that they will *change their manner of life for the future*, they may expect at last to obtain their liberty, and some are every year restored to it upon the good character that is given of them" (emphasis added). In other words, More's mouthpiece proposes that bodily labor will reform the behavior of criminals. We already see the body and interiority of the prisoner perceived of separate but connected entities through the belief that if a criminal is rewarded for his hard work, he will want to change his "manner of life." *Utopia* promoted an alternative to corporal and capital punishment and developed a new genre of writing that took its name from his foundational book. (More himself was later incarcerated, prior to reform, while he awaited his execution.) Like his contemporaries, More was an essentialist because he believed that peasants were suited for hard labor, but he resisted the common idea that peasants were predisposed for immorality.

Early prison reformer John Howard, the British movement "philanthropist" and author of the influential *The State of the Prison*, believed that workhouses failed to reform prisoners because they were focused on reforming the body rather than the soul of idlers and criminals. Reformed prison redesign echoed its utopian roots, with the philanthropists modeling prisons after monastic cloisters that privileged orderliness, cleanliness, solitude, and routine. Prisons began to take the form familiar akin to modern penitentiaries, with isolated cells. (The philanthropists are discussed further in my following section, where I analyze the difference between bodily and spiritual reform.)

Workhouses were designed to be self-sufficient. As Adam Hirsch notes in *The Rise of the Penitentiary*, the labor of inmates paid for the workhouse: “Hard labor thus took on still another role: as threat, as therapy, and as a foundation of support for both” (15). Hirsch calls this early form of rehabilitative punishment “rehabilitation” because wardens were trying to remake the habits of inmates. However, this second wave of prison reformers found that imposing “rehabilitative” labor was insufficient in actually reforming idlers because it taught their bodies to work, but did not improve the interior degeneracy commonly believed to cause their vagrant, slothful, or criminal lifestyles. For Hirsch, this form of rehabilitative punishment was “inherently superficial” because “it addressed outward routines and abilities rather than inner moral values” (14). In practice, workhouses did little to transform inmates into industrious citizens. Through rehabilitation, the prisoner’s body was conditioned to work, but it did not address a deficiency of spirituality, which reformers believed was the real cause of idleness and criminality. For reformers, the workhouse was a failure because the reform of the body did not reform the interior constitution. In actuality, from a twenty-first century perspective, the workhouse failed because it did not address that criminal behavior was caused by poverty and oppression, not moral failing, and hard work could not resolve poverty.

The workhouse, introduced in my second chapter, was the first attempt in England at rehabilitative punishment intended to reshape the “habits” of prisoners rather than cause bodily harm. Developers of the English workhouse, the precursor to punitive incarceration, sought to reshape and redeem the prisoner first through reshaping the habits and practices believed to have led to his criminality. In short, prior to the workhouse, jails were holding cells so one did not escape prior to his punishment; after reform, the workhouse and later jailing became the punishment itself.

To address these shortcomings, in the eighteenth century the “philanthropists” shifted from reforming the body to reforming the spirit. Ignatieff proposes that liberal guilt motivated reform, as “crime figured as a form of social envy, resentment, or desperation. In place of a traditional view of crime as merely an immemorial form of human wickedness and sin, the reformers succeeded in popularizing a new vocabulary of alarmism that interpreted crime as an indictment of a society in crisis” (210). The rich, then, new their affluence “bore some responsibility for the social genesis of crime” (211). Hirsch calls the philanthropist’s attempts at spiritual reform “reclamation,” which attempted to directly reshape the interiority of prisoners. Through reclamation, the philanthropists:

intended a deeper charge in the offender’s character than envisioned by rehabilitation.

Equipping criminals for hard work was not enough; worldly habits and abilities would make no difference unless the offenders wanted to live rightly, unless their souls (under threat of divine sanction) demanded moral rectitude. Thus, conceived, reclamation, unlike rehabilitation, was inherently noncoercive. (19)

Reformers were interested in “saving” the soul because reforming the body alone did not accomplish the official rehabilitative goals of incarceration. When wardens and prison reformers became concerned with conditioning the soul, rather than body, the threat of damnation purportedly motivated prisoners to *want* to reform themselves. Unlike the forced labor of the workhouse, the spiritual reform of reclamation was theoretically noncoercive. While both rehabilitation and reclamation are premised on mind/body dualism, the latter regards exclusive reform of the body inadequate for reshaping the moral constitution of prisoners.

The philanthropists reshaped prisons to model monastic cloisters, where solitude, cleanliness, and routine would facilitate self-reflection and spiritual growth. Frese Witt describes

the transformative power of these new penitentiaries: “Prisons by force, where the prisoners are deprived of their liberty by an outside power, [...] also may appear as voluntary, beneficial enclosures. [...] the deprivation of physical liberty opens the way to a spiritual freedom” (4). These new prisons still controlled the bodies of prisoners, now through deprivation of liberty. In making the prison like a monastery, the body became something for both the prison and the prisoner to master; the prisoner with reformed spirituality could supposedly then repent and master his own sinful body. As Frese Witt frames it,

The symbolic value of prisons and other enclosures as literary figures can be traced back to their use in religious ceremony and ritual: their value as *archetypes*. [...] the body is figured as the prison of the soul and earthly life as a vast prison from which human beings aspire to liberate themselves. [...] Confinement thus paradoxically entails a liberation from the bondage of life as it is limited by time in the world. (3, emphasis added)

Writing about the other side of the Atlantic, and Philadelphia specifically, Michael Meranze, in *Laboratories of Virtue*, demonstrates how American prison reformers based new punitive models on “[t]he denial of corporality” (15) that focused on reform of the penal soul (in Foucault’s sense of the soul as produced by discipline, discussed below). The problem with corporal punishment was what Meranze calls “mimetic corruption”: “where the very presence of embodied criminality overwhelmed spectators’ virtue and led them to identify with and replicate criminality” (8). Corporal punishment was embodied and thus problematic because the spectators identified with the criminal and disrupted the punishment or were inspired to become criminals themselves. Punitive methods needed to sever such identification: “The connection between the bodies of the condemned and the imagination of the crowd would have to be broken” (8). That break was the physical remoteness of the prison, which imposed both social and psychic

space (9). Meranze demonstrates how prisons and the discipline they embody are essential to liberal thinking. Prisons are undoubtedly a modern institution. However, there is not a neat line of progress from the spectacle of corporal punishment to the more “humane” penitentiary. Innes and Styles frame the British punishment in the 18th century as “penal pluralism,” which included a “wide variety of different forms of punishment[...]: hanging, transportation, imprisonment, whipping, pillorying, and fining” (414). According to Innes and Styles, no one form was abandoned and no trend followed a linear pattern. Moreover, as I discuss in my chapter on penal colonies, exile was a competitor to the penitentiary during its development.

Like all reform movements, prison reform was situated within broader worldviews and social practices. The reforms I have outlined thus far are an intimate part of the development and legacy of liberal humanism. “Liberal humanism” is a convenient reduction of complex and multifaceted philosophies. Both liberalism and humanism are separate but overlapping ideologies, while liberalism is more a politics (as in liberal democracy) and humanism an ethics (as in human rights and the rejection of a morality higher than the human individual). In “liberal humanism,” liberal acts as the qualifier for the broader “humanist” rejection of religious definitions of human. In liberal humanism, man is a rational, self-possessing subject who is above the natural world, as C.B. Macpherson has shown in *Possessive Individualism*. As Hayles notes, the liberal human subject is problematic for cultural critics because of

the tendency to use plural to give voice to a privileged few while presuming to speak for everyone; the masking of deep structural inequalities by enfranchising some while others remain excluded; and the complicity of the speaker in capitalist imperialism, a complicity that his rhetorical practices are designed to veil or obscure. (*How We Became Posthuman* 87)

In other words, this liberal humanist framework has been thoroughly critiqued by feminists, critical race theorists, post-colonial theorists, postmodernists, and others for its false universalism that positions white, heterosexual, bourgeois, men as the pinnacle of humanity against which all other subjectivities are measured. Hayles notes how under possessive-individualism and posthumanism, agency (or self-will) is not seen as distinct from the will of others (*How We Became Posthuman* 4).

In addition to defining human history as progressive and humans as rational, self-possessing individuals, a liberal humanist worldview (like incarceration) also assumes that the mind is separate from and superior to the body, a concept attributed to Rene Descartes. Although the “Enlightenment” is a broad philosophy with no agreed upon origin, Descartes’s 1637 “Discourse on Method” is often regarded as the urtext. Incidentally, Descartes is the philosopher we tend to associate with disdain for the body. “Cartesian dualism” is a common phrase used to signify any premise that presumes the mind is separate from and privileged over the body. However, these views of mind over body, as well as man as a rational being, can be traced to Grecian philosophy and were later rediscovered and revived and popularized by Descartes, Francis Bacon, and other enlightenment thinkers (Bury 66). Plato wrote that “it is characteristic of the philosopher to despise the body” (*Phaedo*). Plato believed that the soul was independent of the body and capable of migrating to a new body (this anticipates the transhumanist desire to copy an individual) (*Meno* lines 78-82).

Cartesian dualism generalizes trends that were already present in the Greco-Christian tradition of mind/body dualism, as Susan Bordo demonstrates in her influential essay “Anorexia Nervosa.” First, Bordo writes, “the body is experienced as *alien*, as the not-self, as the not-me,” as the machine- or animal-like container attached to the real essence of a person (231). Second, as

Plato, Descartes, and St. Augustine all wrote, the body was *confinement*, like a cage or prison that “the soul, will, or mind struggles to escape” (231). Third, “The body is *the enemy*,” as it is the site of physical limitations such as disease and the need for food and the site of sin. Bordo concludes that all three seminal thinkers instruct their followers in how to control and eventually live without the body and its needs and desires (“Anorexia Nervosa 231). Descartes, then, was not inventing a new paradigm for understanding the relationship between our bodies and our consciousness, but building upon and furthering pre-existing beliefs.

Like liberal humanism itself, mind/body dualism has been thoroughly critiqued by countless scholars and scientists in a variety of disciplines. Some, such as Hayles, focus on the scientific implausibility of regarding the mind as immaterial. Many cultural critics have found that mind/body dualism is problematic for regarding the mind as immaterial, separate from, and master of the body in order to maintain the false universalism that places white, property-owning men at the top of a pyramid of humanity. For example, when Bordo links anorexia to the dualism of Greco-Christian tradition, she argues that women disproportionately use anorexia as a means to master and erase their bodies. I would add another important critique to mind/body dualism’s maintenance of oppression: within this framework, misfortune is based entirely on an individual’s failure to mentally overcome physical hardship rather than her material circumstances. For example, in the mid-2000s, the popular self-help book *The Secret* promoted positive thinking in order to manifest wealth and happiness. The subtext is: those who failed did not have the mental fortitude to master their material circumstances. This book built on many new-age teachers who peddled positive thinking as a means to success.

Despite the criticisms, liberal humanism is still a dominant lens through which many public intellectuals and politicians come to know the world. Thus, it is no coincidence that the

development of prisons and their subsequent reforms also fit into this tradition, as well as prison overseers and officials who sought to rehabilitate the souls of prisoners. Incarceration as punishment developed long after Descartes's death, but it is nonetheless dependent on the premise of mind/body dualism as well as the Enlightenment project of improving the human condition through progressive reform, education, and cultural development. The shift from rehabilitation and reclamation shows how even early prison reformers conceived of the exteriority (body) and interiority (the soul) as two separate entities. Deprivation of liberty—which surmounted to a confined body—led to a reformed soul.

Which Dualism: Body and Mind, or Body and Soul?

I take a short detour now to unpack the difference between soul and mind. Then, I will discuss the punitive posthuman implications of mind/body dualism. The sources I have cited thus far use both the terms “soul” and “mind” to refer to the will or animating consciousness of prisoners. Many modern definitions of human describe human beings as consisting of exteriority (the body) and interiority. However, are “mind” and “soul” interchangeable and collapsible terms for human interiority, or distinct? Traditionally, these two terms had been used interchangeably because there was little scientific evidence to suggest that they were different. For example, Descartes collapses the two terms to signify “consciousness.” By the twentieth century, however, we see these two terms used differently and distinctly because scientists and philosophers alike developed their understanding of the materiality and function of the human mind. Now, both mind and soul are treated as the interiority of a person, but the terms are not used interchangeably. This section briefly overviews which interiority prison reformers sought to reform.

Prior to the twentieth-century, prison reformers tried to rehabilitate the souls of prisoners in order to improve both their moral constitution and ensure their salvation (immortality via a

desirable afterlife). Because most prison reformers prior to the twentieth century were religiously motivated, their concern for the interiority of the prisoner necessitated a belief in the soul. The definitions of “soul” vary vastly, but the “soul” often signifies the immortal essence of a person. Plato argued that the soul was transferable, immortal, and incorporeal, and this view is still held by most religions, spiritualities, and world-views that believe the soul exists. Western prisons rely on the Christian notion of soul as the innermost essence of a person and the immaterial, immortal aspect. Significantly, the existence of the soul cannot be proven. When the soul is believed to exist, it is typically regarded as immaterial and not permanently attached to the body it inhabits.

As prisons became more secular institutions, the hope still remained that a criminal would become a productive member of his society, but reformers now believed that mental illness and social deviance created criminal behavior (in addition to circumstances such as social class). In this century, scientists and criminologists developed new behavioral sciences: psychology, psychiatry, lobotomies, medications, etc. as they sought to understand how the human mind worked. “Mind” came to signify the cognitive facilities and the information pattern that makes up a person’s consciousness. Unlike the soul, the mind is traditionally viewed as attached to the brain and body that houses it. To use a computing metaphor, we might think of the brain as hardware and the mind as software. By these definitions, consciousness is material because it is a function of the physically-locatable human brain.

The second reason twentieth-century reformers shifted from rehabilitating the “soul” of prisoners to rehabilitating the “mind” is because US prisons are ostensibly secular⁴¹, as state

⁴¹ This is not to say that Christian spiritual reform is not a huge presence in US prisons. For examples, prisoners have a right to a chaplain, but have difficulty accessing religious rights for other prisoners can’t practice marginalized religions, like Leonard Peltier writes about in his

institutions. As secular institutions, prisons cannot officially reform the souls of prisoners, so reformers instead concern themselves with the minds of prisoners. Reform of the mind is possible because the brain is physically locatable and thus can be externally influenced; the mind is believed to be connected to the brain, thus if you alter the brain, you alter the mind. For example, a prison may use cyborg technologies to medicate the minds of prisoners, as we see in the fictional example *Woman on the Edge of Time*, where inmates in a mental hospital receive radio implants that control their emotions (this example is discussed in depth in a later chapter).

With technology that allowed control over the mind, such as psychiatric medication, the mind and soul began to be contrasted in their perceived materiality. Now, the mind is believed to exist within the brain, while the soul is hypothetical and unprovable. Although the nature and location of consciousness still alludes psychologists and philosophers alike, we know that a human being does possess a mind and body, and that consciousness is likely generated within the brain⁴². In contrast, the soul remains unlocatable and its existence cannot be proven, and cannot be quantifiably reformed. In contrast to the soul, the mind is likely mortal, as the information pattern, as far as we know, dissipates when the brain dies. Although the mind is intangible—it is material but not something we can touch or hold—it has an effect on the world as what animates people and our decision-making. In contrast, the soul has no measurable effect on the world *that cannot be accounted for by the mind*.

Although the soul cannot be quantifiably measured, Foucault shows us how the soul nonetheless exists through social construction: when we treat something as though it is real, it can

memoir, and examples of Muslims being denied the right to practice their faith.

⁴² Descartes believed that the mind, too, was abstract and unknowable, but the mind is no longer typically considered abstract.

have a material impact on lived experiences. The socially constructed soul is not the Christian notion of the soul, as Foucault notes, but a soul constructed through power. For Foucault, the soul is “duplication” that is both reality and non-corporeal:

This real, non-corporeal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which [sic] are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power. (*Discipline and Punish* 29)

Foucault asserts that the soul is produced within the body through the act of punishment.

Foucault inverts Plato’s “the body is the prison of the soul” into “the soul is the prison of the body” (30). The soul is produced by the sciences—psychology, education, and, significantly, incarceration—that are targeted towards it. The “soul,” then, is constructed by the knowledge-power relationships of the prison and imposed back on the prisoner to become the prison of the body. Meranze writes that “The body as character opened up the space for the emergence of what Foucault termed the penal ‘soul’; it would also allow punishment to become the site of utopian hopes and social fears” (9). Margaret McLaren explains that Foucault’s notion of the soul as “an account of embodied subjectivity” where “subjectivity and the body are inseparable” (84).

As I show in my second chapter, utopias, enlightenment philosophy, and penal reform grew from the same historic moment in European history. The official goal of reform, with the implicit goal of discipline, was premised by dualism. This is the backdrop upon which SF is engaged. But first, I take another detour to overview another dualistic tradition engaged by SF: posthumanism.

Cyborgs, Posthumans, and Transhumans: The Enlightenment's Children (Or: the Posthuman's My Destination)

Posthumanism, like incarceration, relies on the lineages of liberal humanism and Cartesian dualism discussed above. The desirability of such dualism is the central difference between penal dualism and posthuman dualism because under incarceration, such dualism is undesirable and thus punitive. Under posthumanism, such dualism is desirable because it frees the mind from the decaying meat that is the body. Consider the hacker Case, the protagonist of William Gibson's cyberpunk novel, *Neuromancer*, at his horror at being kept out of cyberspace: "For Case, who'd lived for the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he'd frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh." Case's horror at being imprisoned in his own flesh epitomizes the Platonic prison-as-the-body-of-the-soul in a posthuman context.

However, as N. Katherine Hayles shows, posthumanism also has the potential to depart from the oppressive practices associated with liberal humanism. It is necessary to understand these lineages so that we can see how posthumanism and incarceration are linked, and see what space exists for materialist, posthumanist resistance to incarceration. I add to posthuman theory by arguing that the experience of incarceration is "posthuman."

Posthumanism is a broad movement of overlapping art, science, culture, literature, and theory. Those who might be called "posthumanists" represent broad tendencies and at times differing visions of a posthuman subject. For the purpose of analyzing posthumanism of SF prisons, I divide posthumanist thinkers into two general camps: abstract posthumanists and critical posthumanists (what Vint calls cultural posthumanism). One of the goals of abstract posthumanists, specifically transhumanists, is to make the mind immortal by overcoming the

prison of the body. Transhumanist thinkers, such as Max More, use the term “posthuman” to describe the goal of their movement. Transhumanists tend to be those who celebrate and promote the use of technology for bettering the human condition and eliminating death, what Hayles calls “the ultimate privilege of immortality” (*How We Became Posthuman* 287) for those who are affluent. Hayles cautions that transhumanism is not the end of humanity (as some fear, such as Francis Fukuyama), but “[i]t signals instead the end of a certain conception of the human, a conception that may have applied, at best, to that fraction of humanity who had the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice” (*How We Became Posthuman* 286). As Hayles and Vint note, transhumanism tends to be abstract while critical posthumanism tends to be materialist. The transhuman subject is one transitioning to posthuman subjectivity; under transhumanism, those who modify their bodies and extend their physical and mental capabilities with technology are already transhuman, while their definition of the posthuman subject currently only exists in futurist speculation and SF. As Hayles notes in “Wrestling with Transhumanism,” SF takes a critical stance towards the transhumanist posthuman subject.

Critical posthumanism, on the other hand, is a movement waged largely by theorists who wish to depart from the Enlightenment definitions of human as rational, self-possessing, and dominant over nature. Critical posthumanists critique transhumanism for reiterating the problematic aspects of liberal humanisms and inadequately addressing material inequalities and oppression. Transhumanism tends to continue the enlightenment project, while critical posthumanism is distinctly anti-humanist. Significantly, abstract posthumanism regards the body as a cage, something to be done away with as information seeks to be free without a body. Though critical posthumanists critique the transhumanist goal of techno-transcendence, they do

not reject allowing technology to redefine our human capabilities. Hayles calls for “emergence replaces teleology; reflexive epistemology replaces objectivism; distributed cognition replaces autonomous will; embodiment replaces a body seen as a support system for the mind; and a dynamic partnership between humans and intelligent machines replaces the liberal humanist subject’s manifest destiny to dominate and control nature” (288). Hayles is careful to note that the critical posthuman subject is not destiny but one possible, and desirable, posthuman subjectivity.

Alfred Bester’s 1956 novel *The Stars My Destination* provides both an example of SF incarceration and enables us to define “posthuman” in terms of both the transcendence of the limitations of the human body and criticism of traditional definitions of humanism. The novel is not typically read through a lens of posthumanism, but both Neil Gaiman and Paul Youngquist have noted the novel’s importance to cyberpunk. Gaiman calls it “the perfect cyberpunk novel: it contains such cheerfully protocyber elements as multinational corporate intrigue; a dangerous, mysterious, hyperscientific McGuffin (PyrE); an amoral hero; a supercool thief woman...” (Bester x, introduction to the 1999 edition), while Paul Youngquist asserts that Bester “invents cy-fi, the fiction of cybernetic society (47). Youngquist also calls *The Stars My Destination* “one of the first novels of globalization” (46). In addition to being an essential predecessor to cyberpunk, *The Stars My Destination* is one of the most influential science fiction novels of the twentieth century. Delany considers the novel emblematic of SF and notes that the novel is widely considered “to be the greatest single s-f novel” by many readers and writers within and outside of the SF community as “man, intensely human yet more than human, becomes, through greater acceptance of his humanity, something even more” (35)

At first glance, *The Stars My Destination* retells *The Count of Monte Cristo* or *The Man in*

the Iron Mask in space: a wronged man escapes death and imprisonment to enact vengeance (Kelleghan 353). But as Youngquist notes, “Bester retro-fits the revenge tale to the conditions of life in an emerging cybernetic society” (47). Damien Broderick writes that the novel “is the apogee of Bester’s consistent struggles with a single theme: the heightened image of a compulsively driven individual bursting through the prison bars of nature and nurture both, marked by demonic and transcendence stigmata, a Bergsonian emergent evolutionary salient embodied in one passionate, driven creature who hurtles through a world stripped to hard, brilliant, teleological metaphors” (107). Broderick is not the only critic to take up the prison as a metaphor for limitations in the novel. Fiona Kelleghan, in “Hell’s My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester” reads the theme of closed worlds (such as space ships, factories, offices, penal colonies, and prisons) as a psychological catalyst for his protagonists: “Bester demonstrates that his use of confining spaces is metaphorical in his depiction of the mind itself as a space of imprisonment” (352). Though I find imprisonment an appropriate metaphor for existential barriers and limitations, I do not want to overlook the significance of the depiction of incarceration as a tactic to curtail posthuman transcendence.

I will return to discuss the novel’s prison scene below. First, I would like to discuss how jaunting is such transcendence. Plotwise, *The Stars My Destination* chronicles Gully Foyle’s transformation from an everyday laborer whose file classifies him as a “Common man,” to a criminal cyborg adapted to killing, to finally an enlightened posthuman subject who has given up a need for vengeance and instead leads his fellow posthumans to colonize the stars. Foyle spends a portion of this novel imprisoned in total darkness when he refuses to divulge the location of the destroyed spaceship *Nomad*, which contains not only great wealth but the only prototype of an experimental weapon. Foyle and other prisoners must be held in darkness because it is one of the

only ways to prevent “jaunting,” or teleportation; the entire human species has evolved into “posthumans” because they have developed the ability to teleport limited distances by willing their bodies to move to a new location.

Jaunting fits within a transhumanist vision of a posthuman subject because humans are incomplete and evolve into a species of teleporters (even if jaunting was a “naturally” unlocked human ability not generated by technology, like transporters on the *Star Trek* series). Hayles, in her succinct definition of transhumanism, notes that transhumanists believe that “contemporary technosciences can *enhance human capabilities* and ameliorate or eliminate such traditional verities as *mortality*. It holds that *human evolution is incomplete* and, moreover, that we have a responsibility to further our evolution through technology” (“Wrestling with Transhumanism”, emphasis added), as transhumanism emphasizes such “individual transcendence.” Except for those who are “disabled,” each human must realize her innate ability to teleport by willing the body to follow the mind. Thus, “jaunting” is achieved through individual transcendence. Although humans are still recognizably *Homo sapiens*, they as a species have evolved into super-humans with super-powered abilities.

Foyle, as well as a disembodied-and-downloaded subject like “Deep End”’s Wayna, is “posthuman” as defined by the advocacy organization Humanity Plus (H+), formerly World Transhumanist Association (WTA). For H+, the posthuman envisions “possible future beings whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of present humans as to be no longer unambiguously human by our current standards” (Transhumanist FAQ). Unlike SF authors, who tend not to be predictive but rather write about the present, transhumanists are futurists that anticipate the advent of technologies that can separate, duplicate, and reassign bodies. H+ foresees the potential capabilities of being able to “copy” a person, those who are a part of the

“transhumanist” movement. Transhumanism is an ideology and social movement⁴³ that promotes improvement of humans as individuals and a species through technological means in addition to traditional humanist means of improvement through cultural and educational development. The H+, who have been front runners in developing the philosophical backbone of the transhumanist movement, define transhumanism in two parts:

(1) The intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities.

(2) The study of the ramifications, promises, and potential dangers of technologies that will enable us to overcome fundamental human limitations, and the related study of the ethical matters involved in developing and using such technologies. (“Transhumanist FAQ”)

The latter definition of “transhumanism” is the study of the former. Transhumanists—who sometimes call themselves Extropians—tend to see their project as an extension of traditional humanism in that they promote “improving the human condition” through technological innovation in addition to the traditional liberal means of cultural and educational development. Eventually, the transhuman subject—“an intermediary form between the human and the posthuman” (“Transhumanist FAQ”)—will become a “posthuman.” They go on to define the posthuman subject:

Posthumans could be completely synthetic artificial intelligences, or they could be enhanced uploads, or they could be the result of making many smaller but cumulatively profound augmentations to a biological human” (“Transhumanist FAQ”).

⁴³ Transhumanism is not a social movement in the traditional sense of radical politics.

The posthuman subject described by H+ is abstract because it is a post-body subject.⁴⁴

To return to *The Stars My Destination*: although jaunting is not technologically aided, it is an example of abstraction and individual transcendence because transhumanism does not view technological development as the *only* mode of evolution. It relies on and adds to the old Enlightenment modes of human progress through educational, cultural, and philosophical advancement that generally add to the body of human knowledge and human social practice. As the unnamed narrator of the novel's introduction claims that the philosophical explanation for jaunting is "one of the most unsatisfactory" (9) answers, poking fun at the old ways of thinking. The narrator locates jaunting in the enlightenment tradition through a brief excerpt of an interview with a public relations representative for "Jaunte Schools." The Jaunte Schools' PR man explains: "Jaunting is like seeing; it is a natural aptitude of almost every human organism, but it can only be developed by training and experience" (10). In other words, jaunting comes from hard work and realizing innate human abilities. The PR man goes on to explain how jaunting works with a Cartesian explanation; nobody knows how the mind thinks, and similarly "nobody knows exactly

⁴⁴ Transhumanists do not have a monopoly on disembodied articulations of the posthuman. We see such visions of technology freeing present and future humans from the cage of the body in cybernetics, computer sciences, futurism, advertising, medical research, and even the "Tomorrowland" of Disney theme parks. Nonetheless, because transhumanists are activists, they are the most explicit, promotional, and self-reflexive in their goals and premises, so I use their literature to represent the broader views of posthumanism as disembodied. Additionally, transhumanists range between conservative and liberal, and libertarianism and democratic socialism, but share that they see their project as a part of liberalism and the humanist project of progress and self-improvement (see Hughes, Bostrom).

how we teleport, either, but we know we can do it—just as we know that we can think. Have you ever heard of Descartes? He said: *Cogito ergo sum*. I think, therefore I am. We say: *Cogito ergo jaunteo*. I think, therefore I jaunte” (10-11). While he uses philosophy to be deliberately obtuse and protect jaunting as a trade secret, he does explain that jaunting is mastery of mind over body, placing these transhumanist subjects within the lineage of abstract transhumanism and its reliance on Cartesian dualism. Although embodiment is not (yet) obsolete, we can read “jaunting” as transhumanist when we consider that it is a mastery of mind over body.

As Hayles shows in *How We Became Posthuman*, advocates of transhumanist posthumanism presume that mind and body can be separated and that information can exist abstractly, without a body. For example, she critiques futurist Hans Moravec for proposing “that human identity is essentially an informational pattern rather than an embodied enaction” (xii). The nature of information and embodiment is a premise upon which Hayles fundamentally disagrees with transhumanists. For Hayles, a posthuman subject premised on a mind/body dichotomy is not radical or novel, but rather is a reification of liberal humanism, which shares the same premise.⁴⁵ To wage this critique, Hayles cites political philosopher C.B. Macpherson’s theories of “possessive individualism.” For Macpherson, the possessive individual owes nothing to his⁴⁶ society and is free to alienate his own labor. Critiquing Hobbes and Locke, Macpherson shows how the liberal humanist subject assumes that individualism is a “state of nature” predating market relations, when in actuality it is a “retrospective creation of a market society” (Hayles *How*

⁴⁵ Liberal humanism could go on the column of the old order listed in Donna Haraway’s dichotomizing chart in “A Cyborg Manifesto.”

⁴⁶ This use of male pronouns is intentional, as the liberal humanist subject is male by default, as well as white, heterosexual, property-owning, and able-bodied.

We Became Posthuman 3).

Rearticulating the liberal human subject through transhumanism is a risk for Hayles because both liberal humanism and transhumanism erase embodiment, and thus disembodied transhumanism would maintain oppressive socio-economic arrangements. Hayles asserts that both left and right wing transhumanists “perform decontextualizing moves that over-simplify the situation and carry into the new millennium some of the most questionable aspects of capitalist ideology” (“Wrestling with Transhumanism”). Like Hobbes and Locke apply capitalist ideology backwards, transhumanists apply it forwards; as historical fictions also can be projected onto the visions of the future. Thus, transhumanism can perpetuate oppressive practices of previous eras, but should not be completely disregarded due to the useful questions it asks about science, technology, and the future of the human species—questions that are not being asked elsewhere. Like Hayles, Vint offers a further critique of transhumanism in *Bodies of Tomorrow*. She challenges its erasure of embodiment:

The ability to construct the body as *passee* is a position available only to those privileged to think of their (white, male, straight, non-working-class) bodies as the norm. This option does not exist for those who still need to rely on the work of their bodies to produce the means of survival, for those who lack access to technologies that can erase the effects of illness, and for those whose lives continue to be structured by racist, sexist, homophobic, and other body-based discourses of discrimination. (8-9)

For Vint, this elite posthuman subject is a fictional abstraction that ignores materiality, embodiment, and oppression. For Vint, such an abstraction is problematic because it is another false universal: “Like liberal humanists, Extropians [transhumanists] are guilty of abstracting a universal human nature from specific, material embodied subjects; in both cases, the abstraction is

used to ground an ideology of individualism that refuses to acknowledge the political consequences of social institutions and practices that interpellate subjects differently” (179). As Vint notes, it is easiest for those who (supposedly) do not need to use their bodies for their livelihoods to downplay and erase the importance of embodiment and universalize their own subject positions.

We can consider how socioeconomic considerations fit within the critique of transhumanism as waged by cultural posthumanists like Hayles and Vint. As performance-philosopher Shannon Bell aptly critiques the tradition of humanism and its reformation as transhumanism:

One of the serious flaws in Transhumanism is the importation of liberal-human values to the biotechno enhancement of the human. Posthumanism has a much stronger critical edge attempting to develop through enactment of new understandings of the self and other, essence, consciousness, intelligence, reason, agency, intimacy, life, embodiment, identity and the body.

Bell, like Hayles and Vint, finds that transhumanism perpetuates old undesirable values in its visions of future humans while she asserts that posthumanism is the more relevant and liberatory approach to questions of human existence and embodiment in the twenty-first century.

Hayles shares Bell’s criticisms of transhumanism, but does not advocate discarding it because she finds that transhumanists ask pertinent questions about science, technology, and the future of (post)humanism. Thus, she hopes to “extract the valuable questions transhumanism confronts without accepting all the implications of transhumanist claims” and suggests that “[o]ne possibility is to embed transhumanist ideas in deep, rich, and challenging contextualizations that re-introduce the complexities it strips away” (“Wrestling with Transhumanism”). She rightfully

insists that SF is one way to challenge and (re)introduce complexity into transhumanism without dismissing it.

If SF allows for a more complex consideration of transhumanism, it certainly does so in *The Stars My Destination*, which depicts a posthuman future that fits within transhumanist vision, but is not a simplistic or celebratory future, nor is it simplistically abstract. In contrast to transhumanist theorists, science fiction authors who imagine transhuman societies deeply consider the social implications of new technologies and human subjectivities. In fact, SF authors may portray a transhumanist society, but because of the depth and complexity of their worlds, the project of SF is better categorized as a cultural posthumanist project rather than transhumanist project.

To give an example from the novel: Bester considers the new inequalities that develop in a society that revolves around teleportation. In addition to offering competing explanations for jaunting, Bester spends the rest of the prologue introducing some of the socioeconomic and cultural impacts of jaunting. Jaunting, more than any technological development of the prior five centuries, radically changes human civilization. Rather than the collective liberation of billions of human individuals, we see the chaotic and disruptive exaggeration of inequalities, such as a resurrection of diseases long thought extinct:

Plagues and pandemics raged as jaunting vagrants carried disease and vermin into defenseless countries. Malaria, elephantiasis, and the breakbone fever came north to Greenland; rabies returned to England after an absence of three hundred years. The Japanese beetle, the citrus scale, the chestnut blight, and the elm borer spread to every corner of the world, and from one forgotten pesthole in Borneo, leprosy, long imagined extinct, reappeared. (13)

Here, jaunting disrupts geographical, temporal, and social boundaries. First, the secure position of the global north dissolves with geographic separation between the first and third worlds now obsolete. As diseases transgress national boundaries, “third world” or tropical diseases head north and first worlders are no longer “safe” from biological contaminants. With such geographic boundaries dissolved, class stratification solidifies new lawless lumpenproletariates that reek havoc and disrupt law and order: "The jaunting age had crystallized the hoboes, tramps, and vagabonds of the world into a new class. They followed the night from east to west, always in darkness, always in search of loot, the leavings of disaster, carrion" (129). Second, jaunting dislocates time and progress as linear processes, with diseases once thought extinct and eradicated reemerging. Third, there is a chaotic grab for land and resources as the prior mechanisms ensuring private property become as obsolete as geographic boundaries: “There were land riots as the jaunting poor deserted slums to squat in plains and forests, raiding the livestock and wildlife... There were crashes and panics and strikes and famines as pre-jaunte industries failed” (13). The wealthy are destabilized and experience what they had once inflicted upon the poor, such as lack of private property, disease, vulnerability to violence. The human species moves towards posthumanism, but not in a neat line of progress, and engages the new inequalities that might emerge in a transhuman future.

Imprisoned in Darkness & Alienated from the Body: Rehabilitative Punishment

I turn now to discuss the scene in which Foyle is incarcerated in a low-tech incarceration to prevent his transcendence. Foyle’s incarceration is an essential step in his evolution towards an enlightened posthuman subject. Foyle is incarcerated because he holds privileged information, the whereabouts of the shipwreck *Vorga*. As part of his vengeance against the Prestign corporation, he withholds the location of this shipwreck. Prestign’s employee, Detective Dagenham, tries many

methods of extracting this information. When neither rewriting the mind or damaging the body works, Dagenham finally imprisons Foyle in the darkness of Gouffre Martel prison, “the deepest abyss in France” (70), as longer-term torture.

Because one must be able to see to jaunte, Gouffre Martel prison is in total darkness and thus forces prisoners to live in their minds, alienated from their own bodies. With typical jaunting, the mind wills the body to a new location, which is a mastery of mind over body. In the prison, however, the jailers master the body by placing it in darkness so that it is alienated from the mind. Alienating the prisoner from his body is the only way to prevent jaunting, with the other techniques being a blow to the head, sedation, or a lobotomy (70-71, 67), cleaving the mind from the body. As the darkness alienates Foyle, he loses all sense of time and imagines he is back on the *Nomad*, “reliving his fight for survival” (73) in the dark coffin that sheltered him from the vacuum of space. The prison separates him from the physical world of the present, and traps him in the past, a further form of carceral torture. In the dark, all prisoners are anonymous and stripped of all identities. In all, the prison as darkness extrapolates the humanitarian (and utopian) origins of enlightenment prison reforms; jailers gesture towards rehabilitation (and may actually mean well), when the affect is discipline, control, and mind/body alienation.

Such disconnect from the prisoner’s body is officially rehabilitative, but the Dagenham is clear that the rehabilitation is a joke. He threatens Foyle with with a description of what is to become of Foyle in prison, echoing such humanitarian origins of incarceration:

we don’t punish criminals in our enlightened age, we cure ‘em; and the cure is worse than the punishment. They’ll stash you in a black hole in one of the cave hospitals. You’ll be kept in permanent darkness and solitary confinement so you can’t jaunte out. They’ll go through the motions of giving you shots and therapy, but you’ll be rotting in the dark. And

you'll stay there and rot until you decide to talk. We'll keep you there forever. (69)

The darkness is out of supposed necessity, to prevent prisoners from escaping, while prisoners are otherwise “rehabilitated” through occupational therapy and radio lectures. In actuality, Dagenham is clear, these are token gestures towards rehabilitation when the incarceration itself is clearly punitive rather than rehabilitative.

The guise of rehabilitation continues in Gouffre Martel as Foyle listens to audio broadcast lectures on morals and ethics. The prisoners have the opportunity to labor by piloting machines remotely for one hour a day (71) as cyborg labor. Foyle finds this hour a short relief from boredom and darkness and silence. Foyle works as a prison laborer as a “patient” in “occupational therapy” by telecommuting. He “thrust his hands” into a TV screen and “saw three-dimensionally” where he makes hospital uniforms, kitchen utensils, and cooks prepared foods. “Although he actually touched nothing, his motions were transmitted to the shops where the work was accomplished by remote control. After one short hour of this relief came the darkness and silence again” (71-72). Rehabilitative labor is a relief from the darkness. Only through prison labor can Foyle re-inhabit his body.

Nearly all the texts I discuss include a “flaw” in the system. For Foyle, he is able to hear the voice of another prisoner, Jizbella McQueen, who is kept in another section of the prison. They plot their escape together. Foyle seizes the opportunity when Dagenham returns to interrogate Foyle after ten months in darkness. Dagenham expects to find a broken man, but Foyle still refuses to divulge the location of the PyrE. Dagenham remarks that Foyle is “no common spaceman” (80). Foyle insists he is working alone, but he accepts the aid of Jizbella, who insists that he use his mind. It is Jizbella’s prompting that encourages Foyle to punish the “brains” behind the *Vorga*: “You punish the brain, Gully. The brain that sets the trap. Find out who

was aboard *Vorga*. Find out who gave the order to pass you by. Punish him” (75). Jizbella aids his revenge quest until both Foyle and Jizbella betray one another.

The end of the novel shows Foyle’s evolution from the common man to an enlightened posthuman subject. Foyle passes through a transitional cyborg identity⁴⁷, outfitting himself as a killing machine, before transcending and no longer needing his augmentation to transcend the limits of teleportation. Foyle gives the prototype of PyrE to the entire world so that nobody may use it. As he says, "I’ve handed life and death back to the people who do the living and dying" (254). This democratizing move shares the benefits of Foyle’s transcendence with the masses. He transcends his own abilities by learning how to jaunte more than 1,000 miles, by realizing that the answer to the question "why life?" might exist somewhere in the universe: "It’s only necessary to believe that somewhere there’s something worthy of belief" (256). He teaches others to jaunte through outer space, and is "prepared to await the awakening" of the next step in human progress and evolution (258). Posthumanism is not punishment for Foyle, as we see for in “Deep End” and

⁴⁷ However, the posthumans still master the universe, which echoes Hayles’s criticism of transhumanism. As the narrator warns readers at the beginning of the novel, Foyle’s transformation would “open the door to the holocaust” (17). In “Wrestling with Transhumanism,” Hayles shows of the views of transhumanism founding fathers Max More and Nick Bostrom are rich with rhetoric of “individual transcendence” with an absence of serious consideration of “socioeconomic dynamics beyond the individual” such as population growth, finite resources, and influx of elders that youth must support. While Bester’s novel does engage with economic inequalities, he frames posthumanism as still relying on individual transcendence of one super-man. The cyborg seems like a posthuman state, but he is actually a posthuman when he transcends and exceeds the limitations of jaunting.

Solitaire, but a means for transcendence, and thus is more in line with traditional, abstract posthumanism, but the novel is not uncritically so because the novel engages in the social problems brought on by human advancement. *The Stars My Destination* shows incarceration as a catalyst for such transcendence. Foyle negotiates cyborg and transhuman identity, and must go through imprisonment, overcoming the alienating darkness, as part of his transformation.

Hacking the Virtual Reality Prison in *Solitaire*

In *The Stars My Destination*, the jailers at least gesture towards rehabilitation, even if it fails to be rehabilitative in practice. In Kelley Eskridge's 2002 novel, *Solitaire*, there is another type of "humane punishment," virtual reality incarceration, which is then transcended by "hacking" the prison of the mind akin to Neo "waking up" in *The Matrix* and realizing humankind lives in a simulation. In Eskridge's depiction of the VR prison, incarceration is experienced as a mental simulation that the mind enters while the body hibernates. Eskridge notes on her website that, because the novel is SF, the protagonist Jackal's internal journey is an actual event (*Kelley Eskridge*). Time is experienced subjectively in the VR prison, where the mind experiences years while the body only experiences months. The prisoner dwells in the monastic solitude of her own mind, theoretically contemplating what she does wrong, so that she might reform when she awakes and finds only months have passed and she's lost no years of her life.

Though *Solitaire* has not been widely discussed by literary critics, I would locate it within the tradition of virtual reality novels, and more narrowly, feminist cyberpunk, with predecessors such as Pat Cadigan's *Synners*, Melissa Scott's *Trouble and Her Friends*, and Maureen McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang*. These texts insert women's (and queer) perspectives into a genre previously labeled masculinist⁴⁸. Karen Cardora asserts that feminist cyberpunk contributes to

⁴⁸ See critiques of cyberpunk by Veronica Hollinger, Neil Easterbrook ("The Arc of Our

feminism “fragmented subjects who can, despite their multiple positionings, negotiate and succeed in a high-tech world” (357). Like earlier virtual reality novels, *Jackal* transcends the limits of virtual reality. Unlike these novels, however, *Jackal* also transcends the limits of the prison.

In this novel, Jackal Segura, is a prestigious individual known as a “Hope” (for being born at the right moment). She is convicted of murder after she tries to save her Webmates and fellow Hopes (her coworkers-family-affinity-group) from a malfunctioning elevator. Jackal opts out of a 40-year traditional prison sentence and consents to participate in an experimental “rehabilitative” punishment and undergoes eight years of solitary confinement in a virtual prison. Jackal leaves her physical body behind and her years of incarceration are subjective; in the outside world, only months pass. Meanwhile, Jackal’s body (as she learns from a brochure) “would be fed intravenously and catheterized... Her body would be encased from the shoulders down in a locked medical-minder case ‘for your own protection.’ The minder would monitor and feed and clean her out, and electro-stimulate her muscles every two real-days while she was incarcerated” (134). Her body is suspended and tended by machines; she is forbidden to control her body herself as a part of her punishment. When Jackal’s mind leaps ahead of her body, she begins “the first of two thousand nine hundred and twenty days” (139). She does not feel quite aligned with her body. Instead, she describes her experience as mediated: “She felt as if she were half an inch outside herself, ghosted, like video through a bad link” (140). As Jackal explores her cell, she realizes that her bodily needs are obsolete: “She remembered the tests she was given, to think of egg and apple and butter, and here were the results. Phantom food. It would not matter to her body if she never ate a bite during her sentence; and if she never opened the larder again, the apples would still be as firm, the cheese as buttery yellow, as she had just seen them. Real; not real. She would never need

Destruction”), and Nicola Nixon.

a toilet here, or a shower” (140). Eating becomes entertainment, rather than sustenance, as she struggles to retain her sanity in her private cloister.

Reuniting her mind with her body is the only way that Jackal can maintain her sanity as she begins to willfully undo the effect of her punishment. During her sentence, Jackal “had learned that physical sensation was important to help her stay connected with her body; to keep it solid against the empty space inside that threatened to eat her one cell, one minute, at a time; against the internal voice that seemed to be growing in power, in intimacy and how it sometimes gibbered instead of speaking” (144). Jackal is struggling to stay connected to her body, which becomes a fiction in VR. The incarceration forces Jackal to leave her body behind. As Jackal examines her own body in VR:

She still had the sensation of physical movements being out of sync. She ran her hands up her arms, down her breasts and ribs and around her back, across her bottom and down her legs, everywhere she could reach, and it was as if she touched herself through a layer of plastic film. She still had all her hair: it too felt slightly wrong. She thought of her body, the real one, laying loose and unconscious in a medical minder; that body turning soft and rotting subtly from within because her attention, her self, was not there. ” (141-142).

The forced disembodiment means that Jackal does not have control over her own body and she fears it will atrophy under the stewardship of machines. This echoes real prisons, where prisoners do not have agency over their own bodies, with health care “providers” ignoring their needs and diagnoses. A year into her imprisonment, Jackal in the simulation exercises regularly and cleans herself with a blanket. Despite the exercise having no real impact on her physical body: “She had learned that physical sensation was important to help her stay connected with her body; to keep her solid against the empty space inside that threatened to eat her one cell, one minute, at a time”

(144). The exercise helps her control an internal voice that whispers doubts in her mind; controlling her virtual body gives Jackal some rudimentary mastery over her own mind.

In *Solitaire*, Jackal wakes up halfway through her second year naked, disoriented, and covered in painful red patches: “She was not supposed to suffer physical pain in VC, any more than she was supposed to feel hungry or sick. But she was sore. She was damaged. / She was very frightened.” This bodily discomfort promotes an emotional response. She loses sense of time, with three subjective days having passed without her recollection. She feels a flash of pain, and another day skips forward. She hears a voice behind her, and faces it with her eyes open. Suddenly, she is disembodied: “—and she saw herself” (150) from outside of her virtual body. She battles her inner demon, and must rest and recover for subjective months: “She lived now as if recovering from a long illness. She treated her body like something that might easily break” (151). She eats comfort food associated with her “earliest taste memories” (151) to ground herself by remembering physical sensations such as taste.

In the following subjective year of her imprisonment, Jackal goes about improving herself “to make herself unbreakable” (152)—furthering her abilities to willfully “hack” the simulation. She performs a daily mental exercise where she “made a white board in her mind. Then she let a thought draw itself in colored ink on the clean surface, and erased it, and it was simply gone. No longer anything to do with her. Some things were harder to wipe away, but she persisted. It was like a mental fast; she cleaned the impurities from herself until her mind ran like stream water, shallow and cold” (152). Here, Eskridge invokes the metaphor of the *tabula rasa* (blank slate), the social constructionist / epistemological theory that people are born blank and written upon by their family, education, and culture. The *tabula rasa* can be traced back to Aristotle, but was popularized by John Locke during the English Enlightenment (in contrast to Thomas Hobbes

view of human nature as essentially selfish). In this scene in *Solitare*, Jackal takes control of her own slate, so she may write upon herself (or in this case, erase her weaknesses) rather than be written upon—this is an example of her agency in prison, her mind triumphing over (virtual) matter of her broken (virtual) body. The blank slate is appropriate here because Jackal is *only* mind, there is no genetic code ensuring her essence. She erases the trauma that led to her imprisonment. Finally, she erases her lover, Snow: “Then she was clean and empty. When she looked inside, nothing looked back” (153). She’s attempted to reboot herself as a new person, like an infant. However, becoming an unemotional stone—the blank slate—does not work for Jackal: “It was too much for her. There were too many memories” (153). Realizing this, she has a bodily reaction: “She began to breathe harder and faster... What had she done? She had scrubbed out her home, her family, her life, like rubbing grease from her hands. She had tried to wash herself away” (154). She goes on to then learn how to be alone, and was “spending a great deal of [time] studying each piece of her experience and how it fit into the whole of her” (154). She sees how her fragmented pieces fit into a whole. During her imprisonment, Jackal moves through different ontologies, and repairing herself from her fragmented pieces of experiences. The experience is not a pleasant one; “She felt toxic, contaminated by self-discovery” (156). Finally, when she commits to self-improvement, “I’ll do better this time... I will do better” (156), she finds joy. Jackal has found some rehabilitative purpose in her incarceration (even if she wasn’t deviant in the first place—her “crime” was an accident, but she is deviant in that her parents cheated to make her a Hope): “being Jackal Segura was easier now, even convicted and abandoned and alone... It was better in some incomprehensible way to be all those things if she was also still herself. She wasn’t sure what it meant, and she decided it did not matter... it was never the crocodile or the stone who cried: it was always the human Jackal” (157).

Jackal's growth as a person allows her to exploit the "bugs" or flaws in her incarceration, like a hacker. The flaws, combined with Jackal's mental and physical "self-development" allow her to eventually break free of her cell. She "kicks" through a whole in the wall: "It felt good to use her body like this, against something that resisted and then gave way; it was almost erotic, and she forgot for a while what she was doing and simply gave herself over to action and feeling. When she came back to herself, she had broken a hole big enough to crawl through and her cell was full of a kind of light she had not seen in more than four years" (160). Outside of the cell, she finds a replica of Ko Island, where she'd grown up; Jackal has remade her own world [world making], and one that was so detailed she spent weeks exploring. After months, she thinks of the world beyond Ko. She can see Hong Kong across the sea, and imagines what is next, including the prison where her body is stored, Al Iskandariyah. "That was a nasty thought, to imagine herself dancing down the corridors of the prison hospital into the room where in another life she was strapped down and hooked up; leaning over the empty table and pressing against the space where she was in the other world, coming that close to herself" (166). When Jackal wakes up, she believes that she is still in VC (virtual incarceration): "Her real body, the one that she had missed wrenchingly at first and then forgotten utterly during the last glorious year at Ko. She made small experimental movements: she didn't need to stand to realize how fragile she was" (174). The severing of consciousness from body runs so deep, that Jackal must learn to re-inhabit her body and discern reality from the virtual when she learns to reconnect to her body outside of the simulation. After Jackal is released from prison, she struggles to adjust to living in the outside world. She discovers a bar with other former prisoners who shared her experience. The experiment ends early due to a "disagreement in Earth Congress about the scope and control of the Virtual Technology Program," (178) but it is suggested that it shuts down due to its universal

failure to produce inmates who can reintegrate into their societies.

Ironically, through the power of the mind, hacking the prison enables Jackal to simulate that she has rejoined her mind and body.

“Deep End,” the Informatics of Domination, and Imposing Posthumanism

Prisoners are not the first group of people one thinks of when picturing “posthuman” subjects. However, the fiction I have discussed in this chapter is just a small sampling of science fiction that depicts prisoners as some sort of posthuman as a part of their punishment. In these carceral extrapolations, posthuman subjects are not the most privileged but most disenfranchised⁴⁹. As prisoners are alienated from their own bodies, disembodiment, which tends to be celebrated by transhumanists, then becomes punishment for marginalized peoples. I have been suggesting that one effect of incarceration is the imposition of a negative posthuman subjectivity via alienation from mind and body. This not a universal process or the only effect incarceration has on prisoners’ bodies, but is one effect revealed through science fiction. Another is a forced cyborg identity, like the radio implants in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. A third way is through transparency, where carceral technologies gaze into the bodies of prisoners in an attempt to pry into their essence.

We can hypothesize as to how such negative posthumanism happens by considering what Donna Haraway calls “the informatics of domination. In “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Haraway introduces the informatics of domination as the new ways in which information is stored, retrieved, produced, and controlled in the interest of late capitalism. The old systems of hierarchy and domination, under “white capitalist patriarchy” (161), arrange oppression along familiar

⁴⁹ Jackal is an exception; as an esteemed member of her society, she is imprisoned to be made an example.

hierarchies that privilege one side of a binary: man/woman, straight/gay, rich/poor, etc. These hierarchies have not been neutralized by networked societies. Rather, they have evolved so that socially constructed but often naturalized hierarchical categories, such as sex and gender, class, and race are rearranged but also maintained by late capitalist social conditions, although as lines of tangled networks rather than binary hierarchies. One way that hierarchies are maintained is through translating difference into a homogeneous code: “the translation of the world into a problem of coding, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange” (164). When the world becomes translated into code, old oppressive hierarchies are rearranged and become more deeply embedded in social arrangements to the point that they are unrecognizable (for example, Haraway’s cyborg is often interpreted as postgender as in void of gender[cite] whereas hierarchies are present but obscured and harder to identify). The informatics of domination homogenizes in that oppression is democratized (much like Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, although Haraway is more interested in a new global economy). Under the informatics of domination, it is impossible to talk about communications without talking about biotechnologies. Essential components are now discussed as part of a network. What the informatics of domination look like in practice includes: intensified insecurity and decentralized state power (panopticon), de-skilling of workers and democratization of poverty, and the “homework economy” that erases the boundary between the workplace/home and workday/leisure time. For prisoners, their bodies may be literally translated into code, as is the case in “Deep End” and *Solitaire*, or forcefully made into cyborgs, like the mental hospital inmates who receive radio implants in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. (Foyle does not fit here as neatly because his cyborg identity is self-fashioned, but he is an important precursor example to punitive cyborg identity.)

The ruling elite in “Deep End” use the informatics of domination to duplicate their bodies as a way to externalize, displace, then re-embody their power—in a manner that extends the double-body of the sovereign described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault asks, “If the surplus power possessed by the king gives rise to the duplication of his body, has not the surplus power exercised on the subjected body of the condemned man given rise to another type of duplication?” (29). Here, the law extends the body of the sovereign beyond his physical body to religious, political, and legal institutions, and the state takes vengeance upon the body of the convict for the damage to the sovereign body. However, the punishment in “Deep End”—forced downloading into bodies of sovereign subjects—is a new punishment that is not a spectacle. Rather, with the final destination a penal planet, the prisoners are removed from their society. In a debate between Wayna’s lovers, Thad and Doe, Doe sees their experience as an experiment. They are “petri dishes-inoculated with their [the elite’s] DNA. Except they’re back on Earth; they won’t be around to see the results of their experiment.” Thad replies, “They don’t need to be. They got Dr Ops to report back” (20). Information on the success of the prison is sufficient.

Although Haraway does not discuss prisons explicitly, her framing of “the informatics of domination” is useful to understand the prison and how it is represented in SF. I find that SF, with its critical engagement in technologies’ role in its societies, enables us to understand how the prison industrial complex utilizes the informatics of domination. The informatics of domination is a useful term to understand the process of punitive posthumanism, which would include negative cyborg identity, individuals forced to become cyborgs for survival or against their will. (This contrasts the desirable posthuman subjectivity critiqued by Hayles.) Additionally, extending Haraway’s use of SF as primary source and model of cyborg resistance, we can also read Haraway’s framing of “the informatics of domination” as a critique of transhumanism because

negative instantiations of information technologies, as Haraway notes, reiterate old lines of domination, anticipating Hayles same concern about posthuman technologies perpetuating wealth gaps. SF also models cyborg resistance: *Solitaire* is an example of cyborg subjectivity positioning one to “hack” the informatics of domination.

“Deep End” represents the informations of domination when race and gender hierarchies are codified within the structure of the prison ship and who is allowed to download into what bodies (discussed further in the following chapter). This hierarchical space also represented Foucault’s deeply influential work on the panopticon. Dr Ops, the ship's warden, is an ubiquitous artificial intelligence represented through the avatar of a friendly white doctor. Because he's an AI, Dr Ops possesses God-like surveillance and can be in multiple places at once, running the ship and consulting with prisoners like Wayna, when she visits him about the pains she's feeling and is refused a download into a new body. Both optic and the operating system, Dr Ops is a figure of the political technology, like the all-seeing Panopticon, "represented as a pure architectural and optical system" (Foucault 205). Little is known about *Psyche Moth's* physical space, where the clones are grown and the prisoners live their embodied "meat" lives; it's layout is a secret from the prisoners. They do know that they're kept on a two-kilometer tether from Dr Ops hardware (his mechanical version of the "meat"), which they orbit around in simulated gravity gradually increasing to mimic the gravity on Amends. Dr Ops's hardware is safe, but his wetware is disembodied and multiple. Beneath Dr Ops are trustees, the first group to download because they are complacent prisoners in charge of maintaining order on *Psyche Moth*. Trustees are participants in their own social surveillance, as the red-headed Robeson notes at a shared meal with Wayna and friends, "With trustees to watch us all the time, everywhere we go, and this ship hanging in orbit right over our heads" (16). In noting the behavior of the trustees, Robeson and

the other prisoners are surveilling themselves as well. Whether or not Dr Ops and trustees are actually watching, prisoners in effect behave in the manner of the Panopticon, acting as though they are being watched. In Foucault's words, "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). The prisoners behave as they're being watched and therefore are perpetuating the prison's social power structure in which they participate. I find the panopticon to be an appropriate metaphor for how individuals participate in their own surveillance. Prisoner agency complicates the degree to which prisoners both resist and consent to incarceration. Jackal agrees to her experimental prison as a reduced sentence. Foyle could end his incarceration by snitching. Wayna "agreed" to download into new bodies and colonize Amends. Negative posthuman identity is not depicted as a hopeless state of victimization, however. While Wayna's lovers, Thad and Doe, refuse to download and prefer to live as information in a computer, Wayna accepts her damaged body to make peace with her limited options. Foyle outsmarts his captors and adopts his own self-styled cyborg identity to seek and eventually overcome the need for vengeance. Jackal, through will of mind, is able to overcome the illusion of her imprisonment and transcend its attempt at imprisoning the mind. However, I would caution against using the panopticon to assert that prisoners consent to their own incarceration in the sense of blaming the victims. The shape of the rhizome does not mean that the SF prison cannot be disrupted.

Foucault writes that prison revolts are "against an entire state of physical misery that is over a century old: against cold, suffocation and overcrowding, against decrepit walls, hungry, physical mal-treatment. But they are also revolts against model prisons, tranquilizers, isolation, the medical or education services" (30). These can be read as revolts against the posthuman conditions in prisons.

Foucault notes that prison revolts are not against the conditions of the prison (whether too miserable or too perfect/utopian) but against the body of the prison itself: “In fact, they were revolts, at the level of the body, against the very body of the prison. What was at issue was not whether the prison environment was too harsh or too aseptic, too primitive or too efficient, but its very materiality as an instrument and vector of power; it is this whole technology of power over the body that the technology of the ‘soul’—that of the educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists—fails either to conceal or to compensate, for the simple reason that it is one of its tools” (30). What of a story like “Deep End,” where prisoners plot revolt but never enact it? The characters Thad and Doe, Wayna’s lovers, revolt by refusing embodied existence.

An alternative way to think about the Dr Ops as a panoptic figure is through Gilles Deleuze’s societies of control from his short article “Postscript on the Societies of Control” (elaborated on by Alexander Galloway in *Societies of Control*). Deleuze asserts that while Foucault’s concept of disciplinary societies is an apt description of how power functions in eighteenth and nineteenth century societies, it is in need of updating within the context of the twentieth century shift to globalized, networked societies built around code. He calls these “societies of control” (4). Unlike disciplinary societies, where one starts again and again (from school, to barracks, to factory) in the various institutions in the chain of the carceral archipelago, “in the societies of control one is never finished with anything—the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation” (5) as these institutions blur together with less distinction. Galloway updates the panopticon for a society of control, creating a distributed network of surveillance networks rather than the panopticon’s single all-seeing guard tower: “The shift includes a movement away from central bureaucracies and vertical hierarchies toward a broad

network of autonomous social actors” (32-33). The shape of the networked economy, which Deleuze and Guattari call a rhizome (*A Thousand Plateaus*), allows discipline to continue to function when one point has been disrupted. If the all-seeing Dr Ops represents a society-of-control, Wayna is unable to “hack” the prison ship because

Dr Ops is not a singular entity.

Conclusion: The Flaw in the System

“Deep End,” *Solitaire*, and *The Stars My Destination* feature differing SF nova: duplication and downloading, virtual reality prison, and self-willed teleportation, respectively. What is estranged differs as well, but return to the idea of dualism. In *The Stars My Destination*, the idea of the Enlightenment Man is estranged as the most base of humans becomes the first transcendent posthuman. In *Solitaire*, the limitations of the will (and thus dualism) are estranged. In “Deep End,” what is estranged is the idea that the body is only that which we inhabit. It is no coincidence that these texts use incarceration as a site of estranging mind/body dualism. Achieving transcendent of mind over body is not neatly celebrated in any of these texts, as it is linked to the punitive dualism facilitated by the prison industrial complex.

The criticisms of mind/body dualism and incarceration offered by these texts are also significant given that each case of incarceration “goes wrong.” Like other stories of SF incarceration, the texts I have discussed in this chapter do not model a routine incarceration; something goes wrong. In *Solitaire*, Jackal is able to hack the virtual prison and reforge her connection to her own body. In “Deep End,” Wayna’s cloned body malfunctions, and living in that body is an act of agency. In *The Stars My Destination*, a defect in the prison allows Foyle to befriend another prisoner and aid her escape. One reason a malfunction or “atypical” incarceration is featured in these SF stories is because a story of mundane punishment in a future

prison might not be especially interesting. Moreover, non-routine incarceration. Such “flaws” in the system further estrange incarceration than a story of “routine” incarceration would because it highlights that there is, in actuality, no “routine” incarceration experience. Incarceration is always alienating. Additionally, because such SF provides resistance and transcendence, incarceration is thus not hopeless. The malfunction represents that in incarceration, dysfunction is the norm, not the exception.

Chapter 5: Punitive Gender Reassignment as a Posthuman Punishment

In Tobi Hill-Meyer's short story, "Self-Reflection," the unnamed narrator is visited by an older version of herself, a time-traveler who wishes to give advice to and make love with her younger self. The narrator, a transgender woman, is surprised to learn that her older self has had sex-reassignment surgery:

"No way," I say in disbelief, "But I'm non-op."

"You might be, but I'm not." (231)

After her initial surprise, she curiously examines the time-traveler's "trans cunt." The time-traveler then explain her decision to change her body. One benefit is that, as a lesbian, she passes in women-born-women⁵⁰ spaces: "I don't have any problems in clothing optional space anymore, and I can go stealth in locker rooms, with Michigan festies, or even with one-night stands" (232). More significantly, as she continues: "But I suppose the main two factors that pushed me over the edge were that my healthcare plan covered it—actually [one of her partners] Saphira's health plan—but most health plans cover it now. And that I didn't want the risk of getting placed in men's prison again" after "an abusive partner and survival crime" (232). Here, the time-traveler reveals two future developments that affect transgender people. One, that health care in the United States will progress to the point that sex-reassignment surgery will be covered

⁵⁰ Women-born-women, often spelled womyn-born-womyn, is the radical feminist term for individuals who are medically assigned female at birth, were raised as girls, and live as women. Such women are more commonly called cisgender women or ciswomen, with cis meaning same (an antonym of trans). The time-traveller in "Self-Reflection" refers to the controversial policies of some radical feminist projects, such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which excludes transgender women from attending.

by health insurance (and that individuals in queer, polyamorous relationships can join a partner's health plan). Two, that transgender people are still economically vulnerable (apt to commit survival crimes), disproportionately punished by the criminal justice system, and housed based on their genitalia rather than gender identity. Sex-reassignment surgery, in Hill-Meyer's future, ensures minimal protection so that women such as the narrator are not housed in men's prison.

Time-travel in "Self-Reflection" is a means to explore one individual's growth in regards to her gender expression. It also offers hope that policies can get better for gender non-conforming people, even in a few short years. However, "Self-Reflection" also uses realism to represent the particular vulnerabilities transgender people face within the United States criminal justice system. Prisons, like other state institutions, work within a logic of binary genders. Genitals much match identity. For transgender prisoners, only those who are have "legitimately" had a legal and physical sex change may reside with prisoners of their gender. The criminal justice system also serves as the gender police, punishing women who strand up to abusive partners, as well as cisgender gay, lesbian, bisexual people whose sexual orientation is still regarded as deviant, especially for those individuals who do not replicate monogamous, middle-class, heterosexual lifestyles.⁵¹

"Self-Reflection" is a nearly realist⁵² story. The time travel is never explained; it is a

⁵¹ Queer critics of marriage maintain that "gay marriage" upholds the state and its prison industrial complex. See the anthology *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage* edited by Ryan Conrad. For a more classic critique of gay marriage and assimilation, see Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal*.

⁵² "Self-Reflection" indirectly revisits the scenario of a SF short story by Robert Heinlein, published in 1959, "All You Zombies." In this story, the intersexed narrator lives as a woman

minor detail that enables the narrator to explore her present and future identity as a transgender woman. In Nisi Shawl's "Deep End," a story set in a more distant future, Thad, a transgender prisoner, does not have the option of choosing her own form of gendered embodiment. In my previous chapter, I discuss how "Deep End" depicts forced re-embodiment as punishment. Racially and economically oppressed individuals are punished for their rebellion by being forced to download into white bodies cloned from their oppressors. Thad desires a female body, but was assigned male at birth and is still considered male by Dr Ops, the *Psyche Moth's* artificial-intelligence warden. Although Wayna, the point-of-view character, comes to accept her defective clone as an act of agency, another character, Thad, who is one of Wayna's two lovers, refuses to download.

Thad is offered a choice: a body whose sex (but not race) matches the one she was assigned at birth, or have no body at all. Thad chooses to live in freespace as a disembodied mind rather than live in the body that does not match her identity. Thad chooses to live a disembodied existence because the only option, if Thad chooses embodiment, is a body whose sex she does not desire. Dr Ops, voice of the jailing bureaucracy, requires that one chooses to occupy the body of

until he undergoes an involuntary sex reassignment operation during a cesarian delivery. The story reveals that the father, mother, and baby are the same person; the male narrator time-travels to impregnate his female self. The baby is dropped off at an orphanage in the past. The narrator finds it difficult to adjust to being male, but considered herself ugly and a "ruined woman" as an unwed mother so she is overall happy to adopt her new gender. She accepts her male identity, and begins to find the nurses attractive, which suggests that physical sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation go hand-in-hand. Heinlein's short story inspired David Gerrold's 1973 novel *The Man Who Folded Himself*, which also features a time-traveler fathering and mothering himself.

her or his pre-upload biological sex. Transgender downloads are not allowed without an explanation from the AI warden Dr Ops, except that it is forbidden. Wayna, whose body is defective, asks if she can have her friend's unwanted body. Dr Ops replies, "You must mean Thad... That would be a man's body. Our charter doesn't allow transgender downloads" (21) when Wayna asks if she can download into Thad's unwanted body. Transgender individuals on *Psyche Moth* can still exist in the mind until they are potentially logged off permanently (then apparently they would cease to exist) by Dr Ops. Thad chooses to live as a prisoner in virtual reality, without a body, rather than be imprisoned in a body that matches Thad's assigned sex but not gender identity.

While gender transgression is forbidden, the cloning is a project of racial homogenization. Downloading in "Deep End" is "race-blind." That is, the convicts of various races and ethnicities have their bodies erased and are downloaded into white-skinned clones. This is both erasure of racial identity as both punishment to the convicts and inoffensive to Doc Ops, who is programmed to maintain a gender binary. Wayna must guess her peers' ethnicity based on their physical performance. As she wonders about a friend, "He say closer than she'd expected, closer than she was used to. Maybe that meant he'd been born Hispanic or Middle Eastern. Or maybe not" (17). Crossing racial boundaries is imposed in "Deep End" because it serves the purpose of the colony: ensuring the "immortality investments" of the white ruling class. Such gender slippage, however, is strictly forbidden to ensure the reproduction of the colonists. Although Thad is just a copied consciousness with no body, the warden insists that the consciousness that belonged to a formerly male body match the new body. Race is erased, but allowing would challenge the future of the colony for a "male" consciousness. Both erasure of racial difference and refusal of transgender downloadings prevent self-determination. With race, one's identity is chosen for her. Crossing

gender, however, would prevent the colony's reproductive mission.

In "Deep End," transgender downloading would jeopardize the reproductive nature of the colony. Thad also refuses to download because she refuses to reproduce the genetic lineage of the oppressors. When Wayna and Doe try to convince Thad to join them on the planet so the three can be together, Thad replies, "Together to do what? To bear our enemies' children, that's what, we nothing but a bunch of glorified mummies, girl, don't you get it? Remote control units for their *immortality investments*, protection for their precious genetic material. Cheaper than your average AI, no benefits, no union, no personnel manager. *Mummies*" (20, emphasis added).

Thad refuses download to resist not only reproducing in the unwanted male body, but to also resist reproducing period because she believes "they won't *have* to make people reproduce. It's a basic drive" (20). Although Thad, Wayna, and Doe are in a queer and polyamorous relationship, they resign themselves that traditional biological reproduction is inevitable once they are living within their assigned human bodies. For Thad, refusing to download is to refuse biological destiny. With Thad and Wayna find some agency within a situation with few choices between undesirable options.

Despite Thad's desire to be female embodied, Wayna and her "honeywoman" Doe refer to Thad as "he" as he exists in freespace, and Thad doesn't object. Even Wayna and Doe do not view Thad as his chosen gender without the body to match it. Thad's desire for a transgendered body places his gender transition (no genderqueer here, he requests to go unambiguously male to female) entirely in the body. Alternatively, Thad may be referred to as "he" because of the neutrality of the mind in freespace. Without a body, Thad is a *tabula rasa*—the blank slate: "Thad usually came across as neutral, controlled, the way you could be out of your meat" (16). Thad's neutrality is equated with control; the mind independent of the body can be objective.

Although the technology in “Deep End” is entirely speculative, it represents inability of disciplinary institutions to conceive of nonbinary gender. By nonbinary gender, I mean both individuals whose gender identity does not match their medically assigned sex, and individuals who might identify as neither exclusively male nor female. “Deep End” reveals and extrapolates on the carceral state’s attempts to deal with gender ambiguity by attempting to reassign the gender of prisoners who do not conform to neat categories of binary sex and gender. For the carceral state, there are only two physical sexes: female and male, and gender identity must neatly match. Punitive disembodiment is particularly high stakes for people who are historically outside of the category of liberal human.

How can science fiction help us better understand gender and incarceration? Science fiction engages many of the problems raised by feminist and queer theorists. Where does gender come from? What is the biological basis for sex? Should gender distinctions be maintained in an egalitarian society? How can we materially and discursively rewrite gendered bodies? As I have noted throughout this dissertation, SF makes the familiar alien, and enables us to critique binary gender as natural and inevitable. Le Guin famously did so in 1969 with *The Left Hand of Darkness*, as have Russ, Delany, Tiptree, and others. As Brit Mandelo writes in the introduction to the first-of-its-kind SF anthology *Beyond Binary*, “speculative fiction is the literature of questions, of challenges and imagination—and what better for us to question than the ways in which gender and sexuality have been rigidly defined, partitioned off, put in little boxes?” (1). While few texts interrogate both non-binary gender *and* incarceration, I have found a handful that interrogate the criminal justice system’s maintenance of gender conformity: the aforementioned “Self-Reflection” and “Deep End,” as well as Charles Stross’s novel of posthuman imprisonment, *Glasshouse*, which I discuss in depth below. There is a great potential for the medium of SF to

continue to take up questions of incarceration. SF can help show us how prisons and the carceral state police and maintain binary gender, and how subjects can subvert such gender policing. SF can help us think our way out of gender binaries.

This chapter looks at a very specific topic: the use of gender change as punishment within science fiction. There is a wealth of scholarship on gender in science fiction by scholars such as Marleen Barr, Joanna Russ, Beverly Friend, Susan Wood, Pamela Sargent, Mary Kenny Badami, and many more. However, there is little scholarship on transgender characters in SF. There is criticism on androgyny in science fiction, considering texts like Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* or Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (see Peter Atterby's *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* and Pamela Annas "New Worlds, New Words: Androgyny in Feminist Science Fiction"). Allucquère Rosanne (Sandy) Stone⁵³, who writes about transgender bodies in cyberspace in her 2000 book *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Such criticism notes the important work that SF (and for Stone, cyberspace) does in interrogating the idea of gender. However, it does not consider how gender is used in punitive terms, the focus of my chapter. To begin this work, I have cast a wide net, and overview several examples in order to identify two major trends: punishment of gender non-conformity by forcing individuals to live as a gender not of their choosing, and punishment of cisgender men by forcing them to inhabit a female body.

In this chapter, I discuss how SF texts treat gender non-conforming individuals caught in criminal justice systems. How do speculative disciplinary mechanisms maintain the gender

⁵³ Stone is also the author of the famous essay "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," which is a response to Janice Raymond's attack on transwomen, *The Transsexual Empire*.

binary? What is at stake in maintaining it? I look at gendered punishment in fiction set in more distant futures than “Self-Reflection,” where changing the body and its physical sex is as easy as changing a hairstyle. I argue that this fiction reveals at least two trends in punishment (1) that trans and gender-ambiguous characters are forced to inhabit binary gender and (2) that cisgender men become women as punishment. I begin this chapter with another such text, Charles Stross’s novel *Glasshouse*. In this novel, a postgender individual who identifies as male, Robin, is trapped in the body of a housewife on a prison ship recreating patriarchal twentieth-century suburbia. For Robin, the punishment is both being trapped in a woman’s body *and* a society that regards women as inferior. In “Deep End” and *Glasshouse*, gender-fluid characters must inhabit binary gender as part of their punishment. In other fiction, such as *Season of the Witch*, cisgender men are punished by forcefully becoming women; the punishment is not so much to be imprisoned, but to be imprisoned in *female bodies*. To become a woman is to become punished. I briefly overview three examples: an online novella *Prisoners of Tiresias*, the aforementioned *Season of the Witch*, and the 2011 film *The Skin I Live In*. This SF takes something done figuratively in incarceration (alienation from the body and the feminization of male prisoners as a type of terror and punishment) and literalizes it. Usually this disembodiment is figurative in prisons—such as the attempts to reform the body to reform the soul of prisoners—but it is literal in the case of transgender prisoners being reassigned a sex that matches their genitals rather than lived gender.

This chapter builds on the work of my previous chapter. As I discuss before, cyberspace is traditionally thought of as freeing the individual from the meat of *his* body, including “bodily-based” social identities such as gender. Even those who have challenged this notion, such as Allucquére Stone, regard cyberspace as a transgender space. She writes that, “Some [cyberspace networks] are racially differentiated and gendered, stereotypical and Cartesian,

reifying old power differentials whose workings are familiar and whose effects are well understood. But some interactions are novel, strange, perhaps transformative, and certainly disruptive of many traditional attempts at categorization” (36). She concludes her book with a provocative claim that “In cyberspace the transgendered body is the natural body. The nets are spaces of transformation, identity factories in which bodies are meaning machines, and transgender—identity as performance, as play, as wrench in the smooth gears of the social apparatus of vision—is the ground state” (180-181) in contrast to physical space, where the “transgendered body is the unnatural body” (181⁵⁴). Indeed cyberspace does offer freedom of gender performance without the same degree of violence and cissexist oppression that out transgender people face in the physical world. Cyberspace was especially an exciting and new realm for gender performance at the time of Stone’s writing in the mid-90s. What I am contributing to work such as Stone’s is considering how the promises of cybernetic technologies are oppressive for transgender individuals.

Before I start analyzing this fiction, I would like to define how I am distinguishing between sex and gender, and what it has to do with the mind/body dualism I discuss in my previous chapter. A common premise of feminist theory is that gender that sex as biological and gender as social. However, I agree with social constructionists such as Judith Butler and Anne Fausto-Sterling that interrogate the “naturalness” of the category of sex. How we understand biological sex is filtered through our experience, where there are high stakes through maintaining male and female binaries through medical intervention, as Fausto-Sterling shows in her book *Sexing the Body*, through acts such as involuntary sex reassignment of intersex infants.

⁵⁴ In the two decades since Stone wrote *The War of Desire*, theorists and activists, such as Dean Spade, have challenged the idea that the transgender body is unnatural.

Butler considers how sex is as much an idea as gender. She asserts that the idea of “sex” as natural and “gender” presumes that the body exists prior to language and identity. Butler finds this view problematic because it is dependent on Cartesian dualism and Christian world-views.

In her words,

The sex/gender distinction and the category of sex itself appear to presuppose a generalization of ‘the body’ that preexists the acquisition of its sexed significance. This ‘body’ often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as ‘external’ to that body. *Any theory of the cultural constructed body, however, ought to question ‘the body’ as a construct of suspect generally when it is figured as passive and prior to discourse. There are Christian and Cartesian precedents to such views which, prior to the emergence of vitalistic biologies in the nineteenth century, understand ‘the body’ as so much inert matter, signifying nothing or, more specifically, signifying a profane void, the fallen state: deception, sin, the premonitional metaphors of hell and the eternal feminine.* (Gender Trouble 130; emphasis added)

Butler cautions against seeing the sexed body as existing *a priori* to language and insists that we consider the body (and its sex) as constructed as much by culture as gender.

Sheyrl Vint succinctly explains why it is problematic to think about the body in dualistic terms:

Mind/body dualism has historically allowed some subjects—male, white, heterosexual—to construct themselves as unmarked by the body while other subjects—women, non-whites, gays and lesbians—are seen as having a closer connection to the body, often expressed as being *reduced* to the body. What this reduction entails is the embodied subjects (those whose bodies mark them as different) are not able to attain

true subject status, since subjectivity has been equated with the mind alone... (89) and thus marginalized subjects, under liberal humanism, are not this “mind alone” and therefore unable to “own” themselves in the sense of self-possessiveness (89).⁵⁵ What is the implication for prisoners? As “Deep End” shows, prisoners, as marginalized subjects “marked” by their hyper-embodied bodies, are reduced to *just* bodies. I argue that, given the model of disembody to punish that I outline in the previous chapter, that SF extrapolates on a gender logic maintained by incarceration: that prisoners are not the body of their own choosing. In SF, incarceration literally reassigns identity based on hegemonic notions of what body a person should possess based on what the state perceives their subjectivity to be. Another implication of this chapter is that it joins debates held by both feminists and transhumanists about what to do with the body. Radical feminists and transhumanists alike view the body as the source of oppression, but this SF raises concerns that trouble the idea that abolishing the body will abolish oppression. Though I discuss gender identity, this argument could and should be extended to consider other identities that are marked by the body, especially race and ability (both of which intersect with gender).

Posthuman, Postgender, and Imprisoned in a *Glasshouse*

When Hayles writes that SF is the *locus classicus* for addressing the ethical implications of transhumanism, “Deep End” would serve as an apt example of such SF. The short story explores

⁵⁵ Like Vint, Hayles shows how the liberal humanist subject “*possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body. Only because the body is not identified with the self is it possible to claim for the liberal subject its notorious universality, a claim that depends on erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity” (4-5). I would add that the oppressed were regarded *only* as bodies, as outsiders of liberal human subjecthood. That said, a positive posthuman subjectivity should avoid reducing identity to *just* a body,

punitive uses of life-extending technologies without being technophobic. “Deep End” is implicitly a cautionary response to more optimistic posthuman futures depicted by authors like Cory Doctorow and Charles Stross, who imagine how technology can cure resource scarcity and free individuals from the Platonic prison of the body. In this section, I analyze Stross’s 2006 novel *Glasshouse*, which also depicts incarceration in a future where, like “Deep End,” minds can be copied and bodies can be destroyed and replaced. However, in *Glasshouse*, no social stigma insists that essence is fixed and must match the body, until Robin is imprisoned, and the gender binary is anachronistically enforced.

Stross is one of a number of twenty-first century British, Canadian, and American science fiction authors challenging Verner Vinge’s claim that we cannot know what life would be like after the technological singularity⁵⁶ because it would be so radically different than our own

⁵⁶ In 1993, Vinge famously predicted an event he called "the singularity" that would likely occur between 2005 and 2030. This event would include:

- o The development of computers that are "awake" and superhumanly intelligent. (To date, most controversy in the area of AI relates to whether we can create human equivalence in a machine. But if the answer is "yes, we can", then there is little doubt that beings more intelligent can be constructed shortly thereafter.
- o Large computer networks (and their associated users) may "wake up" as a superhumanly intelligent entity.
- o Computer/human interfaces may become so intimate that users

era. (As Vinge wrote in 1992, “Yet when [the singularity] finally happens it may still be a great surprise and a great unknown.”) Stross’s cohort includes Doctorow, Greg Egan, Iain M. Banks, Ken MacLeod, Rudy Rucker, and Alastair Reynolds, and the fiction of these authors depicts what a posthuman and post-singularity future might look like⁵⁷. On his blog, Stross notes that he is careful to ensure that his fiction passes the Bechdel test⁵⁸. In many of these author’s works, including Stross’s *Glasshouse*, technology has fixed the social problems humans face in the early twenty-first century, especially poverty, which has been cured due to the end of resource scarcity⁵⁹. When bodies can be changed at will, identity-based oppression such as racism and

may reasonably be considered superhumanly intelligent.

o Biological science may find ways to improve upon the natural human intellect.

⁵⁷ As white, cisgender men from English-speaking countries, these writers do not represent the diversity of people writing on posthumanism, but are the more commonly named authors working with themes of trans and posthumanism. A more comprehensive list of authors engaging in posthuman themes would include women of color such as Nisi Shawl and Nalo Hopkinson. Such authors are missing from the popular science fiction blog io9’s posthuman reading list (Newitz).

⁵⁸ The Bechdel test is a list of criteria from Alison Bechdel’s comic *Dykes to Watch Out For*. An unnamed female character says she will not see a movie unless it (1) has at least two women in it, (2) the two women talk to each other, and (3) the two women talk about something other than a man.

⁵⁹ A critique of this vision is that we’re presuming technology is equally accessible.

sexism holds no more weight⁶⁰. Because humans can be restored from backup, identify theft is “a crime against the individual that most polities rate as several degrees worse than murder” (37).

The sole purpose of government is to prevent identity theft (230). Identify theft, in this scenario, includes impersonation, but actually copying an “instance” of a person against her consent. It also includes altering a person’s memories and personality.

Glasshouse details life on a prison ship, but the experience is not unambiguously incarceration. The novel begins prior to the narrator’s incarceration in the Glasshouse. A virus called Curious Yellow erased much of human history—akin to civilization-wide identity theft—and the posthuman civilization has lost much of its own history. At the beginning of the novel, Robin, the narrator, has undergone memory incision and recovers in a rehabilitative habitat. Many individuals choose to undergo memory incision to reinvent themselves or forget a loss, but Robin undergoes memory surgery because, in his words, “I knew too much. Either consent to undergo memory surgery, or my next death would be my last” (3). Robin initially cannot remember why he wanted to reinvent himself, but thinks he was given a punitive ultimatum. Robin wears a “parole ring” that grants physical pleasure or discomfort depending on how well he socializes with other “inmates”: “It’s crude conditioning reward behavior indicative of recovery, punish behavior that reinforces the postsurgical fugue” (3). Old terminology like “parole” and “inmate” remain, though the center is entirely rehabilitative, and Robin accepts that his punishment is therapeutic.

The eponymous Glasshouse, however, is closer to the twenty-first century definition of the term prison. The novel is named for the habitat upon which most of the novel is set: an ex-military prison converted into an alleged psychological experiment, which Robin calls “a

⁶⁰ Also critiqued. [cite]

panopticon society” (29). The Glasshouse is ambiguously a prison because it is for science (even if the science is revealed not to be about reconstructing the past but the creation of a new virus) rather than punishment. The Glasshouse simulation (before its ulterior motives are uncovered) is an attempt “to reinvent a microcosm of the polymorphic society that’s ancestral to our own” (32). The experiment will allegedly recreate the “dark ages,” which are the second half of the twentieth century, “a pre-Acceleration scarcity economy” (31) whose history was lost to Curious Yellow. Those who have recently had memory incision are recruited for the experiment because they are a “Tabula rasa” (24) and less likely to bring their twenty-eighth century biases. The simulated society, set in a prison, is an attempt to restore humankind’s lost past. Robin agrees to participate in the experiment because he believes someone is trying to kill him and seeks to hide in a closed, anonymous community. Once inside, he receives a new body and identity and lives “in historic drag” (45). Robin becomes Reeve, a housewife in a replica of suburban life. Reeve and the other participants receive points for acting in character, especially conforming to a patriarchal nuclear family. The participants pair up into heterosexual marriage units and receive points for having sex with their spouses, being a breadwinner (for the men), participating in domestic tasks (for the women), and having biological children (a prospect that disgusts Reeve). Reeve recalls her deep, repressed memories in a dream, and realizes she underwent memory incision to go under cover. She discovers that the Glasshouse is not an experiment, but a breeding project to create a new strain of Curious Yellow. She realizes that she is a spy and sleeper agent, and discovers that the experimental subjects are being bred against their will.

Glasshouse, and other posthuman novels, depict a postgender future. Robin had already lived in a bisexual, polyamorous relationship, and found it easy to transform into a woman: “This in itself is no big deal. I’ve been a female orthohuman before” (39-40). She does not consider

the change in bodies to be drag; she has lived as a woman before, and changing physical sex is a mild body modification compared to posthumans such as Robin's lover Kay, who has lived as alien species. However, Reeve initially feels physically powerless in a small, female body. "I'm *weak*" (41), she thinks. But after routinely lifting weights and building dark age weapons, becomes physically formidable. Reeve is comfortable in her role as a woman. The experiment, however, teaches Reeve to internalize the patriarchal gender roles she simultaneously finds barbaric. She comes to see her husband Sam "through gender-trapped eyes" (163) and is surprised that Sam was her (female) lover, Kay, before entering the Glasshouse. Reeve reminds herself to keep thinking of Sam as her husband, not Kay, willing herself to use male pronouns (165). Reeve becomes shy about her body: "Months of living in this gold-fish bowl society have done strange things to my body-sense, and I feel surprisingly awkward about being naked in front of [Sam]" (186). However, Reeve still displays some "masculine" traits, such as her unwillingness to accept an insubordinate role, and sexual assertiveness towards her husband Sam. She even acts as a sexual aggressor towards him, bringing him to climax against his wishes (116).

Though the Glasshouse is a prison ship, the deeper act of incarceration is the entrapment in physical bodies that cannot easily be modified beyond Reeve's "primitive" weightlifting. Within the transhumanist view, bodies are regarded as prisons to the posthumans living in Stross's postscarcity future. Kay, Robin's lover, spent a lifetime in an alien body, studying a people they call the "ice ghouls." As Kay remarks "They're prisoners of their own bodies, they grow old and fall apart, and if one of them loses a limb, they can't replace it" (31).

Emphasis on the body in *Glasshouse* questions the importance of the material body and whether a postgender existence is possible. The term postgender has been taken up from Donna Haraway's deeply influential "A Cyborg Manifesto." In addition to its contributions to cyborg

theory, cyber-feminism, socialist feminism and posthumanism, the manifesto is known for its widely cited term, “post-gender.”⁶¹ Haraway famously wrote that, “The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity” (“Cyborg Manifesto” 150). Though she only used the term “post-gender” once in her essay, it has been taken up by transhumanists, who see gender as another weight of the body to be eradicated. For example, prominent transhumanist thinkers George Dvorsky and James Hughes jointly recall that “At the beginning of the 21st century [...] posthumanist and transhumanist discourses using technologies to intentionally transcend the limitations of the human body began to address the transcending of gender. Trans- or post-humans would *at least* be able to transcend the limitations of biological sex, and would eventually be able to transcend the biological altogether into cybernetic or virtual form” (7). Physically transcending biological sex (a step further than transcending gender, which is possible without technological intervention) is a step on the way to freeing the individual from the body.

Transhumanists such as Dvorsky and Hughes take a position between radical feminists and cultural (or eco-) feminists. Radical feminists tend to be a part of the broader group social constructionist theorists, developed in the 1970s, who believe that social inequality is caused by socialization. Cultural feminists, theorizing in the 1980s, are gender essentialists who believe that males are physically aggressive and females are nurturing, peaceful, and better suited to lead. Transhumanists, like all feminists, want to end sexist oppression. They believe that much of, but

⁶¹ When I teach “A Cyborg Manifesto,” my undergraduate students often use this term as a take-away from Haraway. Upon their first read, they remark that Haraway is advocating a society with no more gender--a position not unlike that of transhumanists.

not all, sexism stems from socialization, but that women and men have distinctly different brain makeup. Thus, to eradicate gender inequality they believe is rooted in biology, you must alter (and ideally eliminate) biology.

Dvorsky and Hughes interpret Haraway as being “a postgender theorist arguing for technological transgression to liberate both women and men from the gender binary” (5-6) and “a new liberatory androgynous archetype” (6). Haraway herself has contested the use of post-gender on at least two occasions. In an interview she granted in 1999, she acknowledged that the term had some use in challenging patriarchy, so long as it did not reproduce the techno-utopianism of transhumanism:

Gender is a verb, not a noun. Gender is always about the production of subjects in relation to other subjects, and in relation to artifacts. Gender is about material-semiotic production of these assemblages, these human-artifact assemblages that are people. People are always already in assemblage with worlds. [...] So, gender is specifically a system of that kind, but not continuous across history. Things need not be this way, and in this particular sense that puts focus on a critical relationship to gender along the lines of critical theory's "things need not be this way" -- in this sense of blasting gender I approve of the term "post-gender." But this is not "post-gender" in a utopian, beyond-masculine-and-feminine sense, which it is often taken to mean. (*The Haraway Reader* 328)

She reiterated her concern in a 2006 interview: “We live in a world where people are made to live several non-isomorphic categories simultaneously, all of which ‘torque’ them. So, in some ways post-gender is a meaningful notion, but I get really nervous about the ways in which it gets made into a utopian project” (Gane 138). At the simplest level, the postgender future in *Glasshouse* fits Haraway's dislike of the term: it is a utopian future where gender is an accessory. To become

rigidly gendered is to become punished.

Anne Balsamo also regards gender as material-semiotic. She opens her book *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* with the premise that the body is both a process and a product. As a product, it is the “material embodiment” of performed social identities and as a process it is a way of knowing and marking the world, as well as a way of knowing and marking a 'self” (3). She conceives of the body not as something located in nature but as a *boundary* where we “we witness an ideological tug-of-war between competing systems of meaning, which include and in part define the material struggles of physical bodies” (5).

Technologies can both free and confine the body: "the popularization of body technologies disseminates new hopes and dreams of corporal reconstruction and physical immortality, it also represses and obfuscates our awareness of new strains on and threats to the material body" (2). For Balsamo, Haraway's informatics of domination mean that “the body is produced, inscribed, replicated, and often disciplined in postmodernity” (3). If the body is fragmented under postmodernity, Balsamo asks: “When the body is fractured into functional parts and molecular codes, *where is gender located?*” (6, emphasis added). Within a technological framework, the female body is reduced to a reproductive body, which is troublesome. Balsamo asserts that gender, like the body itself, is a boundary concept. She insists that her purpose in her book is to "describe how certain technologies are [...] ideologically shaped by the operation of gender interests and, consequently, how they serve to reinforce traditional gendered patterns of power and authority" (10).

Glasshouse goes beyond utopian postgenderism when Reeve and Sam live within the Glasshouse because their experiences reveal the construction and reinforcement of traditional power. Consider how Reeve and Robin, two differently gendered instances of one individual,

construct their own bodies. Denied access to the A-gates that allow Reeve to remodel her body, she turns to the lower-tech technology to alter her body: weightlifting. Weightlifting is an aspect of “feminist bodybuilding” discussed by Anne Balsamo in her analysis of the documentary film *Pumping Iron II: The Unprecedented Women*. She asserts that for white women, bodybuilding is a way to engage in “transgressive body practices” and “possibilities for reconstructing their corporeal identity in opposition to a traditional notion of white femininity—defined as weak, pathological, and passive” (54). Balsamo concludes that “A closer study of the popular culture of female bodybuilding reveals the *artificiality* of attributes of ‘natural’ gender identity and the *malleability* of the cultural ideals of gender identity, yet it also announces quite loudly the *persistence* with which gender and race hierarchies structure technological practices, thereby limiting the disruptive possibilities of technological transgressions” (55). Balsamo’s discussion of bodybuilding reveals that though the body is material, it can be physically constructed to challenge how it is gendered—to an extent. “[C]ulture processes transgressive bodies in such a way as to keep each body in its place,” Balsamo writes, “—that is, subjected to its ‘other’” (55). That is, white women have a greater range of reconstructing their bodies. If transitions are within the range of racialized gender expression, bodybuilding is a limited expression of gendered bodily autonomy, but the body cannot be constructed to be postgender. Regina Kunzel, too, notes that body building is an expression of prisoner agency and one of the few ways they can self-fashion their bodies (125).

However, by the end of *Glasshouse*, when the experiment has been thwarted, Reeve learns that the body is not as much a prison but an experience to be appreciated. Reeve returns to being Robin, but values the experience of bearing a life child: “I went back to being Robin, or as close to the original Robin as our medical ‘ware could come up with. Natural childbirth is an experience

all fathers should go through at least once in their lives (as adults, I mean), but I needed to be Robin again: the only version of me that doesn't come with innocent blood on his hands" (332). Despite this genderplay, Robin's chosen family unit is surprisingly nuclear: he partners again with Kay, who has returned to her female identity. However, it is the fact that Robin has a choice that signifies she has been freed from the glasshouse of patriarchy. Reeve can return to being Robin, and decides to live within the gender binary. From being a woman, he's learned to be more in touch with his body and enjoy organic experiences like childbirth⁶².

This choice echoes liberal feminism's insistence that marriage and motherhood be a valued but not coercive choice. Additionally, Reeve finds housework "mind-destroying" (110), and (like a liberal feminist) finds empowerment through her work at the town library. *Glasshouse* suggests that patriarchal society is the prison. The mind-destroying limitations of patriarchy for Reeve as a housewife suggest that the actual prison in *Glasshouse* is not so much the body, but being *trapped in a female body within patriarchy*. The worst atrocities of the patriarchal prison are best captured by the character Cass, who is chained in her home, starved, raped, and impregnated by her husband Mick (187). (The patriarchal society is also an ideal setting for the villains that need to create a breeding program.) Though *Glasshouse*, somewhat disappointingly, relies on liberal feminism, it starts to envision gender pluralism and freedom of expression in gendered embodiment as ways to escape the prison of gender.

While "Deep End" is an example of SF jailers attempting to use technology to erase any

⁶² Additionally, Sam's sacrifice suggests that there are biological differences between women and men; Sam was driven to die to protect his mate and offspring. Sam and Reeve also exhibit bodily autonomy by refusing to copulate when they realize they are fertile—they resist their biological drive.

gender nonconformity in prisoners, *Glasshouse* is an example of living with a gender binary under patriarchy as a type of prison in itself. Both of these texts extrapolate present-day illegibility of gender non-conformity within carceral logic, as well as the prisons' investment in maintaining the gender binary and using technology to erase gender non-conformity in prisoners.

Such SF radically alienates the norm of gender so that the ambiguity and arbitrariness of gender are visible. SF has long interrogated gender in ways that other genres have not, but questioning gender *and* punishment perhaps began with a 1992 episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "The Outcast." This episode inverts the punishment of gender non-conformity. In this episode, the starship *Enterprise* collaborates with an androgynous race called the J'naii to rescue a J'naii crew that had gone missing. Lieutenant William Riker collaborates with a J'naii named Soren to coordinate a rescue mission. During their time together, Soren confesses not only romantic feelings for Riker, but that Soren identifies as female. She explains to Riker that her people once had gender, but chose to eradicate it because they considered gender to be barbaric. When Soren is discovered to identify as female, she undergoes involuntary psycho-therapy, and renounces her gender and feelings for Riker.

Although the *Star Trek* franchise does not have any canonical gay or lesbian characters, the episode is an allegory for gay rights. When Soren is on trial for being female, she tells her people, "I was born that way [...] It is not unnatural." She insists that she does not need help or treatment, but understanding and acceptance. "The Outcast" also makes the classic science fiction move of making the familiar strange. It encourages viewers to question why there are two genders, and how gender outcasts are treated. The episode is not especially subversive, however. Soren is played by a female actress and identifies as female, making her relationship with Riker heterosexual; she is persecuted for desiring a heterosexual relationship.

The contemporary prison industrial complex, in which there is no freespace for the incarcerated to opt to exist as a disembodied upload, prisoners are forced to embody gender within a binary. Transgender prisoners are often incarcerated with inmates of the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender prisoners are the targets of bodily and emotional violence that is especially heightened for transgender women forced to live with male-identified individuals in prison. To give one example, in August 2007, The Los Angeles Daily reported that Victoria Arellano, a transgender prisoner, died in custody of the privatized Immigrations and Customs Enforcement detention center after she was denied treatment for HIV.

The examples continue. Rae, an imprisoned transgender man in Central California Women's Facility, reported to Lori Girshick that through homophobia and transphobia "...you're trying to take my identity from me. You're trying to take my soul from me from me, you're just trying to take everything from me. You've already taken my freedom, but I had a large part to play in that, so there's not a blame game going on here. But, come on now, you can't, that's all I have left is who I am and they are trying to take it from me" (cited in *Captive Genders* 190). Girshick interviews Cookie, another transgender inmate, who says that the ban on boxers is a type of "forced feminization" (198). Rae equates soul with his identity, his essence. Removal of the soul in his case is specifically gender oppression. At the same time, Rae describes his identity as survival oriented: "Out there in the free world there's just gay, so I've learned transmale in here as well in identifying with others. But in a free world, I'm gay and that's what I am" (193). As Girshick notes that further research would pursue "how individuals take on gender roles for utilitarian reasons and not gender identity reasons" (205) with gender performance as a tactic for survival.

Outside of prison, transgender and other gender non-conforming people are statistically more vulnerable to police harassment. For example, in 2013, Ashley Del Valle arrested in

Savannah, Georgia for wearing a shear top that allegedly revealed her nipples. When she was taken to jail, a nurse examined her genitals and determined that Del Valle was “technically a male,” and housed her in the men’s ward. There, she was kept in isolation, but harassed by guards and other inmates

(<http://www.thegavoice.com/news/georgia-news/6083-trans-woman-alleges-abuse-by-savannah-police-jail-officials> accessed 4/20/2013) before her family posted bail three days later. Del Valle told *GA Voice*, a Georgian LGBT newspaper, that “They didn't know where to put me... The young men there were out of control. They kept beating on my cell. It was pure torture.” The chief deputy of the jail who misgendered Del Valle told the same reporter: “First off, Ashley is still a man... I think he's had some surgery, breast implants. But technically he is still a male which poses a problem. We do have a policy in place. Typically we put them in isolation.” Zack Ford, of *Think Progress*, analyzed the situation: “Though Del Valle was kept in a private cell, the fact that she was still surrounded by men still made her vulnerable to harassment. An isolation cell can also be a different form of torture, depriving an individual of any social contact. Whatever transgender policy the jail supposedly has, misgendering her and endangering her in such ways did not prioritize her safety nor convey even the most basic respect for her identity”

(<http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2013/04/17/1884371/transgender-woman-arrested-for-exposing-breasts-jailed-with-men/?mobile=nc>). Although I cannot say if the arresting officer knew Del Valle was transgender, Del Valle was punished for gender-transgressive behavior: bearing her female body in public and, when she arrived at the jail, for having a non-normative body.

Stories like Del Valle’s are not random, isolated incidents. Del Valle’s case happened to make mainstream LGBT news, perhaps because she had previously been a guest on the reality TV show *Tattoo NY*, but many more arrests go uncovered because they are so routine. Transgender

prisoners do have more visibility due to the character Sophia on the popular streaming series *Orange is the New Black*, played by Laverne Cox, one of the few transgender actors to play a transgender character. Cox is producing a documentary film on Cece McDonald, a black transgender woman who was recently released from prison due to a long activist campaign for her freedom. She served 19 months in a men's prison; she had been sentenced to 41 months after fatally stabbing a man in self-defense.

Despite the publicity of Cox and the success of the Free Cece campaign, transgender people are routinely and disproportionately arrested. There is a link between the policing of gender within prisons and without. As Lori Girshick writes in "Out of Compliance: Masculine-Identified People in Women's Prisons," published in *Captive Genders*, "Even outside of prison transgender people are often not free to be their authentic selves due to multiple risks in coming out as transgender. These walls imprisoning gender itself need to be torn down" (206). In the same anthology, S. Lamble notes, the PIC's role is "less about protecting the public from violence and more about controlling, labeling, disciplining, and in some cases killing particular groups of people—especially those who potentially disrupt the social, economic, and political status quo" (239-240). Such disciplining includes gender transgressions.

Transgender people are often targeted by police for gender-transgressive behavior, such as Del Valle wearing revealing clothing. They are also disproportionately likely to be poor, whether it is from discrimination in hiring, rejection by families when coming out as transgender, lack of affordable health care for those who wish to transition, etc.—and poor people are disproportionately likely to be arrested, as The Sylvia Rivera Law Project asserts.

Man to Woman: Punitive Gender Downgrade

Glasshouse and "Deep End" feature gender-fluid individuals forced to inhabit binary

gender as punishment. Another trend in SF is cisgender men being forced to become biological women as punishment. This literature overlaps with and is a niche within type of fetish literature known as “body transformation.” Sex change body transformation fiction indulges readers in a fantasy of becoming the “opposite” sex, often against the protagonist’s will. Though punishment is a convenient reason for a forced transformation, not all of these stories feature punitive sex transformation; one of the more well-known examples of such fiction is Robert Heinlein’s novel *I Will Fear No Evil*, written near the end of his life. In this novel, a 95-year-old wealthy white man pays to have his brain transplanted into the body of a young person who is legally brain-dead. He fails to specify the sex of the donor, and wakes up in the body of a young woman (who just happened to be his secretary). He proceeds to explore his new identity and sexuality as a woman. Though this novel does not feature incarceration, and the protagonist enjoys his new body and identity, the narrator must hide that he has fused consciousness with his secretary, whose mind lives on beside his own, for fear of being locked up. (I exclude *Glasshouse* from this trend because although Robin becomes a woman as punishment, Robin had already voluntarily lived as a woman (and nongendered) person in a society where gender fluidity is the norm. Stross’s future is different because Robin lives in a society that has gender pluralism without patriarchy, so living as a woman within patriarchy is punishment, but becoming a woman in itself is not punishment.)

Much of this gender transformation literature is published as ebooks or free on erotic literature websites. As blogger KimberlyFDR notes, it features a fetish that is difficult to depict in visual pornography: physically transforming the body through magical (or sometimes scientific) means. In the case of gender transformation, she notes that, “the male character is dominated by a stronger female and forced to take on the role of a submissive.” One such online novella, Christopher Leeson’s *Prisoners of Tiresias*, also explores the social implications of such a gender

swap. In Leeson's novella, which was published on a site for transformation fetishists, men are incarcerated in a parallel universe where all who visit transform into the "opposite" gender. Transforming "dangerous" men into women makes the men an easier population to manage, though the prison guards must transform as well. Leeson's narrator, a prison guard named Aaron Carter, describes the prisoners as the most dangerous amongst a dystopian, crime-ridden future: "They were the hijackers and burglars and stickup men who killed without remorse, they were the murderous pimps who knifed their own girls or cut the faces of streetwalkers who worked for rival hustlers." Incidentally, this future is also one of female supremacy, and the novella reads as a men's rights manifesto, blaming feminism for the alleged oppression of men. The narrator was sentenced to guard Tiresias for sexual harassment, or asking a woman out on a date after she had already said no. In Tiresias, "studies had demonstrated that the Tiresian transformation brought with it a psychological change. Just as women changed to men grew more aggressive on Tiresias, males changed to women became more passive. This fact was not very PC, but it represented the reality of sexual psychology and, fortunately, in a male institution it made for more docile prisoners." Biological essentialism paired with feminist vengeance means that in Tiresias, a gang of now-male guards blackmail Carter's roommate Allie into becoming their sexual servant. They also attempt to rape Carter (though she fights them off); this is feminist revenge against men: "Back home they'd all been militant feminists, hated men, and had done dirt to a quite a few of the Charlies before Allie's turn came." The prisoners are rarely present in the story, and Carter learns to enjoy being a woman during her one year tour. Though this novella does explore social implications of transforming gender, the setting of the prison is a way for the author to assert a gender essentialist message that complains against alleged female supremacy. Carter does not learn to be more sympathetic towards women, and his previously held views are reinforced by the

year he spends as a woman.

A more serious, literary exploration of the punitive gender swap is the stream-of-consciousness novel *Season of the Witch*, written in 1969 by Jean Marie Stine (under the name Henry Stine). In the novel's first scene, a waitress named Josette Kovacks brings home Andre Fuller for a one-night-stand. In the morning, they take a drug called MST, and under the drug's influence, Andre rapes and murders Josette. Because Andre has no friends or family who would miss him, Andre's judge searches for an alternative to the death penalty, explaining that "three crippling world wars and plague [...] left us with millions dead" (though we never see the impact of these events). The judge sentences Andre to have his consciousness transferred to the body of Josette:

Your body is to be given to society. There are men more important to us than you, men who have earned their right to live among us, but who have grown too old for a few new organs to save them. Their bodies are dying and we cannot preserve them. We can preserve their minds, though, and their thoughts, and one of them will be given your body, his personality and his soul, transplanted to your brain. [...] But we will not deprive you of life, life is too precious for that. You will have your personality, all that is Andre Fuller, transferred to the body whose life you took, restoring life to it and balancing the scales of justice. Your life will replace hers, and you will live in her body. I can only hope you will use this life better than the one you had.

Though the judge does not discuss the sex change Fuller is to undergo, he is implicitly allowed to live in the body of his victim *because* she is a woman. Fuller's society is patriarchal, and to be a woman is punitive because Fuller will experience the sexual degradation that he imposed as a predatory man. Moreover, as a woman, he is not seen as a threat.

As a formerly misogynistic man, Fuller must learn to live within his female body. Still thinking of himself as “he,” Andre is filled with dread as he examines his new body and how he will have to become a mistress or a prostitute in order to survive: “But now that yielding, usable, fillable, spread-apart and entered, quickly thrusting spurting and finished flesh was his, was Andre Fuller. And men would come, pricks hard, eager, long and round, demanding entry, filled with the desire to conquer and subdue, making their pleasure and giving it, ready to do anything to have it, just as every woman had desired the smile and face that had been Andre Fuller.” As a woman in a patriarchal society, Fuller has no means to a livelihood except to trade sex for housing and money, and finds both disgust and sexual pleasure in this role. She does not know how to react when a rich man, Howard, falls in love with her and marries her, insisting he respect her as a wife rather than mistress. She flees Howard, takes up with a string of lovers, and is raped by Josette’s brother, who uses sexual violence to punish Fuller for taking the life of his sister. Fuller finds love in a threesome relationship with two poets, a man and woman, and finally returns to Howard when she learns she is pregnant with his child. As Celeste, Fuller’s act of redemption comes when she accepts that she is worth loving and carries the child to term.

Such stories also are premised on gender essentialism that Stine later refutes in the afterword of her 2000 republishing of *Season of the Witch*. She writes that, “If sexual anatomy and biology seems to equal psychological destiny” in this book, she reminds readers that she shared a then-common belief: “I thought you had to be heterosexual to be a real woman.”

This type of fiction is not unambiguously science fiction, and some has found a wide audience. The most well-known example is the 2011 Spanish film *La Pie Que Haibito* (*The Skin I Live In*). This film stars Antonio Banderas as a plastic surgeon Robert Ledgard, who began developing a synthetic skin that could withstand most harm after his wife died from burns she

received in a car accident. To experiment, Ledgard captures his daughter's rapist, a young man named Vincente, and slowly transforms Vincente into a woman, Vera, who is a physical replica of Ledgard's dead wife. Though the surgery technologies are speculative (Ledgard is disgraced for performing transgenic experimentation on humans), the film takes the form of a psychological thriller as it is revealed through flashbacks that Vera is Vicente. As a woman, Vera is held captive for six years and raped by Ledgard's half-brother. The screenplay describes her anguish when she rips off a dress provided by Ledgard: "It's her way of reacting to an imposed gender that she rejects with all her heart." Though Vera is not jailed in a state prison and Ledgard did not intend for her to be raped, she is still the prisoner of a vigilante and experiences sexual assault as a woman, as if her punishment is coming full circle. Near the end of the film, it seems as though Vera has come to accept her role as Ledgard's kept woman as she attempts to sleep with him. However, the film subverts the trope of submission when Vera uses the opportunity to catch Ledgard off guard and kill him. She escapes and reunites with her mother. *The Skin I Live In* flirts with but ultimately avoids the gender essentialism common in this type of fiction, but still depicts forced-feminization as punishment so that the victim might know what it is like to experience the victimization he had previously inflicted upon women.

A story like *Prisoners of Tiresias* could be understood in terms of virtual cross-dressing, where gendered bodies are regarded as objects to be worn. Thomas Foster notes that virtual cross-dressing can be problematic when considered within these terms: "Conceptualizing virtual cross-dressing as an act of 'wearing girl bodies' can be read as a reinscription of the Cartesian mind/body dualism, in which the body functions as a mere receptacle for the mind or self" (Foster). Lisa Nakamura extends criticism of virtual cross-dressing to apply to racial "cross-dressing" in her scholarship on identity tourism. For Nakamura, the tourism connotes an

allegedly safe place to explore fantasies and alternate identities, but in practice manifests as racist and sexist archetypes. For example, she finds that (mostly) white users choose to perform as “orientalized cybertypes” gendered and racist archetypes of geishas and samurais in online communities. I find identity tourism to be a useful term to describe a story like Leeson’s, where punishment is a convenient and otherwise unexplored reason to indulge readers in a fantasy of changing gender without challenging sexism or the categories of gender themselves.

It would be easy to extend Nakamura’s apt critiques of identity tourism and assert that gender-based identity tourism is male appropriation of the female identity and body, as a radical feminist might claim. While I do not believe cyberspace is a postgender utopia, I find that cyberspace is an important venue for transgender and gender-nonconforming people to perform as a gender identity other than the one medically assigned at birth. In some ways, this fiction does express a desire of individuals assigned-male-at-birth (AMAB) to become women, as Stine notes in her 2000 conclusion to *Season of the Witch*: “As to the plot, as any male-to-female crossdresser or transsexual knows, ‘forced feminization’ is to us what the bodice-ripper (where the heroine is raped by the hero for 500 pages and then marries him and lives happily ever after) is to many women-born women. And for the same reasons: ‘I want it. It is forbidden. But if I was forced to do it, no one could blame me (and I could secretly enjoy it).’” Stine wrote her novel before she came out as transgender, and used fiction to express a desire she could not safely practice in the 1960s. Using the guise of punishment, for Stine, as a rationale that functioned within misogyny: no one should *want* to be a woman⁶³. Though *Season of the Witch* preceded the internet, and

⁶³ Another novel that fits Stine’s description of gender transformation is Angela Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve*. In this dystopian novel, English professor Evelyn is captured by a sadistic “Goddess” who surgically transforms him into a woman, “Eve,” and attempts to

cyberpunk, it expresses a desire for technologically-mediated gender-fluidity that was taken up by both.

This fiction represents a real trend: the feminization of men as punishment within the criminal justice system with a system *that punishes femininity*. This constellation of gender transformation texts does not depict the punishment of gender conformity, but rather how cisgender criminals might be punished *by making them women*. In such fiction, punishment is a secondary premise for an excuse for men to become women, which is the primary focus of these stories. This fiction traces the process of former men learning to enjoy and eventually identify as women. Nonetheless, patriarchy is the backdrop of this punishment, as there is (to my knowledge) no equivalent story where women must become men in order to repent for past crimes.

Moreover, such fiction extrapolates the terror of cisgender men stepping down in the gender hierarchy. Prison rape, a topic that holds almost as much public fascination and anxiety as the prison itself, in many ways places men in a “feminine” position to make them vulnerable to sexual violence⁶⁴. David Rothenberg, an activist and journalist who was imprisoned himself in the 1970s, was one of the first to frame prison rape not as a “homosexual problem” but one of sexual violence. He argues that in the prison, gay prisoners become “girls” that are used as sexual objects in an act of “ritualized demasculinization” (228) within the context of sexism. In other words, prisons play out patriarchal violence with men cast in a “feminine” role and the victim of sexual violence.

Beyond Transgender: Cisgender Women Prisoners Punished for Gender Non-Conformity

impregnate Eve with his own sperm.

⁶⁴ Rothenberg, as well as Kunzel, are both careful to note that prisoners of all sexual orientations engage in consensual sex, and this is unrelated to prison rape.

The SF discussed in this chapter broader implications than just that for transgender prisoners. The category of gender also allows us to break the “default” that makes us assume that prisoners are male unless we say otherwise. Centering the experiences of transgender prisoners allows us to consider the ways in which cisgender women are also punished for gender nonconformity, such as standing up to abusive men.

I have been discussing two general trends in SF treating transgender prisoners: both prisoners punished for being transgender and cisgender men punished by becoming women. I have also focused on gender identity because transgender prisoners are among the most marginalized, though many demographics of marginalized populations are over-represented in incarcerated populations. Centering their experiences, as I have been in this chapter, brings into focus the prison as a tool for maintaining binary gender. This maintenance of binary gender also affects cisgender women who refuse to conform to patriarchal gender roles. (Women are incarcerated at higher rates than in the past, but are still incarcerated less frequently than men.)

As of 2010, the United States federal and state governments now incarcerate 112,822 prisoners that it classifies as female, which makes women nearly 7% of US prisoners⁶⁵ (Guerino 16). The number of women incarcerated, per capita, has increased in recent years (Guerino 16) [find more sources. Under tough on crime?]. However, women were once not considered incarcerable. Prior to the women’s rights movements, other social institutions such as the church and family served to police women’s gender expression; the state granted husbands and fathers the legal write to punish their wives and daughters for transgressive behavior. Angela Davis writes, “Since women were largely denied public status as rights-bearing individuals, they

⁶⁵ The US Department of Justice reports that “state and federal corrections authorities” house 112,822 out of 1,612,395 prisoners.

could not be easily punished by the deprivation of such rights through imprisonment” (45).

Women were not historically imprisoned because we were already inherently inhuman; under the same logic, slaves were not jailable prior to abolition. The expansion of the category of human corresponded with who was subject to incarceration.

Although women were (and are still) incarcerated at a lesser rate than men, women’s prisons were “distinctly domestic spaces populated” whose goal “was to reclaim deviant women for normative domesticity, and their architecture and administration reflected a belief in the rehabilitative power of family life” (Kunzel 117). What these “domestic spaces” looked like meant that nuclear family relationships were replicated as women formed what prison scholars called “kinship networks” and “the surrogate family” (Kunzel 117). Some prison scholars read these kinship networks as resulting from “understandable desire to compensate for their own ‘broken family histories’” (118) and desire to fulfill feminine domestic social roles: Sociologists pointed to the distinctly female anguish resulting from the dispossession of their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters, which made their prison experience uniquely difficult and by some accounts, more painful than men. The deprivations felt most keenly by women prisoners, investigators argued, were those of human connection, family relation, warmth, and love. (Kunzel 127). These deprivations were cast as distinctly female, in addition to the “deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relations, autonomy, and security” experienced by male prisoners, cast as fundamentally and universally human (127).

Women’s prisons were of particular interest to prison reformers, and their desired reforms, as we might expect, reflected the hegemonic values of femininity because women’s prisons are very much about policing gender performance and sexuality. In prisons themselves, “Often confined together in close, noisy, and congested quarters, women were typically subjected to

neglect rather than the strict surveillance that prevailed in the model male institutions” (Kunzel 24). This alarmed prison reformers who were especially concerned with “chaotic heterogeneity and indiscriminate mixing of inmate populations” (24), where criminal and innocent, elderly and young, and black and white inmates would be free to “intercourse” and petty criminals would learn from experts, with prostitutes teaching corrupting vagrant girls. This anxiety is very much a fear of criminality as contagious. However, despite their interest in women’s prisons, many scholars and officials treated the relationships between women in prison as a fantasy and illegitimate, describing their kinship networks as “play,” “make-believe,” “surrogate” and “pseduo”. Kunzel defends these relationships with almost utopian⁶⁶ language: “Some sociologists likened [prison families] to gangs formed in men’s prison for self-defense, women’s prison families served primarily affectional, social, and economic roles rather than protective ones” (119).

Alfred Bester’s *The Stars My Destination*, Jisbella McQueen is incarcerated for rebelling against Neo-Victorian gender roles. In her future, where humans can freely teleport, “There came a hideous return to the worst prudery of Victorianism as society fought the sexual and moral dangers of jaunting with protocol and taboo.” Social taboos serve to control behavior where technology cannot; there is no way to keep a “criminal” from violating bourgeois women; this security is social rather than technological. Jisbella is imprisoned for revolting against her society’s victorian gender roles. “You don’t know what jaunting’s done to women, Foyle. It’s locked us up, sent us back to the seraglio... There’s nothing for us to do. No jobs. No careers. There’s no getting out, Foyle, unless you can bust out and smash all the rules” (74). This passage anticipates the critiques of liberal feminism that would be articulated by Betty Friedan a decade

⁶⁶ I find Kunzel’s project to be utopian in the positive sense, but not fantasy—although the two are often conflated.

after the publication of *The Stars My Destination*, but in the context of this story show that a lack of choice for women means rebellion against gender roles is criminalized.

In Marge Piercy's critical utopian novel, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the protagonist Connie Ramos's brother commits her to a mental hospital for breaking the nose of her niece's abusive pimp. Connie's incarceration is largely framed as retaliation for fighting back; as a poor Chicana, she is supposed to be passive and accept abuse. In the mental institution, Connie meets fellow gender transgressors of different strokes: Connie's friend Skip is a young homosexual man, sent by his parents for "treatment." Connie's best woman friend, Sybil, is punished for being a practicing witch, and is feared by the hospital staff for being a physically strong and outspoken woman. Later in the novel, as Connie plots her escape, she hyper-performs her roles as a Chicana woman in order to gain the trust of the staff by volunteering for the most unpleasant cleaning tasks. This performance of her ideal race and gender roles allows her to earn her captors' trust and attempt escape.

Focusing on women and transgender prisoners in SF *and* scholarship helps debunk the prisoner-as-male archetype. Prisoners consist of varying diverse gender and sexuality identities. They are housed within an institution that not only has very little room for diverse gender expression, but depends on the gender binary to maintain and justify its existence. SF extrapolating on the experiences of transgender, gender non-conforming, queer, and women prisoners makes the prisons dependency on the gender binary visible and disrupts that dependency. Such disruption is an important aspect of SF, which I discuss in this dissertation's conclusion that follows. SF is already disrupting binary gender, and has the potential to be the literary genre to challenge the prison as commonplace and popularize alternatives to the entire institution.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Science Fiction and Prison Abolition

What is next for SF & Prison Abolition?

This dissertation is primarily a project of literary criticism detailing two major ways that prisons are thought of in SF: as self-contained “utopias” and sites of punitive posthuman subjectivity. Prisons in SF are just one side of the complex relationship between prisons and SF. As much could be said about material prisons as science fictional places, which I have only just begun to touch on in this project. In this conclusion, I begin to consider how SF can help us generate alternatives to the problematics of incarceration that SF has thus helped us identify and critique.

Though this has been a project primarily concerned with the idea of the prison as it appears in SF literature and popular culture, I do not wish to lose sight of the fact that incarceration is the material reality for millions of people, especially in the era of mass incarceration. In 2008, the United States reached a new record: 1 out of 100 people in the United States was detained in a prison or jail. By 2012, nearly 7 million adults were incarcerated in state and federal prisons (Glaze and Herberman). It is no secret that the poor and people of color, especially African American men, are incarcerated under what Michelle Alexander famously calls the new Jim Crow.

The prison is a physical site that embodies the technologies associated with science fiction. Examples of carceral technologies once only found in SF include bulletproof cameras in CCTV systems, cellphone jammers, biometric and full-body scanners, radio frequency identification tracking (RFID) to monitor prisoner movements, and telecommunications that permit prisoners to “visit” family members or “appear” in court remotely. Additionally, medical personnel have begun performing remote “telemedical” procedures on prisoners (“Prison Security”). In March

2012, Korea debuted the world's first robot prison guard "helpers" (the term "robot" came from SF, and like many technologies first appeared in SF before it was a material fact).

Unsurprisingly, the journalism reporting these technologies is full of quotes from "experts" about how these technologies ensure prisoner safety and welfare, further rhetorically constructing a myth of humanitarian reform for prisoners that is far from social reality. As Angela Davis writes, "What was once regarded as progressive and even revolutionary represents today the marriage of technological superiority and political backwardness" (50). SF discusses the implications of these technologies in much more critical terms than much of the journalistic writing on these technologies.

For many prisoners, science fiction provides the most apt metaphor to describe their incarceration. Writers in prison have used SF metaphors to translate their experiences in terms non-incarcerated readers will understand. For example, prisoners use metaphors of science fiction, such as alienation and robotics, to describe dystopian and repressive spaces. Former political prisoner Assata Shakur uses SF metaphors to describe her incarceration in her autobiography. She uses the figure of the robot to describe the state, its agents, and its prisons (50, 84, 208). She describes prison as a spaceship with *disembodied surveillance* that controls prisoners from afar (84). She compares the unreal trickery and racism of the courts system to the *Twilight Zone* (98). The guards in the then-new Metropolitan Correctional Center, a place she describes as anti-nature and anti-human, "The guards looked like space age robotons, with blue blazers, gray pants, walkie-talkies, and beepers" (208). Additionally, her friend Eva uses SF to escape the dehumanizing imprisonment by projecting her mind to the planet Jupiter (59). Shakur replies that, "No, that's not good enough. I want to project my mind *and* my body out of here" (59). Here, Shakur sees escapism as an insignificant form of freedom because only the mind is free, not

the body. Eva replies, justifying the use of SF to escape dehumanizing imprisonment, “You’ll be in jail wherever you go [...] The only difference between here and the streets is that one is maximum security and the other is minimum security. The police patrol our communities just like the guards patrol here. I don’t have the faintest idea how it feels to be free” (60). For Eva, escape is irrelevant because the prison apparatus extends beyond the penitentiary to the state bureaucracies and surveillance networks that entrap oppressed women like Shakur and Eva.

Eva uses SF to escape the hopelessness of the prison and carceral state. The isomorphic institutions that extend past the prison also have been described through SF metaphors, especially the pervasive surveillance undergone by those in on parole and social services. In “Hotel Hell,” anthologized in *Captive Genders*, Ralowe Trinitrotoluene Ampu writes about her experiences living in a single resident occupancy (SRO) residence hotel, where many of his neighbors live in between times of incarceration. She specifically compares the surveillance cameras in her SRO’s lobby to the all-seeing closed-circuit panopticon of SF:

I want to quickly think about the science fiction of surveillance in my hotel. Several of us have noted the absence from the lobby guard’s booth of the impressive bank of monitors relaying the many surveillance feeds that are allegedly guarding us from ourselves. I’ve seen a variety of filmmakers exploit the remote cameras for dramatic effect, usually welded on the side of the helmet of the heroic stomping space trooper archetype. It’s a marvelous story-telling device, often providing the irrelevance of subjectivity when the contraption fails, cutting out, the signal sharing the same fate as the person it’s transmitting from. Though often fatally unreliable to the characters in some usages of the device, it sometimes does manage to capture the grisly final moments. The command center witnessing these live feeds are often prompted to respond, or at the very least are aware that they should have

responded sooner, too late. Isn't that the point of the camera—you know, intervention?

(87)

Ampu notes the powerful disciplining effect of SF-esque surveillance and initially compares the effect of surveillance in SF film to that of the residents of the SRO—parolees under surveillance that is designed to remind them of the irrelevance of their subjectivity. However, there is not the infrastructure to fully enact the surveillance system's SF potential to its fullest. Ampu continues, noting that these cameras fail to fully enact their SF function:

The cameras in our hotel appear to exist for another purpose. They exist for surveillance alone. To where do they transmit? Do they only record? Could desk clerks be found negligent if they witnessed a criminal activity but failed to intervene? (87)

Unlike science fiction film, Ampu and her neighbors will never see the perspective of those watching on the other side. Whether or not the cameras feed to some unknown watchers does not change the panoptic effect of the visible mechanisms of surveillance.

Contemporary narratives that represent incarceration suggest that there is a complex relationship between media, popular perception, and the normalization of what has come to be called the prison industrial complex (PIC).⁶⁷

Moreover, contemporary narratives in film, television, and literature frequently feature the prison as a setting. Bender, in *Imagining the Penitentiary*, argues that the emergence of the novel in the cultural sphere changed attitudes towards punishment and, in furthering discourse of progress and individuality, aided prison reform campaigns towards the regimented, rehabilitative penitentiary. For Bender, prisons and the arts, especially literature, are in a feedback loop, and

⁶⁷ Prison industrial complex is a term used by activists and academics who are critical of the expansion and privatization of US prisons in recent decades.

fiction discursively constructs reality, especially personal identity. Davis, elaborating upon Bender's work, writes that, the "analysis of the relationship between the novel and the penitentiary emphasizes the extent to which the philosophical underpinnings of the prison reformer's campaigns echoed the materialism and utilitarianism of the English Enlightenment" (53). A famous example of literature and prison reform intersecting is Charles Dickens's 1842 travel memoir *American Notes*. Dickens used his writing and fame to promote prison reform after he visited Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia and denounced the secretive punishment he described as torturous. In this time period, autobiographical prison narratives became a popular genre well into the twentieth century. By the 1970s, films about prisoners became popular, and by the twenty-first century, there were several popular television shows representing incarceration.

Narrative and material practices influence one another; this is where SF intervenes. Fictitious relations might be socially constructed relationships that then enable and construct material oppressions. If imagined relationships facilitate real material oppressions, then can we imagine reality without subjugation? If realist novels traditionally might have normalized the development of the penitentiary, science fiction complicates the necessity of incarceration by calling attention to its dehumanization and imagines radical alternatives. Science fiction can imagine and normalize alternatives to incarceration, which is essential to making prison abolition a material reality. In fact, if prison abolitionists are dismissed as utopian idealists, it might just be SF that can show us how alternatives to the prison are possible.

There is much to be said for themes and rhetoric of utopianism depicted in realist prison narratives as there is in SF. One reason that realist prison narratives are popular is because readers can safely escape into the world apart as voyeurs into a world dramatically worse than their own. In some ways the opposite of Shakur's friend Eva, who used SF to escape the inescapable,

non-incarcerated readers and viewers use realistic prison narratives to safely escape into a fantastical but allegedly real alternative world. There is a surprising absence in scholarship on SF prisons, with Auli Ek being the lone scholar to dedicate a single chapter of her book to the subject. However, a gap in scholarship is not sufficient reason to warrant a dissertation-sized inquiry into a given topic. The relationship between prisons and science fictions warrants study because everyone, incarcerated or not, has a stake in what becomes of prisons in the future, and SF can help us get to a desirable future.

Realist prison narratives also can critique the institution, as popular shows like *Oz*, *Prison Break*, *Orange is the New Black*, and *Wentworth* reveal corrupt guards and administrators as well as the threat of sexual assault by inmates and guards. Such narratives insist on the humanity of prisoners, and may call for reform, but never question the existence of the prison itself. SF, more than realist narratives, can go further in its commentary. Prison narratives may echo the institution's utopian origins, clearly depicting an alternative world, but SF is the genre most poised to insist that a desirable future does not need prisons.

This potential of SF is why I believe that prison activists should be interested in SF. In particular, SF should be of interest to prison abolitionists, the activists who argue that there is no place for incarceration in a just society. As Eric Stanley explains in the introduction to *Captive Genders*:

An abolitionist politic does not believe that the prison system is 'broken' and in need of reform; indeed, it is, according to its own logic, working quite well. Abolition necessarily moves us away from attempting to 'fix' the PIC and helps us *imagine an entirely different world*—one that is not built upon the historical and contemporary legacies that the racial and gendered brutality that maintain the power of the PIC. What this means is that

abolition is not a response to the belief that the PIC is so horrible that reform would not be enough... abolition radically restages our conversation and our ways of living and understanding as to undo our reliance on the PIC and its cultural logics. For us, abolition... [is] a political commitment that makes the PIC impossible. To this end, *the time of abolition is both yet to come and already here.*" (8, emphasis added)

Stanley is not writing directly about SF, but identifies how abolition requires imagining and building an alternative world that is radically different than our own. Like SF, it is a project both engaged in the future and the present. It is very much a present struggle, reliant on a vision of a better future to ensure that such a better future comes about.

Why would one want to abolish rather than reform the prison? One reason, as Angela Davis argues, is that racism cannot end so long as prisons exist because prisons are an inherently racist institution. Because of poverty and institutional racism, people of color are disproportionately imprisoned. Davis asks of her readers, "If the prison continues to dominate the landscape of punishment throughout this century and into the next, what might await coming generations of impoverished African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian-Americans?" (37). In this passage, Davis is looking to the future. The prison is a concrete site that maintains state-endorsed subjection of historically marginalized subjects.

While prison abolitionists "are dismissed as utopians and idealists" (Davis 9-10), it is very much a utopian project in the positive sense of the tradition: not a vision of totalitarianism or naive impossibility, but a movement that engages very real and very difficult questions. How can we prevent violence and harm from occurring? Rather than throwing people away, how can we transform those who commit violence and harm? If the prison is one of the present's most oppressive institutions, alternatives to the prison deeply challenge racism, policing, economic

disparity, gender conformity, and other systems that funnel marginalized individuals into the prison industrial complex.

Activists ask a very “science fictional” question: what would it take to create world that does not need prisons. SF is one body of thought that can help us think about how to arrive at a future that does not require prisons. For this reason, prison abolitionists should have an interest in science fiction. Activists—both reformers and revolutionaries—share with SF authors a project of world-building. Activists, too, are committed to imagining and, going a step further than SF authors, implementing what they believe to be a vision for a better way of arranging human societies. When proposing a moderate or radical reorganization of their society, activists face a similar question to that posed by some SF authors: what would you do with the criminals if you abolished penitentiaries?

Alternatives to incarceration do not just live in SF; they are practiced within and outside of the criminal justice system. Moderate deterrents exist within social services programs both address poverty, such as low income housing, after school programs for youth, free and empowering drug-and-alcohol programs. Courts offer some diversion programs for those convicted of a crime, such as community service, house arrest, and fines. However, these programs are insufficient in themselves. Social services are underfunded and underutilized within the scope of mass incarceration and poverty, and as Apta notes, social services can resemble the prison itself. While community service can be empowering, house arrest is dependent on the individual having a stable home and fines serve to keep the poor in modern debtors’ prison⁶⁸. Social workers and critics of incarceration agree that the majority of incarcerated offenses are survival crimes, whether it is shoplifting to feed children or drug use to

⁶⁸ See Saki Knafo's "The U.S. Is Locking People Up for Being Poor."

medicate the pain of inherited trauma, and easing these problems. Ending incarceration would require ending poverty.

Restorative justice is perhaps the most widely practiced alternative, and involves the victim, perpetrator, and community coming to an agreement that will leave the victim satisfied. As restorative justice practitioner and former-convict Patrice Gaines writes, “In restorative justice, all of the parties impacted by an offense—offender, victim, and community—are involved in determining a resolution that addresses the harm caused by the crime. Restorative justice acknowledges that crime is about more than breaking the law: Therefore, the resolution is about more than simple punishment.” Restorative justice began as a community-based practice, but has received some legitimacy within legal systems as a viable alternative to traditional court-based punishments. The Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, developed an alternative to incarceration in the late 1980s as an act of resistance to the western criminal justice system imposed through colonization. Family Group Conferences was the first method of restorative justice to be acknowledged by a government as a satisfactory alternative. Family Group Conferences are “Organized and led by a Youth Justice Coordinator, a facilitator who is a social services professional, this approach is designed to support offenders as they take responsibility and change their behavior, to empower the offenders’ families to play an important role in this process, and to address the victims’ needs. Unlike restorative justice programs attached to justice systems elsewhere, this group together formulates the entire outcome or disposition, not just restitution” (MacRae and Zehr). Unlike other restorative justice approaches, all parties must reach consensus: victims, perpetrators, social workers, community members, and police officers.

There are currently more radical alternatives to incarceration practiced outside of the criminal justice system. Transformative justice, developed by the group generationFive, focuses

on preventing and addressing sexual assault in communities that cannot rely on the police or criminal justice system. Transformative justice focuses on healing the perpetrator of harm. As generationFive writes,

We premise the Transformative Justice approach [...] on three core beliefs, namely:

- Individual justice and collective liberation are equally important, mutually supportive, and fundamentally intertwined—the achievement of one is impossible without the achievement of the other.
- The conditions that allow violence to occur must be transformed in order to achieve justice in individual instances of violence. Therefore, Transformative Justice is both a liberating politic and an approach for securing justice.
- State and systemic responses to violence, including the criminal legal system and child welfare agencies, not only fail to advance individuals and collective justice but also condone and perpetuate cycles of violence. (5)

Restorative and transformative justice are alternatives to incarceration that address interpersonal harm and violence. Presumably, these forms of harm will still exist (though be greatly reduced) when poverty is eliminated. What these methods have in common is that they focus on supporting the victim and healing the perpetrator. Transformative justice works within the spirit of restorative justice, but goes further in seeking to transform the community that produces harmful behavior. Transformative justice is based on the premise that the individual must be transformed as a part of a radical transformation of the broader society.

Restorative justice has been practiced more often and for longer than transformative justice, but both alternatives are just the beginning of the alternatives that would need to be developed to fully realize a society without prisons. This is where SF is useful. Although typically working in different mediums than SF authors, activists and scholars have provided ample critiques of incarceration ranging from calling for reforms so that prisons can accomplish their rehabilitative aims (thus making the penitentiary a place of penance) to the call for abolition of the prison industrial complex. Activists ask the same questions as some utopian SF authors: what a better world would look like, and how does one get there? Prison abolition activists and those who otherwise advocate for alternatives to the police and state are accused of utopianism and are asked the same question SF authors pose as premises to their fiction: “What would you do with the criminals?” Someone who is aware that prisons disproportionately incarcerate people of color for survival crimes or drug use might say, “Sure, get junkies drug treatment, invest in education, but what about the really bad people? The rapists and murders and child molesters?” While we might dismiss moralist claims that people are inherently good or evil, the question of what to do with violent people is a serious one, and there are no easy answers. If we know that incarceration does not keep people safe from violence, and encourages violence, what alternatives are there to incarceration? Activists articulate visionary answers to such questions, ranging from defferal programs, restitution, restorative justice, and transformative justice. However, it is difficult to map out just how a world without prisons would prevent individuals who have committed violence from offending again because prisons have been so normalized. This is where I see SF being useful because it answers the “what are the alternatives to a given social problem” in a different way: SF tries a society out, complete with its disciplinary mechanisms, or lack thereof.

Throughout this project, I primarily analyze SF that serves as a critique of incarceration, I

turn now to highlighting SF that has imagined alternatives. This is a smaller collection of examples, but this list will surely grow as more thinkers turn to SF to model how we get from present to future. The examples I cite are feminist utopias, and this short list is by no means comprehensive of every (desirable) alternative to the prison explored in SF.

Of the texts I discuss, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* most explicitly models alternatives to incarceration in the utopian future that contrasts the present-day dystopian incarceration in the mental hospital. In one of Connie's visits to Lucient's future, she attends a "worming" session that is a community mediation between Luciente and Bolivar. They share a lover, Jackrabbit, and experience jealousy that affects their abilities to work together. Parra, a young person that Connie reads as Chicana, takes the rotating position as referee and mediator; Connie is impressed that a young Chicana can hold such a powerful role in her community. Parra explains to Connie that they have no need for police because everyone is trained in self-defense and community accountability (208); such power is not held by a few specialized individuals. Parra explains that assault and murder do happen, but infrequently due to everyone's social needs being met. If one who commits violence regrets the act, the community helps heal that individual. If the individual does not, the person agrees on a sentence such as exile or dangerous labor: "we ask if person acted intentionally or not—if person wants to take responsibility for the act." If they say they didn't know what they were doing, Parra tells Connie that, "We work on healing. We try to help so that never again will person do a thing person doesn't mean to do" (209). Connie asks what happens if she hurts someone and does not regret it: "Then you work out a sentence. Maybe exile, remote labor. Shepherding. Life on shipboard. Space service. Sometimes crossers [perpetrators of harm], cook good ideas about how to atone. You could put in for an experiment or something dangerous" (209). Parra is careful to note that the community does not tolerate repeat

offenders: "The second time someone uses violence, we give up. We don't want to watch each other or to imprison each other. We aren't willing to live with people who choose to use violence. We execute them" (~211). As Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha writes, Piercy's vision is sophisticated because, "It does not pretend that with a just society where everyone has enough, where Black, Brown and Indigenous people are not locked up in prisons to make money, where there is no gender injustice, where queerness is completely accepted, that no violence will occur. It also holds an understanding of a society's limited capacity, while also committing to values that no one will be police; there will be no prisons" (27).

A second example of feminist utopias is Pat Murphy's 1989 novel *The City Not Long After*. There are no police or jails in the utopian San Francisco, where perpetrators of violence are shamed rather than captured or killed. In this novel, a plague had killed off the majority of humans. A militia led by General Fourstar attempts to invade, and the pacifist residents of San Francisco wage non-violent warfare against the invaders. They paint "dead" on the forehead of those they capture in combat to demonstrate that they could have killed the invaders, but chose not to. The "dead" soldiers lose face amongst their colleagues:

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Please consider yourself removed from combat.

Look at it this way—we could have killed you.

If you don't stop fighting, we really will kill you next time.

Signed,

The People of San Francisco (192)

Danny-boy, a friend to the protagonist Jax, justifies the choice of non-violent resistance: "You've got to realize that violence and death aren't the only forces that can change the social order" (216).

Though *The City Not Long After* models an alternative to killing in warfare, its vision is applicable to alternatives to incarceration because it models how to deal with threats from external communities without imprisoning or killing enemy combatants. Moreover, it advocates a display of community power without acting on that power. The goal is to transform those who would commit harm. As Danny-boy notes, “We’re good at showing people a view of the world that they’ve never seen before. [...] We just have to make them think that we could kill them at any time” (170).

Starhawk’s 1991 novel *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is similar to Murphy’s novel in themes, vision, and setting. San Francisco is a utopian community in contrast to a totalitarian fundamentalist Christian United States. The residents of San Francisco practice free love, direct-democracy, and community-centered conflict resolution. As one of the point of view characters, Madrone, explains to outsiders:

“We don’t have those kind of social isolation that breeds [incest and child molesting]. We have a lot of different kinds of families. [...] So every kid has half a dozen aunts and uncles from the time they’re tiny. They’re encouraged to talk about things, to ask for help, to protect themselves. And we train all our children, early on, in self-defense both girls and boys. Oh, I’ve read a lot about incest and child abuse, but we don’t have the climate of secrecy and shame that lets it go on for any length of time. I’m not saying it never happens, but nothing supports it. The same with rape. Our men aren’t raised to believe they have the right to rape. In fact, we consider it the most shameful, degraded thing a man could do.” (276-277)

Madrone explains that those who do rape—always men—are healed or banished. This conflict is never detailed in the novel, but only described to ease the concerns of outsiders who have been

taught to trust in law and order.

What is detailed in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is how violence is dealt with when it comes from outside the community. The utopians are invaded by an occupying army, who are dealt with through radical pacifist transformation of consciousness. As Maya, a 98-year-old community elder, states in Defense Council meeting, “If we let the terms of force describe the terrain of our battle, we will lose. But if we hold to the power of our visions, our heartbeats, our imagination, we can fight on our own turf, which is the landscape of consciousness. There, the enemy cannot help but transform” (238). As an alternative to *The City Not Long After*’s writing of DEAD on the foreheads of those “defeated” in combat, the friends and family of those killed “haunt” soldiers, telling them about the ones they killed:

“Do you know how I felt, to see my son shot down, that bullet enter his head, that dear face I had washed so many times and watched as it grew and changed—”

“Shut up, lady!”

“Taste, taste these fruits so you will know what you destroyed!”

“Look, I was ordered to do it.”

“Choice is always possible. You chose to obey. And now we are here to teach you the meaning of that choice.” (414)

The hauntings drive soldiers to refuse orders and desert, but at great casualties to the pacifists as many, including children, give their lives to persuade the enemy to give up violence.

These three novels use SF to model alternatives to policing and incarceration. All three novels show how threats from outside a community might be handled, and in Murphy’s and Starhawk’s work, that threat is the central conflict of the novel and the resolutions are most developed. Piercy’s novel includes the most developed scene of an internal conflict resolution,

though Starhawk's novel does acknowledge internal conflict. However, each novel's vision has limitations. These three books come from historic moments in social justice movements, written from the perspectives of white feminists. As I discuss in my second chapter, *Woman on the Edge of Time* relies on a dated premise that essentializing cultural differences is the source of oppression. *The City Not Long After* does not model how violence and harm within the community might be addressed. And, as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha notes in her conference paper on transformative justice in *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, Starhawk does not include any contested rape accusations; it is assumed that the rare rapist always admits that the rape occurred and it was indeed rape (30). Starhawk's novel does not model a process of determining guilt or responsibility for committing harm⁶⁹. In Piercy's future, rape happens so infrequently it does not need to be addressed. Both Murphy's and Starhawk's visions also include extreme pacifism, while admirable in its creativity, is naive as a model of resisting state violence because it involves sacrifice of human life as a tactic to persuade those who commit harm to change their behavior.

Another novel that offers a compelling alternative to prisons is Ursula K. Le Guin's classic novel, *The Dispossessed*. On the anarchist moon Anarres, society is built on cooperation and mutual aid. Interpersonal violence exists on Anarres as a means to work out individual conflict (such as fist-fighting), but major conflicts are resolved through "public reprimand."

⁶⁹ These feminist SF novels were written before generationFive introduced the term transformative justice, but these novels nonetheless model transformative justice processes. The inability to determine guilt in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* shares a weak spot with the first decade of transformative justice activist work: transformative justice works best when the perpetrator feels he or she *did* commit harm and wishes to change.

Bedap, an inhabitant of Anarres critical of his own society, explains that traditionally reprimand is when “[e]verybody comes to your syndicate meeting and tells you off. It used to be how they cut a bossy gang foreman or manager down to size. Now they only use it to tell an individual to stop thinking for himself” (169). On Anarres, there are no prisons; the closest institution is the Asylum, “where “murderers and chronic work-quitters” flee “because they asked to go there, where they’re not under pressure, and safe from retribution” (170). Retribution might include violence. Bedep finds the Asylum method troubling because his friend was driven there by promoting unpopular opinions. Accordingly, Le Guin, titling her novel *An Ambiguous Utopia*, does not suggest her vision is perfect, and accordingly depicts a society with the full range of human experience and without states and their prisons. A central conflict of the novel surrounds Shevek, a physicist, who is out-of-place within his anarchist society because his scientific theories are paradigm-shifting. Shevek realizes his society has become dogmatic and static, and commits himself to better practicing the visions of Odo, the theorist upon which Anarres’ society is based:

A healthy society would let him exercise that optimum function [best contributing to his society] freely, in the coordination of all such functions finding its adaptability and strength. That was the central idea of Odo’s *Analogy*. [...] The Odonian society was conceived as a permanent revolution, and revolution begins in the thinking mind. (333)

Shevek commits himself to bringing his people out of isolation by visiting and working with off-worlders: “Those who build walls are their own prisoners. I’m going to go fulfill my proper function in the social organism. I’m going to unbuild walls” (332). Though Anarres has no prisons, a major theme of *The Dispossessed* is mental and social prisons. *The Dispossessed* certainly models a society without prisons, but what sets it apart from novels such as Murphy’s,

Starhawk's, and Piercy's is that the Shevek learns that doing away with physical prisons is not sufficient to bringing about a free society.

The Dispossessed is not the only novel with thoughtfully developed (and admittedly imperfect) alternatives to incarceration. It lead the way for later novels that explore alternatives without the naivety of pacificism, such as Nalo Hopkinson's *The Midnight Robber*, Octavia Butler's *Parable* series, Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*, and Jacqueline Carey's *Santa Olivia*. Despite this growing list of texts, there is still room for SF to continue to think through alternatives to incarceration. This is important work in coming up with and popularizing alternatives to incarceration.

I open this dissertation with the words of Michel Foucault: "A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation" (202). If imagined relationships facilitate real material oppressions, then how can we imagine reality without subjugation? If realist novels traditionally might have normalized the development of the penitentiary, science fiction complicates the necessity of incarceration by calling attention to its dehumanization and imagines radical alternatives. To reiterate: science fiction can imagine and normalize alternatives to incarceration, which is essential to making prison abolition a material reality.

If prisons and science fiction are not just connected in narratives or academic theory, it is important to remember that the reality of prisons can mean life and death for those who are incarcerated, and people in prison (when allowed access books) read science fiction. My interest in connecting prisons and science fiction began in 2006 at a packing meeting for the Bellingham chapter of *Books to Prisoners*, a nonprofit that mails donated books to prisoners. With many prison libraries underfunded or cut completely, Books to Prisoners is the only way that many prisoners can acquire books and educational materials. I opened a letter from a man who said he

enjoyed both African American literature and science fiction, and I mailed him Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*. I wondered how someone in prison might interpret a story about marginalized people building an alternative community in order to survive. Moreover, *Books to Prisoners* is a contemporary facet of the historic relationship between the novel and prisons, between media and incarceration.

In all, contemporary narratives that represent incarceration suggest that there is a the complex relationship between media, popular perception, and the normalization of what has come to be called the prison industrial complex. One could analyze utopianism in realist prison narratives. Realist prison narratives are popular because readers want to safely escape into the world apart as voyeurs into a world dramatically worse than their own. What does SF do that realist prison narratives do not? SF, more than realist narratives, can comment on the present. Prisons may draw on utopia, but SF also can free us from a world that “needs” prisons.

Given both the popularity of both science fiction and prison narratives (“realist” representations, fiction or nonfiction, of incarceration in both literature and film/television), the prison is thus a frequent setting in speculative literature. Because of SF’s license to subversively comment on the present under the guise of a future or alternative universe, the prison in space (and/or the prison of the future) is an inviting setting to question the motives and necessity of incarceration and by extent, because the prison industrial complex inherently strips prisoners of their humanity, challenges the category of human. SF’s imaginative and extrapolated settings articulate and complicate the future of the prison industrial complex. SF offers alternatives to incarceration that might not be found in other genres because SF is known, to paraphrase *Star Trek*, to go boldly where other genres have not gone before.

Works Cited

- Abramsky, Sasha. *American Furies: Crime, Punishment, and Vengeance in the Age of Mass Imprisonment*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007. Print.
- Adams, John J. *Brave New Worlds: Dystopian Stories*. San Francisco, Calif: Night Shade Books, 2012. Print.
- Afnan, Elham. "Chaos and Utopia: Social Transformation in Woman on the Edge of Time." *Extrapolation (kent State University Press)*. 37.4 (1996). Print.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2010. Print.
- Almodóvar, Pedro, Agustin Almodóvar, Esther García, Alberto Iglesias, José Salcedo, José L. Alcaine, Antxón Gómez, Antonio Banderas, Elena Anaya, Marisa Paredes, Jan Cornet, Roberto Álamo, Eduardo Fernández, José L. Gómez, Blanca Suárez, Susi Sánchez, Bárbara Lennie, Fernando Cayo, and Thierry Jonquet. *La Piel Que Habito: The Skin I Live in*. Culver City, Calif: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2012.
- Annas, Pamela J. "New Worlds, New Words: Androgyny in Feminist Science Fiction." *Science-fiction Studies*. 5 (1978): 143-56. Print.
- Attebery, Brian. *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Atwood, Margaret. *In Other Worlds: Sf and the Human Imagination*. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2011. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. "Critical Utopias." *Textual Practice*. 21.3 (2007). Print.
- Balsamo, Anne M. *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.
- Beattie, J M. *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University

Press, 1986. Print.

Bechdel, Alison. "The Test." *Dykes to Watch Out For*. 1985.

Bell, Shannon. "Bioart in Question." [finish citation]

Bellamy, Edward, and John L. Thomas. *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967. Print.

Bender, John B. *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Print.

Bester, Alfred. *The Stars My Destination*. Boston: Gregg Press, 1975. Print.

Booker, M K. "Woman on the Edge of a Genre: the Feminist Dystopias of Marge Piercy." *Science Fiction Studies*. 21.3 (1994): 337-50. Print.

Bordo, Susan. "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture." *Food and Culture*. Ed. Caroline Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Bostrom, Nick. "A History of Transhumanist Thought." *Journal of Evolution and Technology*. 14.1 (2005). Electronic.

Broderick, Damien. *X, Y, Z, T: Dimensions of Science Fiction*. Holicong, PA: Borgo Press/Wildside Press, 2004. Print.

Brown, Adrienne Maree, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, and Jenna Peters-Golden. "The Transformative Justice Strategic Science Fiction Reader." *Allied Media Conference*. June 2012, Detroit. Conference presentation.

Bury, J B. *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth*. New York: Dover Publications, 1955. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

- Cadigan, Pat. *Synners*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991. Print.
- Cadora, Karen. "Feminist Cyberpunk." *Science Fiction Studies*. 22.3 (1995): 357-72. Print.
- Carter, Angela. *The Passion of New Eve*. London: Virago, 1982. Print.
- Caster, Peter. *Prisons, Race, and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century U.s. Literature and Film*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008. Print.
- Clynes, Manfred E. and Nathan S. Kline. "Cyborgs and Space." *The Cyborg Handbook*. Ed. Chris Gray. New York: Routledge, 1995. 29-33.
- Conrad, Ryan, and Yasmin Nair. *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage*. Lewiston, Me: Against Equality Pub. Collective, 2010. Print.
- Cult TV*. Interview with Patrick McGoochan. n.d.
- Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003. Print.
- Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. London: Women's Press, 1991. Print.
- Doctorow, Cory. "A Vocabulary for Speaking About the Future." *Locus Online*. Locus Magazine: 1 Jan 2012. Web. 7 Dec 2013.
- Delany, Samuel R. "Science Fiction and 'Literature'—or, the Conscience of the King." *Visions of Wonder*. Ed. David G. Hartwell and Milton T. Wolf. New York: Tor Books, 1996. Print.
- Delany, Samuel R. *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction*. New York: Berkley Windhover Books, 1977. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October (cambridge, Mass.)*. 59.59 (1993): 8-26. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University

of Minnesota Press, 1986. Print.

Disch, Thomas M. *Camp Concentration*. London: Granada Pub, 1969. Print.

Du, Gay P. et al. *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. London: Sage, in association with The Open University, 1997. Print.

Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003. Print.

During, Simon. *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2005. Internet resource.

Dvorsky, George, and James Hughes. "Postgenderism: Beyond the Gender Binary." *Ieet White Papers*. (2008). Print.

Dyens, Ollivier. *Metal and Flesh: The Evolution of Man : Technology Takes Over*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001. Print.

Easterbrook, Neil. "State, Heterotopia: the Political Imagination in Heinlein, Le Guin, and Delany." Eds. Donald M Hassler and Clyde Wilcox. *Political Science Fiction*. Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1997. Print.

Easterbrook, Neil. "The Arc of Our Destruction: Reversal and Erasure in Cyberpunk." *Science Fiction Studies* 19:378-94, #58, November 1992.

Ek, Auli. *Race and Masculinity in Contemporary American Prison Narratives*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Ekirch, A R. *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. Print.

Eskridge, Kelley. "Kelley Eskridge Talks About Writing Solitaire." *Kelley Eskridge*. n.d. kelleyeskridge.com Web. 31 Dec. 2013.

- Eskridge, Kelley. *Solitaire*. New York: Eos, 2002. Print.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000. Print.
- Fincher, David, David Giler, Walter Hill, Sigourney Weaver, Charles S. Dutton, Charles Dance, Paul McGann, Brian Glover, and Lance Henriksen. *Alien³*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Video, 1992.
- Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Morrow, 1970. Print.
- Fitting, Peter. "Utopia, dystopia and science fiction." Ed. Gregory Claeys. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Print.
- Foster, Thomas. "'Trapped by the Body?'" Telepresence technologies and transgendered performance in feminist and lesbian rewritings of cyberpunk fiction." Eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy. *The Cybercultures Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of other spaces, Heterotopias." 15 Dec 2013. Web.
- Fromm, Erich, and Karl Marx. *Marx's Concept of Man*. New York: F. Ungar, 1966. Print.
- Galloway, Alexander R. *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004. Internet resource.
- Gaines, Patrice. "Restoring Lives: Now That's Justice." *Yes! Magazine*. 8 June 2011. *Positive Futures Network*. Web. 14 Feb. 2014.
- Gane, Nicholas. "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?" *Theory, Culture & Society*. 23 (2006): 135-158. Print.
- Garber, Eric, and Lyn Paleo. *Uranian Worlds: A Reader's Guide to Alternative Sexuality in*

Science Fiction and Fantasy. Boston, Mass: G.K. Hall, 1983. Print.

Gerrold, David. *The Man Who Folded Himself*. New York: Random House, 1973. Print.

Gibson, William, and Jack Womack. *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace Books, 2004. Print.

generationFive. "Toward Transformative Justice: A Liberatory Approach to Child Sexual Abuse and other forms of Intimate and Community Violence." *generationFive*. June 2007.

generationFive. Web. 14 Feb. 2014.

Gilmore, Ruth W. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Print.

Glaze, Lauren and Erinn Herberman. *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012*.

Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, United States. December 2013. Web. 16 Feb. 2014.

Gray, Richard T. "Disjunctive Signs: Semiotics, Aesthetics, and Failed Mediation in 'In der Strafkolonie.'" Ed. James Rolleston, *A Companion to the Works of Franz Kafka*. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2002. 213-45. Print.

Guerino, Paul, Paige M. Harrison, and William J. Sabol. *Prisoners in 2010*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2 Feb. 2012. Web. 16 Sept. 2012.

Hayles, N K. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Print.

Hayes, N. Katherine. "Wrestling With Transhumanism." *Metanexus*. Metanexus Institute, 1 Sept. 2011. Web. 20 May 2012.

Haraway, Donna J. *The Haraway Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Print.

Heinlein, Robert A. "'all You Zombies.'" *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. 57

(1979). Print.

Heinlein, Robert A. *I Will Fear No Evil*. New York: Putnam, 1970. Print.

Heinlein, Robert A. *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. New York: Orb, 1997. Print.

Hill-Meyer, Toby. "Self-Reflection." Ed. Brit Mandelo. *Beyond the Gender Binary: Genderqueer and Sexually Fluid Speculative Fiction*. Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2012.

Hirsch, Adam J. *The Rise of the Penitentiary: Prisons and Punishment in Early America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. Print.

Hirst, John. *Convict Society and Its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales*. Sydney: G Allen & Unwin, 1983. Print.

Hirst, John. "The Australian Experience: The Convict Colony." Eds. Morris, Norval, and David J. Rothman. *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Project Guttenberg. 11 Oct. 2011. Ebook. 18 Feb. 2014.

Hollinger, Veronica. "Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism." *Mosaic (winnipeg)*. 23.2 (1990). Print.

Holquist, Michael. "Metropole and Penal Colony: Two Models of Comparison." Ed. Giovananna Franci. *Remapping the Boundaries: A New Perspective in Comparative Studies*. Bologna, Italy: CLUEB, 1997.

hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2010. Print.

Howard, John. *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales*. Warrington: Printed by W. Eyres, 1777. Print.

Hughes, Robert. *The Fatal Shore*. New York, N.Y: Knopf, 1987. Print.

Ignatieff, Michael. *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

Innes, Joanna, and John Styles. "The Crime Wave: Recent Writing on Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century England." *The Journal of British Studies*. 25.4 (1986): 380-435. Print.

Jakubowski, Maxim, and Malcolm Edwards. *The Sf Book of Lists*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. "Progress Versus Utopia; Or, Can We Imagine the Future." *Science Fiction Studies*. 9 (1982): 147-158. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972. Print.

Jay, Karla, and Allen Young. *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*. New York: New York University Press, 1992. Print.

Johnson, Richard. "What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?" *Social Text*. (1987): 38-80. Print.

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis, in the Penal Colony, and Other Stories*. New York: Schocken Books, 1988. Print. Kirchberger, Lida. "‘In the Penal Colony’ or The Machinery of the Law." In *Franz Kafka’s Use of the Law in Fiction: A New Interpretation of ‘In der Strafkolonie,’ Der Prozess, and Das Schloss*, 13-42. New York: Peter Lang, 1986.

Knafo, Saki. "The U.S. Is Locking People Up for Being Poor." *Huffington Post*. 2 Feb. 2014. *HPMG News*. Web. 14 Feb. 2014.

Kelleghan, Fiona. "Hell's My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester." *Science*

Fiction Studies. 21.3 (1994): 351-64. Print.

KimberlyFDR. "Male Femaling: Stereotypes in Gender Change Fiction." *Nerds in Babeland*. 12 April 2011. Web. 11 Jan. 2014.

Kipness, Marc. "The thread of the (Marginal) Feminine: Decolonizing Kafka's 'Strafkolonie.'" *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 16, no. 1 (June, 1992): 46-51. Print.

Kunzel, Regina G. *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Print.

Kurzweil, Ray. "The Law of Accelerating Returns." *Kurzweil Accelerating Intellect*.

KurzweilAINetwork, 7 Mar. 2011. Web. 16 Oct. 2012.

Le, Guin U. K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. New York: Ace Books, 2000. Print.

Leeson, Christopher. "Prisoners of Tiresias." *The Transformation Story Archive*. 1999. Web. 11 Jan. 2014.

Maciunas, Billie. "Feminist Epistemology in Piercy's 'woman on the Edge of Time.'." *Women's Studies*. 20 (1992): 249-258. Print.

MacLeod, Ken, and Sheila Perry. *Giant Lizards from Another Star*. Framingham, Mass: NESFA Press, 2006. Internet resource.

MacRae, Allan and Howard Zehr. "Righting Wrongs the Maori Way: Instead of Prison, New Zealand Chooses Restorative Justice and Community Problem Solving." *Yes! Magazine*. 8 June 2011. *Positive Futures Network*. 14 Feb. 2014.

Mandelo, Brit. *Beyond Binary: Genderqueer and Sexually Fluid Speculative Fiction*. Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe Press, 2012. Print.

Marin, Louis. *Utopics: Spatial Play*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984. Print.

Marks, Susan. "Torture and the Penal Colony." *Leiden Journal of International Law* 20.3 (2007):

535-44. *ProQuest*. Web. 10 Nov. 2013. McClintock, Scott. "In Penal Colony: Inscription of the Subject in Literature and Law, and Detainees as Legal Non-Persons at Camp X-Ray."

Comparative Literature Studies 41, no. 1 (2004): 153-67, Print.

Mathiesen, Thomas. *Prison on Trial: A Critical Assessment*. London: Sage Publications, 1990. Print.

McGoohan, Patrick. *The Prisoner*. New York: A & E Home Video, 2001.

McHugh, Maureen F. *China Mountain Zhang*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1997. Print.

McLaren, Margaret A. *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002. Print.

Meranze, Michael. *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996. Print.

Milman, Yoseph. "The Ambiguous Point of View and Reader Involvement in Kafka: A Reader Oriented Approach to *The Castle* and 'In the Penal Colony.'" *Neophilologus* 77, no. 2 (April 1993): 261-72.

Mogul, Joey L, Andrea J. Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock. *Queer (in)justice: The Criminalization of Lgbt People in the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2011. Print.

Moylan, Tom. *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. New York: Methuen, 1986. Print.

Moylan, Tom. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2000. Ebook.

Murakami, Haruki, and Philip Gabriel. *Kafka on the Shore*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. Print.

Murphy, Pat. *The City, Not Long After*. New York: Doubleday, 1989. Print.

Nakamura, Lisa. *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Newitz, Annalee. "The Essential Posthuman Science Fiction Reading List." *io9*. 5 May 2010. Gawker Media. Web resource. 10 January 2014.

Nicholas, Stephen and Peter R. Shergold. "Unshackling the Past." Ed. Stephen Nicholas. *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Print.

Nixon, Nicola. "Cyberpunk: Preparing the Ground for Revolution or Keeping the Boys Satisfied?" *Science Fiction Studies* 19: 219-235, #57, July 1992.

Peters, Paul. "Witness to the Execution: Kafka and Colonialism." *Monatshefte* 93, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 401-25.

Piercy, Marge. *He, She, and It: A Novel*. New York: Knopf, 1991. Print.

Piercy, Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. New York: Knopf, 1976. Print.

Piper, Karen. "The Language of Machine: A Post-Colonial Reading of Kafka." *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 20. June/December 1996: 42-54.

Plato, and David Gallop. *Phaedo*. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1975. Print

Plato, and R S. Bluck. *Meno*. Cambridge University Press, 1961. Print.

Pohl, Nicole. "Utopianism after More: the Renaissance and Enlightenment." Ed. Gregory Claeys. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Print.

"Prison Security Goes High Tech." *South Source*. Austin: South University, 2009. Web. 28 May 2012.

Redstockings Collective. "Redstockings Manifesto." Redstockings.org. *Redstockings, Inc.* n.d. Web. 15 Dec 2013.

Riegle, Mike. "Sexual Politics of 'Crime': Inside and Out." Ed. Ridinger, Robert B. *Speaking for Our Lives: Historic Speeches and Rhetoric for Gay and Lesbian Lives*. Binghamton, NY: Hawthorn Press, 2004.

Roberts, Adam. *Science Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Rothenberg, David. "Prisoners." *The Sexually Oppressed*. Eds. Harvey L. Gochros and Jean S. Gochros. New York: Association Press, 1977. Print.

Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971. Print.

Russ, Joanna. "Towards an Aesthetic of Science Fiction." *Science Fiction Studies*. 2.2 (1975): 112-119. Print.

Saramago, José, and Giovanni Pontiero. *Blindness: [a Novel]*. New York: Harcourt, 1998. Print.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited." *Utopian Studies*. 5.1 (1994): 1-37. Print.

Scott, Melissa. *Trouble and Her Friends*. New York: TOR, 1994. Print.

Seabury, Marcia B. "The Monsters We Create: Woman on the Edge of Time and Frankenstein." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 42.2 (2002): 131-143. Print.

Spierenburg, Pieter. "The Body and the State." Eds. Morris, Norval, and David J. Rothman. *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print.

Shawl, Nisi. "Deep End." Ed. Mehan, Uppinder, and Nalo Hopkinson. *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004. Print.

- Silverstone, Roger. "Complicity and Collusion in the Mediation of Everyday Life." *New Literary History*. 33.4 (2002): 761-780. Print.
- Simon, Bart. "Introduction: Toward a Critique of Posthuman Futures." *Cultural Critique*. (2003): 1-9. Print.
- Shelley, Martha. "Gay is Good." Ed. Karla Jay and Allen Young. *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*. New York: New York University Press, 1992. Print.
- Smith, Nat, and Eric A. Stanley. *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011. Print.
- Starhawk, . *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. New York: Bantam Books, 1994. Print.
- Stine, Jean Marie. *Season of the Witch: the Transgender Futuristic Classic*. Las Gatos, CA: Sizzler Press, 2011. Ebook.
- Stone, Allucquère R. *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995. Print.
- Stone, Sandy. "The Empire Strikes Back: a Posttranssexual Manifesto." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*. 10 (1992): 150-176. Print.
- Stross, Charles. *Glasshouse*. New York: Ace Books, 2006. Print.
- Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. Print.
- Taubeneck, Steven. "Irony, Contingency, and Postmodernity: 'In the Penal Colony.'" Ed. Richard T. Gray. *Approaches to Teaching Kafka's Short Fiction*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1995. 114-22. Print.
- "Transhumanist FAQ." *Humanity+*. World Transhumanist Association: n.d. Web. 21 May 2012.
- Vaughan, Brian K, Pia Guerra, José Marzán, Pamela Rambo, and Clem Robins. *Y: The Last*

Man-Cycles. New York, N.Y: DC Comics, 2003. Print. Whitlark, James S. "Kafka's Parodies of Sexual Homicide." *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*, nos. 1-2 (July/December 1998): 70-80.

Vinge, Verner. "The Coming Technological Singularity: How to Survive in the Post-Human Era." Ed. G.A. Landis. *Vision-21: Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in the Era of Cyberspace*. NASA Publication CP-10129 (1993): 11-22 1993. Accessed online. 26 Nov 2013.

Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press, 1999. Print.

Wells, H. G. *A Modern Utopia*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1904.

Williams, Donna G. "The Moons of Le Guin and Heinlein." *Science Fiction Studies*. 21.2 (1994): 164-72. Print.

Willis, James J. "Transportation Versus Imprisonment in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Penal Power, Liberty, and the State." *Law & Society Review*. 39.1 (2005): 171-210. Print.

Witt, Mary A. F. *Existential Prisons: Captivity in Mid-Twentieth-Century French Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985. Print.

Youngquist, Paul. *Cyberfiction: After the Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Zebrowski, George. *Brute Orbits*. New York: HarperPrism, 1999. Print.