

# Otherring In Two Dystopian Novels: Analysis Of The Wall And Leila

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## Abstract:

*Otherring, the process whereby the Other is created, is defined by contestation between two groups for valuable resources. The contestation between two groups – one more powerful and one less powerful – results in eventual domination of the less powerful group by the more powerful group. In this process, the Other is created, who is the enemy or the opposite of one's own group. Historical examples include Nazi Germany and Stalin's Russia, which had powerful groups dominating over less powerful groups they identified as their enemies. While being created as the Other, we see the dominated groups being both negatively categorized and negatively treated. These two processes, part of the eventual process of othering and also considered as tools of othering, are seen in literary dystopias too, Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty Four being particular examples. The presence of these processes in both literary and historical dystopias showcases the relevance of othering in the creation of dystopias. Or that othering is a significant part of what makes a place dystopian. Analysis of two recent dystopian novels – The Wall (2019) and Leila (2017) – also reveal the significance of othering in making a place dystopian for some citizens of those places. The novels showcase two distinct dominant groups, with their specific philosophies and ideologies, defining who would be their Others. Once defined and thereby identified, the Others are negatively categorized as the enemy, the monsters, the impure, etc. Negative categorization is followed by negative treatment in the form of reduction of ontological status, removal of ontological security, use of Repressive State Apparatuses, etc.*

**Key Words:** Othering and Dystopia; Processes of Othering; Negative Categorization, Negative Treatment

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## I. Introduction

### Othering

Othering is considered as the process through which the Other is created, this Other being the opposite or the enemy of oneself or one's group. The negative perception one group has for another group which it considers its opposite and thus its Other is highlighted by Felicity Rash when she says that "within political discourse, the image of the Other is often contrasted unfavourably with that of the Self" (24). R. C. Tripathi in the "Prologue" of *Perspectives on Violence and Othering in India* says that othering is done for creating "one's own cultural and social space and not share this space with members of the other group" (XV). Othering thus is part of contestation between groups of people for control of cultural and material resources, during which the Other is created. And in most cases, it is the dominant or the more powerful group that does the othering or engages in the process of othering (Tripathi, "Violence and the Other" 10). We can thus deduce that the process of othering involves two groups who are in a dominant-dominated relationship. That is, a dominant group engages in othering of the less powerful group. And this happens for control of valuable resources.

In his text *Dystopia: A Natural History*, Gregory Claeys shows othering taking place in Stalin's Russia and Nazi Germany during the 1930s and 1940s. In both these states, there were dominant or powerful groups that othered or created/designated a minority group as the enemy. For Stalinist Russia, the bourgeoisie, the landed farmers, and the intelligentsia were the Others while for Nazi Germany, the Jews were considered as the Other (Claeys 133, 186). In Russia, the three groups of people were considered as destroyers of the communist project and called as "serpents in paradise" (137). Stalin called for the complete annihilation of the Kulaks on Christmas Day 1929 (137). These Others were also blamed or scapegoated for the "hopelessly defective economic system" of Russia (139). They were thus treated as dehumanised and expendable subjects of the Russian state, without care and concern for their lives. Hitler's promised utopia for the German people excluded the Jews who were instead treated as the enemy and as a threat to the German nation (177, 178). They were also blamed for the economic and social woes of Germany and ascribed with the intention of taking over the country (187). As such, they were called a "parasites, vampire, anti-man" (Claeys 187). And being considered as such, millions of them were sent to Nazi prison camps where they faced extreme domination and subjugation, which has been widely documented.

In both these cases, we see two powerful groups, followers of Stalin and Hitler respectively, dominating over less powerful groups. We also see two processes within the overall process of othering or of considering someone as one's enemy: negative categorization and negative treatment. In Stalin's Russia, the bourgeoisie, the landed farmers, and the intelligentsia were called as "serpents in paradise," while Nazi Germany blamed the Jews for the economic woes of the country. These are examples of negative categorization. Negative categorization can include negative discourse about the less dominant group, negative representation, derogatory names being used, being blamed as the enemies, traitors, as sinners, etc. Negative categorization thus identifies or creates the Other. This is one part of the process of Othering.

On the other hand, the Jews being sent to Nazi prison camps and Stalin's Russia sending its so-called enemies to the gulags are examples of negative treatment. Negative treatment, within the process of othering, usually follows negative categorization. Negative treatment can include violence, oppression, exclusion, denial of rights, and various other forms of harmful treatment meted out to the Other.

Thus it is clear that analyzing the process of othering would involve looking at the processes of both negative categorization and negative treatment. Through negative categorization and through negative treatment, othering is done. In other words, negative categorization and negative treatment are the tools of othering.

### **Othering and Dystopia**

Dystopia can refer both to a body of literature as well as geographical spaces. According to Gregory Claeys in *Dystopia: A Natural History*, dystopia means "a diseased, bad, faulty, or unfavourable place" (4). As mentioned above, Claeys gives the example of Russia under the rule of Stalin and Germany under Hitler's rule as dystopian places. These dystopias showcase extreme domination by the dominant group over the dominated groups. The dominant groups engage in the process of othering involving both negative categorization and negative treatment.

We can say that it is the process of othering – negative categorization and negative treatment – that leads to the place becoming dystopian. It can also be argued that dystopian spaces reveal the worst aspect of a powerful group dominating over a weaker group, and thus these spaces reveal the worst aspect of the process of othering.

Not only historical-geographical spaces, but the process of othering can be literary dystopias too: *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for example. In *Brave New World*, the World State Government others the people of the Malpais Settlement by considering them as their opposites. While the people of the World State are said to be in advanced state of civilization, the people of the Malpais Settlement are categorised as primitive and ignorant, and as everything that the population of the World State would not want to be. The people of the Malpais Settlement are also considered as ideologically harmful to the people of the World State, who could pollute or excite the intricately-conditioned thoughts and beliefs of the people of the World State. As such, negative treatment follows: the inhabitants of Malpais settlement are kept under geographical isolation and control, and no intermingling of any kind is allowed between the two groups of people. Negative consideration and negative treatment of the people of the Malpais Settlement also showcases the domination that is exerted over them by the World State.

In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, the Oceania State engages in creating enemies of those who do not share its vision of totalitarian control over the land. Ideologically different people are thus othered in the novel. They are vilified as blood-thirsty enemy of the public and various kinds of state apparatuses – Institutional State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses – are used to suppress them. For example, Winston, the chief protagonist of the novel, is captured and tortured for plotting against the Big Brother of the Oceania State. In the novel thus, we see negative categorization and negative treatment of the people who are ideologically opposed to the Oceania State.

All of the various instances show that othering takes place in dystopias, whether literary or real-life. We can even say that othering is an important aspect of dystopias or for dystopian conditions to be created. And within the process of othering, we see the domination of one group over another, which is further manifested through negative categorisation and negative treatment of the dominated group by the dominant. To analyse the process of othering in various dystopian contexts thus, we would need to look at the two groups engaged in the dominant-dominated relationship as well as the context, means, and methods of negative categorisation and negative treatment. The dominant groups can be looked at in terms of their purpose or goal, their ideology (if any), their particular nature, etc. The dominated group or groups can be looked at in terms of how they are dominated over, how are they affected by this domination, how are their living conditions dystopian in nature, how are they viewed and represented as, how are they treated as, etc. On the other hand, the means and methods of negative categorization and negative treatment constitute the tools of othering, through the application of which the dominant group exerts domination over the dominated group. Analysis of othering in a dystopian context would thus look at:

1. The Dominant Group
2. Othering of the Dominated Groups
3. Tools of Othering

## **II. Analysis Of Othering In The Wall**

*The Wall* (2019) by John Lanchester showcases othering taking place during an environmental disaster or environmental collapse (Lanchester). The novel is a bleak depiction of a future world devastated by disastrous environmental change. Gregory Claeys had mentioned the various kinds of dystopias in *Dystopia: A Natural History*: the political dystopia, the environmental dystopia, and the technological dystopia (Claeys 5). *The Wall* is an example of environmental dystopia or what is also called as eco-dystopia. According to T. Divya Bharati, “Eco-dystopia or Eco-critical dystopia focuses on the environmental ruin and how that brings subsequent changes to the society” (2900). In *The Wall* we see a country that has been changed irrevocably due to the climate apocalypse (Lanchester). The sea levels have risen and submerged many parts of the world, causing people from these places to attempt to reach safer places to live. On the other hand, the island of Britain has built a wall, described as “a long low concrete monsters” (8) all around its coast. This is done to protect against the rising sea levels as well as to prevent the desperate climate refugees, called as the Others by the people of Britain, from coming in. The Wall, ten thousand kilometers long and three meters high above the waters, and the defending of it occupies the mind of the large section of the population. As Joseph Kavanagh, the narrator of the novel, says, “Life is all about the Wall” (12). And also that the Wall “offers no choice” (7), in the sense of it being brutal and unforgiving with no place for feelings other than that of hostility and enmity against the Others.

The Wall symbolises a country that is bent towards one single, hostile purpose: to not let anyone else enter into it. The nation has adopted a siege mindset, where everything is done for the defence of the Wall and for the upkeep of the Wall. The adoption of this siege mindset has caused changes within the society too. The country is now divided into various groups: The Elites, the Defenders, the Guards, the Flights, the Breeders, the civilians and the Helps. This division is done according to the various kinds of duties needed to be performed for the upkeep of the wall. The Defenders, the Guards, and the Flights are the ones who guard the Wall; Defenders are posted along the Wall, the Guards patrol the waters, while the Flights guard the airspace around the country. The Breeders are couples who are encouraged to produce children to maintain the population of the country. The Helps are the Others who have been able to enter the country but have been captured and turned into slaves.

### **The Dominant Group in *The Wall***

The Elites are the dominant group in the country. They are the privileged class, rich and powerful, who, Kavanagh suspects, get away with not serving time on the Wall: “No one ever admitted to not going on the Wall, but we all suspected that there were rich and powerful people who got out of it” (Lanchester 95). Compared to them, the other groups – the Defenders, the Flights, the Breeders, the Guards – are commoners, who have to perform the violent business of defending the Wall. The Elites are also the policy makers and decision makers of the country, described as having the exclusive privilege of travelling by aeroplanes for talking “to other members of the elite about the Change and the Others and what to do about them” (28). Kavanagh dreams of becoming a member of the Elite by making great amounts of money (66). But at the same time, he also feels guilty about dreaming such because once he becomes an Elite – a superior class to the other groups – he would no longer have anything to do with his friends and relatives, that there would be a great gap between them (66). Kavanagh says that the Elites let a few outsiders into the group and thus ensures a slight spread of luxuries and benefits, just enough to not let the other groups from rising against them, or “to stop disorder rising from below” (66). The Elites thus control and have appropriated most of the wealth and the power for themselves. It can be said they benefit the most from the dire situation the country is in. Kavanagh believes that the Elites only think of the other groups in term of what they can be used for:

... and it was very interesting the way he said this next word, because you caught a glimpse of something cold and dark in him, just for that tiny moment, a small window into what he really thought of us, and the distance between his life and ours – ‘duties.’ Our duties. Yes, OK, our duties, our long nights in the cold and dark, twelve hours at a time spent both bored shitless and in fear of our lives. That was what, in his eyes, we were for. That was our use, our purpose. (95)

### **The Dominated Groups in *The Wall***

The “Others” – so named – are considered as blood-thirsty enemies who are hell-bent on entering the country. As mentioned before, they are either to be killed, to be euthanized, or to be kept as slaves called Helps. A harsh law exists for the defenders like Joseph Kavanagh: if they are found responsible for Others entering the country, they themselves would be put out to sea. From this we can understand that the categorisation of

someone as the enemy or the Other doesn't happen only to the outsiders trying to enter the country, but also to the people inside the country. The fate of being the desperate Other can befall anyone within the country, except for the Elites. So if anybody could be an Other, Kavanagh considers, what really was the difference between the people inside the wall and those outside the Wall:

No hard feelings, the living and the dead, more in common than you might think; a tiny bit of luck here and there dividing them; taking turns to live, taking turns to die; all in the same boat. All the same really. Others, Defenders – what's the difference? I couldn't decide if this was the opposite of what it would be like to fight to the death, or a good preparation for it. (82)

When Kavanagh is put out to sea in Chapter 18 of the novel, he experiences the despair and fear the Others must face on losing their lands and their homes. Floating upon the sea and struggling to survive, the group is given food and shelter by a group of Others on a small island. They are helped despite the group on the island knowing they were former Defenders.

Being welcomed and being given food and shelter relates to the idea of radical, ethical welcome offered to an Other by the self as proposed by Emmanuel Levinas (Kierney and Semonovitch 10). This happens despite the other being an alter-ego or being the complete opposite of the self, according to Levinas (10). The unbridgeable difference between the two was an opportunity to practise ethics rather, and thus the Other must be welcomed according to Levinas (10). The welcome offered by the Others show their higher moral standing as opposed to the violent, demeaning, and degrading treatment meted to the Others by the people of Britain. Kavanagh, who used to think of the Others in terms of being deadly enemies, eventually recognises the similarities with himself. His views and perceptions broaden and he comes to realise the human-ness in all of them:

I'd been brought up not to think about the Others in terms of where they came from or who they were, to ignore all that – they were just Others. But maybe, now that I was one of them, they weren't Others any more? If I was an Other and they were Others perhaps none of us were Others but instead were a new Us. (168)

### **Tools of Othering in *The Wall***

In *The Wall*, we see examples of both negative categorisation and negative treatment of what Britain considers its Other. They are as follows:

a) Negative Discourse of the Others: The Defenders, having to guard the Wall against being breached, imagine the Others in monstrous terms:

You know this, and you train for this, but at the same time you know that sometimes, those things are there, and that many times the following has happened: a Defender who thought for a moment he saw something which looked like moonlight gleaming off metal, dismissed it, or thought he heard something like metal scratching on concrete, and dismissed it, died coughing up blood with an Other's knife in his guts. (57)

There is no kindly terms in which the Defenders can conceive of the Others, because they are locked in a do-or-die situation due to Britain's policy about the climate refugees. Kavanagh also believes at the beginning of the novel that he and the Others cannot exist together, that one has to perish for the other to live. This negative dichotomy between the Defender and the Others forces the Defenders to create negative discourse about them. Another example of this is when Kavanagh recalls having been taught not to think about the Others as suffering subjects with terrible histories, but just as the monstrous or the enemy Others: "I'd been brought up not to think about the Others in terms of where they came from or who they were, to ignore all that – they were just Others" (168).

b) Reduction of Ontological Status: The Others who manage to enter Britain are kept as slaves, or "Helps." Among all the social groups that have been created after the Change, the Helps are at the lowest rung of the social order. They are not allowed to have children and are separated from their families. Thus, we see free people being turned into slaves for the ease and use of the privileged classes in the novel. Being kept as Helps is part of the transactional nature of the country of Britain during a period of extreme crisis, because the Helps are being made to pay the price for being allowed to live in the country. This attitude is apparent from the story of the Captain, who was a former Other, and who works extremely hard as an officer of the Defenders to show he had been worthy of being allowed to live. There is thus a commodification of human misery and suffering in the novel, that if they are allowed to live, they must live to serve whoever has allowed them to live, and not as free human beings. As mentioned before, this goes against the idea of radical welcome to be offered to the other by the self according to Levinas (Kierney and Semonovitch 10).

The negative treatment of being reduced to the status of slaves also ties in with the fate of the defeated self in Hegel's analogy of the Master-Slave relationship (Kain 46). The defeated self becomes the slave of the victorious self, who becomes the Master in turn (46). The Master-Slave analogy provides an example of the reduced ontological status of the defeated self in the case of the self-other contest for achieving self-affirmation.

Self-affirmation meaning being affirmed about one's own consciousness and thus the affirmation of the existence of oneself, the nation of Britain also affirms its victory and the declaration of its survival and vitality during the climate crisis by making the Others, the climate refugees from other lands, as slaves, and thus negating their existence and the existence of their lands, and affirming their defeat.

c) Removal of Ontological Security: Haugaard's *The Four Dimensions of Power: Understanding Domination, Empowerment, and Democracy* mentions ontological security as a secured sense of one's well-being or of one's place in the world. For a person to have ontological security, there must be a match between his or her inner expectations and outer reality (144). Haugaard mentions that a person's ontological security is broken in the case of slavery, in solitary confinement, etc (172). Because in these cases, the slaves or the prisoners lose their secured sense of selves and become something else, as desired by their masters or due to the circumstances. The slaves in particular have no social identity of their own, except what is given to them by their masters (172). The Helps too, who were once free people and had social identities, respect, reputation, etc., lose all these markers of their selves and become only slaves. The previous markers of their selves are removed once they enter Britain and become slaves. Their ontological security is lost thus, becoming people with no secure identity of their own, except what is given to them by their masters.

### III. Analysis Of Othering In Leila

The novel *Leila* (2017) by Prayaag Akbar depicts life in an unnamed dystopian city through the eyes of the chief protagonist called Shalini. The novel is about Shalini's search for her daughter Leila. The rulers of the city, the Council, have enforced the ideology of purity and as such divided the city into various segments to maintain caste, communal, and religious purity. That is, people from various castes, communities, religious backgrounds are kept within their own areas and prevented from meeting anyone who is not of their respective group. Because it considers all kinds of intermingling or inter-mixing as deviant or as sacrilegious, the Council considers anyone engaged in intermixing as its enemy or its Other. Thus, othering is done of people like Shalini who had dared to marry outside of her religious and communal boundaries, and who have thus become impure. Othering is also done of the Slummers, the people living in the slums, who are considered impure from birth. Thus the city is dystopian for people like Shalini and the Slummers, having to live under conditions of violence, repression and subjugation, denial of basic rights, exclusion, segregation, sexual assault, etc.

The city is also dystopian because of the environmental collapse depicted in the city. There is extreme heat in the city: "In the past months the unrelenting heat had widened the cracks, all over the city the roads coming apart like the gaps in an old person's mouth" (Akbar 84). There is also water crisis – with some areas not having received water for years – and as such protests take place. All the trees have been cut: "Some forty years after Purity One was erected there are no trees. The stunning canopy is gone" (31). The environmental crisis is also reflected in the depictions of pollution and filthy living conditions of the Slummers. There is constant fire in the landfills, some having not abated for three weeks, and sewage materials are dumped over the sector walls to the Outroads, the road used by the Slummers for their daily commute: "When a load dumped from a trash tower comes gush-tumbling-bouncing down a sector wall, the warm, gritty splash carries to the other side of even the widest road, leaving a rain of brown drops on my shoulders, my hair" (31).

The environmental degradation and the filthy living conditions for the Slummers stands paradoxical to the Council's idea of purity and hence cleanliness. The growth of the Council is linked with the destruction of the forest canopy, which we can assume, would have started the cycle of extreme heat and also the water crisis. As such, the Council is directly responsible for the environmental degradation and the environmental crisis. Alongside that, the Council keeps the city pure or clean by dirtying the outskirts of the city where the Slummers and people like Shalini live. As such, its idea of purity is discriminatory, exclusive, and morally unreflective, not concerned about how its pursuit of the idea of purity is making other places filthy and the lives of other people miserable.

#### **The Dominant Group in Leila**

In the novel, the members of the Council are the dominant group. They "oversee the divided city from the political quarter, from behind Purity One" (1). Purity One is the name of the wall that surrounds the place where the Council members live, and the name of the wall itself show the importance of the Council members. The political quarter and the Purity One have become sanctified to the extent that people come and pray there. Members of the Council are not named except for Joshi, the Council Spokesperson. The Council gained power through providing money and enforcers to the leaders who supported their vision. As such, the vision of purity cannot be attributed to only the Council members, but that it was already pre-existing. People from all religions and sects can become members of the Council so long as they share the vision of the Council. Joshi says that the events or the division of the city into various segments was "simply the flowering of an ancient consciousness" (36).

Holding extreme views about ideas of purity, the Council looks down upon anyone it considers as impure. For the Council, “impure” people can be of two types: those who have become impure through transgressing the ideas of purity imposed by the Council, and those who are already born impure. Shalini belongs to the first category of impure people, having married Rizwan, who is from another religion and community. People of lower castes belong to the second category of the impure people. The “impure” people are considered as the Other, or as its opposite, by the Council. Violence and repression, various methods of indoctrination, exclusion, denial of basic living privileges and rights, are affected upon them by the Council. The Council also employs enforcers known as the Repeaters to enforce its diktats and to punish any transgressor.

The Council thus exerts extreme domination over its Others. This domination is done for the purpose of having ideological control over the citizens of the city. Taking Althusser’s concept of the application of Institutional State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses by the state for the purposing of perpetuating ideological control, we can analyse the various ISAs and RSAs through which the Council has imposed its ideology. The Council uses ISAs like Purity Camp, control of educational institutions, etc., to control the people. Purity Camp is where transgressors like Shalini are sent for them to be ideologically converted to accept the idea of purity imposed by the Council. The Council also controls the educational institutions of the city so that these institutions only teach or perpetuate the ideas of purity. The Council uses the Repeaters to enforce its views upon the city, and this is an example of the Repressive State Apparatus. The Repeaters uses tactics like intimidation, violence, killings, and murders to silence the dissidents.

### **The Dominated Groups in *Leila***

As mentioned above, people like Shalini and the Slummers are the Others for the Council. And as such, extreme forms of domination are exerted upon them, including violence, repression and subjugation, denial of basic rights, exclusion, segregation, sexual assault, etc. Othering thus – which is negative categorization and negative treatment (after negative categorization) – is done of them. Shalini, considered as impure for having transgressed the boundaries of social and communal purity, is deprived of her daughter, her husband, her previously comfortable life. Sent to a Purity Camp and thereafter to the Towers, where all other transgressing women are housed, she lives a life that is far-removed from her previous life. Not able to bear the pain of her daughter being taken away, she has to take medicines to be able to sleep. She is also sexually assaulted by a member of the Council while interviewing her for her transfer to the Ministry of Settlement. She has also seen her how the Council’s policy had forced her parents to relocate multiple times. She had also seen her father being beaten up by Repeaters because he had protested against the policies of the Council. Thus three generations of her family – her parents, herself, and her daughter – are victims of othering by the Council.

The Council also engages in Othering of the Slummers. Slummers are those who are impure by virtue of their birth. They live in the slum areas and therefore called Slummers. A Council member called Vijay says of them: “There is no hope for people on the ground, you know. They were like this a thousand years ago. They will live like this forever” (136). Thus the Council holds these people in extreme contempt. This is apparent from them not being allowed to live inside the city. They are not pure enough to be allowed to do so. Secondly, the Council deeming them as irredeemably impure, throws garbage and other “impure” wastes over to their living spaces. It is also the Slummers who have to breathe in the polluted air because of the constant fire in the landfills, located right next to their slums. And it is mentioned that some slum areas had not received water supply for three years. The othering of the Slummers thus take the form of denying them rights and privileges of living like drinking water, clean habitations, pollution-free air, etc. The denial goes to such an extent that at the end of the novel, the Council members are even reluctant to share the air with the Slummers. As such, they close their living space with Sky Dome, which is like a large air conditioner, and which keeps the air in their living spaces clean and cool, while throwing hot air outside to the slum areas. Thus, othering is done of them in viewing them as not worthy of having the most basic of rights – clean living conditions, clean air, clean water – by the Council. This shows that the Council considers the Slummers as not worthy of receiving basic human dignity.

### **Tools of Othering in *Leila***

The Council in *Leila* uses various tools or means of othering. As mentioned before, processes of othering would include means and methods of negative categorization and following that, negative treatment. Some tools and processes identify, mark, and define the Other of the Council, which is negative categorization. Other processes and methods inflict negative treatment upon the Other, once marked as the enemy or the Other. The tools and processes deployed by the Council are of following kinds:

a) Negative discourse about the Slummers: Negative categorization is apparent in the novel through negative discourse being spread about the Others. Vijay, a Council member, says that the Slummers are irredeemably impure and that they would never be able to uplift themselves even after a thousand years. As such, the

Slummers are identified as the irredeemable Other of the so-called pure Council members. The negative discourse about the Slummers is not held only by the Council members, but by Shalini herself. She had once asked her maid Sapna to never kiss her daughter Leila because she couldn't imagine Sapna's saliva on her daughter's face. Shalini had also instructed Sapna about where to sit and where not to sit, she being a servant. This treatment of Sapna belies Shalini's negative categorization of her as being impure. Due to this negative categorization, the Slummers are denied basic privileges of life like clean air, clean water, clean living spaces, etc.

b) Use of Institutional State Apparatuses: The Council uses Institutional State Apparatuses to spread its ideology of purity. These ISAs include educational institutions, government machineries, and indoctrination processes like Purity Camp. The spread of the ideology of purity is insidious at first, with Shalini's parents being charged with eating non-vegetarian food and thus made aware of not being desirable to be lived with in the same community. Once the Council gains control over the city, it starts to use various institutional apparatuses to spread and perpetuate its ideology. Dipanita tells Shalini during their meeting that the various schools now teach the principles of ideology espoused by the Council. This shows the absolute control the Council has over the means of perpetuating the ideology of purity. And for transgressors like Shalini, those who dare to rebel against the rules of the Council, there is an indoctrination camp called Purity Camp. The inmates of Purity Camp are counseled by a doctor and made to accept the Council's ideology of social and communal purity. The Council also uses various government machineries to obstruct or blockade processes they consider to be against its ideology. Thus, Shalini's marriage to Rizwan is made unnecessarily hard through making them do large amount of paper work. The use of these institutional apparatuses maintains control over transgressors like Shalini while also perpetuating the ideology of purity. These apparatuses, helping to mark the Other as well as to deny, obstruct, and indoctrinate them, are tools of both negative categorization as well as negative treatment.

c) Reduction of ontological status: Shalini is turned from a well-off lady to someone living on the margins of the society on the orders of the Council. From living in East End, an affluent and green locality, to travelling through the filthy Outroads to her room in the Towers, is a drastic fall in her quality of life. Psychologically too, from having her family around her to living her life alone and taking medicines to be able to sleep, is a steep fall in her health and happiness. She thus experiences a drastic reduction in her ontological status. This reduction in ontological status is reflected in the condition of the slave in Hegel's analogy of the Master-Slave relationship (Kain 46). The reduction of her ontological status serves as a warning to other people of the society who would have had thoughts of rebelling against the diktats of the Council like Shalini did. This is told to Shalini by her former friend Dipanita who she goes to meet while searching for her daughter Leila. The reduction in Shalini's ontological status is also apparent when Dipanita tells Shalini about her husband considering Shalini as impure and thus not worth meeting or being seen with.

d) Removal of ontological security: In the novel, we also see the removal of Shalini's ontological security. Defined as a secured sense of one's well being or one's place in the world (Haugaard 144), we see Shalini losing her bearings as she navigates a cruel world that has taken away everything from her. Because of her transgression, her daughter is taken away, her husband is killed, her comfortable life is snatched away, and she is made to exist on the margins of the society – living in the Towers, a dilapidated building for other women like her; working as a peon in the Revenue Ministry; taking medicines to be able to sleep; unable to resist sexual molestation because of her desperate need to find her daughter; none of her relatives or friends wanting to meet her, etc. In the present world, none of the markers of her safety, security, and happiness of her past life exist. She lives knowing that anything can happen to her if the Council wishes so. The disappearance of her ontological security is concomitant with the environmental degradation that the city faces. Since the time the Council took over, Shalini says, the city had lost all of its trees and thus there was water crisis and soaring temperatures faced by the people. The degradation of nature or nature going haywire – nature otherwise being a source of solace to all living beings – mirrors the precarious existence of Shalini or she losing her sources of security and safety once the Council took over the city.

e) Use of Repressive State Apparatuses: The Council uses Repeaters to enforce its vision of purity. The Repeaters are what can be considered as Repressive State Apparatus for the Council. The actions of the Repeaters are violent throughout. They are used to bully or intimidate anyone who goes against the diktats of the Council. Thus they beat up Shalini's father because he had spoken against the Council. Many people who spoke out were also killed or murdered. It is also the Repeaters who break up Leila's third birthday party and humiliated and beat up everyone, including Rizwan. Rizwan disappeared after this incident. The Repeaters also guard the gates of the various sectors, not allowing people from other castes or communities to enter into sectors of different castes or communities. The Repeaters are thus the perfect example of a repressive state apparatus used by the state to enforce its vision.

#### IV. Conclusion

The analysis of the two dystopian novels reveal various aspects of othering. We see the dominant groups in the novel – the Elites and the Council members – engaging in othering of the dominated groups. The two dominant groups have their own philosophy and their own ideology, which are very specific to the environmental and social-cultural contexts in which they operate. The Elites wish to selfishly maintain their social and political position in the novel *The Wall*, and the Council Members wish to impose the ideology of purity upon everyone in *Leila*. From their position of power, these dominant groups, through making rules and policies for the society to function, create the Other for their society or country. As such in *The Wall*, even a Defender can become an Other and vice versa. And once an Other, they would have to face the aftermath of the social, political, and environmental collapse the rest of the world has undergone. In *Leila*, the Others are those who the Council members consider as impure. And once so, they are denied basic rights and dignities of living.

Once the category of the Other is defined by the dominant group, the Others are identified and mistreated. Thus the Others undergo both negative categorization and negative treatment. Negative categorization is in the form of negative discourse about the Others – as monsters, as mortal enemies, as socially and culturally impure – and negative treatment is in the form of exclusion, violence, coercion, denial of basic rights, etc.

The analysis of the two novels reveal that the process of othering – consisting of negative categorization and negative treatment – is what makes the geographical spaces in these novels dystopian. This proves the intimate connection between othering and dystopia.

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