

**Twentieth-Century Dystopian Novels:  
A Reflection of the Making of the Modern World**

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## **Abbreviations**

### General

NSDAP - Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

WWI - World War I

WWII - World War II

NKVD - Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

### Louis Althusser

ISA - Ideological State Apparatus

RSA - Repressive State Apparatus

### Sigmund Freud

Cs - Conscious

Ucs - Unconscious

Pcs - Preconscious

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### Abstract

The first half of the 20th century marks a critical transition from the Victorian to the modern era paving the way to dilemmas of the postmodern age. This period saw the colonies and feudal systems breaking up, and technological innovations leading to rapid growth in industrial activities and urban settlements. Consumer culture, complex state systems, fascism, communism and totalitarianism as well as anti-intellectualism, surveillance, and media influence were on the rise. Most of all two great world wars brought about a spiritual crisis for many. All these issues led to dystopian writings which formed a striking literary movement. This movement attempted to criticize the contemporary events and forecast its grim future consequences. This thesis looks at three dystopian novels: *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1931), *1984* by George Orwell (1949) and *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954). It will analyze these texts using Marxist, Althusserian and Freudian theories, and will argue that these dystopias need to be considered to understand the history of the early 20th century as well as the socio-political dynamics of the present day world.

## Introduction

### Twentieth-Century Dystopian Novels: A Reflection of the Making of the Modern World

From the myth of Atlantis to semitic religious scriptures on the Garden of Eden, the wheel of civilization has been kept in motion by the ambition to achieve a perfect society; a society where everything is in order, everyone is equal and peaceful; in other words— utopia. Utopia, in a general sense, is a hypothetical state of perfection where society is in its best form and the individuals living in the system are perpetually happy. The idea of Utopia goes a long time back. So far as we know, Plato is the earliest to introduce the concept of Utopia in his book *Republic* (380 BCE). However, the term Utopia was first used much later, by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 book *Utopia*.

The concept of utopia comes with its binary opposite— dystopia. If utopia is the promise of the best form of social order and with best living standards for human beings, dystopia is the absence and the opposite of these conditions. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), a dark satire of the European social and political reality of his time, is the first known and significant work of dystopia. It paved way for the popularization of the genre (albeit much later) and influenced many later writers. With the dawn of scientific and technological boom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were mixed reactions from intellectuals. Some appreciated these developments, but many criticized the immediate and future negative impacts. With technology suddenly coming to the limelight, social and political realities started to merge and thus dystopian works became a hybrid of science fiction and socio-political comments. A typical utopian science-fiction imagines a future achieved through technological revolution as so advanced that when compared to the present state of technological capabilities it seems almost

fantastic. In Dystopian novels, particularly science fiction dystopia, we see this too. However, here we see the fear, anxiety and paranoia of technological advancement going wrong, being manipulated or misused and thus bringing disorder in human lives or man-made apocalypse so leading to the destruction of human civilization in the near or distant future.

Dystopian novels usually imagine the dark future of a society where individual and collective lives are affected by the events of its past. The origin of dystopia is rooted in the contemporary state of affairs, and the journey to an uncertain future is the essence of the dystopian genre. Although in the present time, we are witnessing the popularization of science fiction dystopia as a pop cultural phenomenon, dystopian novels fuse many other elements. Other than technology, trends in the genre have had instances of societal issues, environmental degradation, political crisis, economic issues, religious elements, psychological paranoia and philosophical views on ethics. A core feature of a dystopian novel is that, it builds up to a state that brings about a sensation of suffocation, melancholy, fear and anger. Through this effect, the readers experience a form of catharsis.

The early 20th century saw emergence of the dystopian literature as a part of an intellectual movement. It emerged mostly as a reaction to many existing and contemporary political realities — colonization, industrial pollution, urban slums, labor movements, imperialism, religious and ethical values losing their influences, anti-intellectualism, racism, totalitarianism and most of all the two great World Wars. Many novels of the genre were published during, before and after the war. However, the pessimism of the 20th century dystopian novels is the disillusionment of utopian ideals of the previous centuries. According to Gregory Claeys, “the eighteenth century was characterized by an unusual trust in man’s

capacities. This confidence led man to think highly of himself and to believe that he would be able to transcend his human limitations” (Claeys 15).<sup>1</sup> In the late 18th century, Europe was entering a new phase of economic and political history. Earlier, commodities would be hand made, requiring craftsmanship and manual labour in slave colonies. With the invention of steam engine, cotton mill, the way commodities could be produced was radically changed. Within a century, growing mechanization of production would trigger an industrial revolution. The impact of the industrial revolution was manifold— one of these was on intellectual and aesthetic movements. In literature and art, the late romantics and early modernists reacted to rapid industrialization and urbanization which broke people’s bond with nature that had marked the agrarian communities. New social classes emerged; the bourgeois invested capital, the proletariat labour was exploited to produce commercial products which the masses consumed.

One of the underlying causes that pushed the industrial revolution forward was the increasing progress in scientific research and technology. Inspired by its development, many intellectuals including modernist writers held onto the utopian belief that science would bring positive changes in human life and civilization would see peace and prosperity in the near future. This was particularly reflected in H.G. Wells’ *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901) where he tried to imagine the future through his predictions regarding transportation, urbanism, future social classes, warfare and political systems. Wells’ major literary works established the grounds for literary futurism and popularization of the science fiction genre. His science fiction novels, particularly *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910) had very significant influence on those who

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<sup>1</sup> Claeys, Gregory, ed. *The Cambridge companion to utopian literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

later contributed to the genre. Several other works, Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908), *The Machine Stops* (1909) by E. M. Forster and *We* (1921) by Yevgeny Zamyatin were all influential in setting up dystopian literature as a distinct genre of critiquing socio-political issue. Wells was phenomenal at the peak of his career, and his works inspired Aldous Huxley (1894 - 1963) and George Orwell (1903 -1950).

1900-1950 was a phase when politics in Europe was going through a transitory phase. On the one hand, Victorian values and the old imperial kingdoms were falling apart. On the other hand anti-colonial resistance grew stronger and industrial and commercial corporations utilizing technology and new modes of communications were shaping the coming cosmopolitanism to be seen in the later half of the century. Most of all, this period was marked by political events, the rise of fascism, nazism, communism, totalitarianism and the two great world wars. All of these had a huge impact behind the most influential dystopian novels of this period.

The consequences of World War I were devastating; not only did it destroy the infrastructure and destabilized social systems, it psychologically traumatized those who had witnessed it, particularly the young generation who experienced severe spiritual crisis. Known as the Lost Generation, young writers who grew up in this period were highly influenced by the experience of war, intercontinental politics and the use of technology in war. Aldous Huxley was one of the lost generation writers; like Wells he was deeply concerned about the future of human civilization given the insecure time he was living in. Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in 1931 (published in 1932), a science fiction that deals with the themes of cloning, predestined and rigid social classes, recreational drugs consumerism, regulation of knowledge, reproduction and

sexuality and the penetrating influence of urbanization, industrialization and commercialization — all dominated and puppeteered by a powerful oligarchy.

Orwell, one of Huxley's students, took his works a bit further. He had known the colonial oppression at close quarters, witnessed the rise of communism in Russia with Vladimir Lenin (1922–1924) coming into power in 1917 through Bolshevik Revolution and had grown to despise totalitarians - Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler and the atrocities committed by their slave-dog political party members. Orwell, who was greatly disturbed by these political occurrences, would later emerge as a political writer. Near the peak of his career as a writer, Orwell witnessed the escalation of political tension and the breakout of World War II (1939-1945).

By the time the war was over, Europe, which had barely recovered from the first great war, once again found itself amidst a greater carnage. The atrocities and violence, the massive casualties, the Jewish holocaust and annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had shaken the world. With this the utopian spirit, the so much vaunted trust in the potentials and possibilities of science was shattered. Those who had believed in the virtues of technology were disillusioned and reality could no more find its reflection in such ideals.

Near the end of the war in 1945, Orwell wrote *Animal Farm*— a political satire that criticized the corrupt communist political and social system mocking Stalin and other political figures through animal allegories. In 1949, Orwell came up with what would be later considered as one of his best works— *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or simply *1984*. Set in a fictional totalitarian state, the 'Orwellian' dystopia features elimination of privacy, exercise of behavior and thought control, disintegration of family and kinship ties, extreme surveillance and active state-

intelligence force, information control through historical revisionism and media regulation. Here too power is limited to only a few elite inner party members who rule with terror.

The fact that experience of war can change the way one views the world is proved in the case of Sir William Gerald Golding CBE (1911-1993). In his early career, Golding was a school teacher. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 during World War II and participated in the destruction of Bismarck and the invasion of Normandy. After the war, Golding returned to teaching, this time— with the burden of the things he had witnessed in the war. His first novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954) projects the influences of his war experiences and reflects the deep moral and spiritual crises of humanity. Although it embodies a dystopian theme, the novel's plot is different from Huxley's and Orwell's novels. In *Lord of the Flies* there is no futuristic technology; it is a story of a group of young school boys, stranded in an island and their descent into savagery.

Like many dystopian novels, readers feel puzzled and disturbed when they read Huxley, Orwell and Golding. There are several reasons as to why I have chosen these three particular novels. One is that, all the three writers are British. Although it limits the opportunity to analyze diverse backgrounds, it does provide the scope to focus on diversity within a particular region. Also, the novels have a chronological sequence; *Brave New World* was written in 1932 — the time between World War I and II, Orwell's *1984* in 1949— shortly after World War II, and *Lord of the Flies* in 1954— sometime after the world wars and during the ongoing cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Most importantly, these three works are connected, as they belong to the dystopian novel genre; yet each of them has a unique view of utopia and dystopia as well as human affairs that allow readers to relate and connect emotionally to the post-

war moral and spiritual crises. *Brave New World* is a reflection of rising hyper mechanization and industrial dystopia while *1984* gives us a view of political dystopia. Both are technotopias and are situated in fictional futuristic societies. *Lord of the Flies* is not a sci-fi but a spiritual dystopia, which provides a kind of anti-thesis and synthesis to the views of the previous two novels.

In my thesis I will explore these three novels through close reading and analyzing with literary theories. In chapter 1, I will examine *Brave New World* to show how the commercial-industrial complex of the World State is actually a reflection of Marxist theories of industrial economy, how the bourgeois exploit the masses through consumerism and other manipulative mechanisms. In chapter 2, I will discuss how Orwell portrays a very dystopian totalitarian system in *1984* to show that such systems will use Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses, as theorized by Louis Althusser, to dominate the masses and establish unquestioned power. Lastly, in chapter 3, I will argue how our inherent psychological nature may lead us to dystopian violence in the absence of the restraints of civilizing civility. The purpose of my thesis is to explore dystopia as a literary genre that is paradoxically both a consequence of human action and an inevitable outcome of material conditions. My analysis will attempt to show how these novels embody essence of the modernist anxiety about the new world and are quintessentially modern dystopian novels.

## Chapter 1

### The Roots of Modern Dystopia

“Civilization is sterilization”

—Hypnopaedic Wisdom, *Brave New World*

#### A New Age

The roots of modern dystopia lie in the history of the Industrial Revolution that originated in England in the late eighteenth century. In his book *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* Robert C. Allen states that “The Industrial Revolution was preceded by the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century ... [that] started in Italy with Galileo and ended in England with Newton” (6).<sup>2</sup> The discoveries in the fields of physics and chemistry paved the way for engineering innovations and scientific inventions. For instance: John Kay’s flying shuttle (1733), James Hargreaves’s Spinning jenny (1764) and Edmund Cartwright’s power loom (1784) contributed to the rapid development in textiles in England. However wages were high and raw materials were hard to come by in the region. This crisis was solved through colonialism; slavery in the plantations allowed cheap labour that were used produce raw materials. The raw materials would be sent back to the centre of the empire and processed to produce textile products.<sup>3</sup> By the nineteenth century the industrial revolution spread across Europe. Invention of steam engine and processing of iron would lead to rapid industrialization; to accommodate labor population

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<sup>2</sup> Allen, Robert C. *The British industrial revolution in global perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> I will come back later why it is important to mention colonialism

nearby sites would be urbanized. Such developments had already overshadowed the literary world; the pessimism regarding technology, industry and urbanization would be expressed in eighteenth century literary texts, especially poems. For example, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) reacted to the “the physically ugly and socially challenging background of the rapid pace of the industrialization of much of Britain in the closing years of the eighteenth century” (Sanders 358); in Book Eight (“The Parsonage”) of *The Excursion* he writes —

“Here a huge town, continuous and compact,  
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues  
 .....  
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires  
 Hangs permanent ...” (122-123 , 127-128).<sup>4 5</sup>

These lines are one of the earliest accounts of the industrialization and urbanization that was taking place in England. Wordsworth’s melancholic frustration with industrialization and the growing distance between people and nature contain the seeds of dystopian thoughts that would emerge in the later centuries.

Despite the romantic rejection, industrialization continued. By late nineteenth century, developments in industrial technologies led to the economic boom and Europe entered the age of the second industrial revolution. This phase was marked by the use of steel instead of iron, the generation and use of electricity, invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876 and the radio by Guglielmo Marconi in 1901. Factories started using electricity to operate

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<sup>4</sup> Sanders, Andrew. *The short Oxford history of English literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Wordsworth, William. *The Excursion by William Wordsworth*. Cornell University Press, 2007.

conveyor belts, lifts and cranes, leading to sharp increase in production. However, despite the popular conviction that “material progress would improve world conditions and solve all human problems” (Duiker 4) the urban scenario in England remained depressingly unhygienic and repulsive. <sup>6</sup> “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” which T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) started writing in around 1910, has similar but relatively more grim picture of urban London than Wordsworth’s time. The imagery of “sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells: / Streets that follow like a tedious argument ” (7-8), “The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the windowpanes” (15) and “the pools that stand in drains, / ... the soot that falls from chimneys” (17-18) mirrors the reality that Eliot witnessed during his time in England. <sup>7</sup> It is not hard to imagine that such social conditions left a persistent depressive effect on individuals living in that period, although only intellectuals had the means to be vocal about it. Earlier, although the Romantics had consciously witnessed industrialization and urbanization, the connections to the nature remained in their minds; thus they had the chance to seek solace and escape through a somewhat utopia-like imagination. For the modernists though, there was no escape; their attachment to nature had already been broken by two centuries of urbanization and industrialization; with minds filled with pessimism and despair by the somber urban life, the modern age writers manifest the spiritual crises of the age through their dystopian writings. <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Duiker, William J. *Twentieth-century World History*. 3rd ed. Southbank, Victoria, Australia: Thomson, Wadsworth, 2005. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005. Print.

<sup>8</sup> This will be expanded in the chapter 3

## Aldous Huxley

Aldous Huxley was one of the modern writers writing 20th century dystopian novels and was key in popularizing the genre. Born in 1894, Surrey, England, Huxley belonged a family with a long intellectual tradition. His father, Leonard Huxley, was also a writer whose first wife Julia Arnold was the niece of the famous poet and cultural critic Matthew Arnold. Huxley's grandfather was the renowned zoologist Thomas Henry Huxley. His brother Julian Huxley, and distant half brother Andrew Huxley were also influential biologists. Huxley studied English Literature at Balliol College in Oxford.<sup>9</sup> During World War I he volunteered to join the British Army but was rejected for his poor eyesight. He graduated later in 1916 with First Class Honors. At Eton, he taught French, where Eric Blair, who would later become the famous George Orwell, came to know him.

Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in 1931. He was influenced by H.G. Wells' science fiction, particularly *A Modern Utopia* (1905) and *Men Like Gods* (1923). Huxley was also influenced by Swiftian satire and was a satirist himself. He began writing the novel with the intention of creating a parody of the Wellsian utopian theme. In one of his letters he mentions — “I am writing a novel about the future— on the horror of the Wellsian Utopia and a revolt against it” (Huxley and Smith 348).<sup>10</sup>

Several novels had distinctive influences on the conception of *Brave New World*. *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910) by Wells was the predecessor of both Orwellian and Huxlian Dystopia which presented the themes of socialism, elite power and privilege, class hierarchy and

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<sup>9</sup> Reiff, Raychel Haugrud. *Aldous Huxley: Brave New World*. Marshall Cavendish, 2009. Pg 112.

<sup>10</sup> Huxley, Aldous, and Grover Cleveland Smith. *Letters of Aldous Huxley*. Chatto & Windus, 1969.

oppression and the use of technology to achieve it. It explores ideas such as World Order, Industrial life, hedonism, disappearance of family as an institution and children raised without it. All of these are reflected in Huxley's dystopian world. Although Huxley denied it, critics believe Yevgeny Zamyatin's futuristic *We* (1921) was also a major influence. Huxley's own family lineage in genetics and evolutionary sciences and the concept of in vitro fertilization featured in J.B.S. Haldane's *Daedalus; or, Science and the Future* (1924) were to inspire the novel's industrial cloning facility.

*Brave New World* is also a collage of many of elements, personalities and phenomena of Huxley's time. The Industrial Revolutions, the World War I, his visit to Sir Alfred Mond's Billingham Manufacturing Plant where chemicals were used in industrial processing—all appears in the novel in satirized forms. However, the strongest element that underlies the novel is the growing cosmopolitanism shaped by American consumerism, promiscuous culture, motion pictures—all reflecting the principles described in the book *My Life and Work* by Henry Ford. While on a visit to San Francisco, Huxley was struck by these emerging phenomena, and the paranoia of the Americanization of Europe and loss of individualism in the growing popular consumer culture in an evermore mechanized technological world provided the foremost motivation behind the creation of the dystopian world of *Brave New World*.

## **A Brave New World**

The “Brave New World” imagined by Huxley is an amorphous dystopia-utopia. There are advanced technologies and high living standards; but there is also a void, a kind of frustration which is suppressed by consumerism; most importantly it is in a seemingly stable and orderly

state. The stability of the World State is maintained through a system that is cyclically self-sustaining; with social predestination, genetically engineered children cloned into castes. Hypnopaedia (sleep teaching) and conscious conditioning make them internalize a fixed set of constructed values. Unquestioned compliance to authority and the system thus is ensured. Reproduction, family and intellectual pursuits are stigmatized and promiscuity, drug and entertainment consumerism are promoted. Citizens routinely consume products and obediently run a system that provides consumer services and successfully clone the next generation of social castes and hierarchy. Any deviation from this routine is not tolerated and those who deviate are exiled from the world state immediately. With the self-sustaining cogs in place, the social system operates undisturbed and perpetuates the power and influence of the shadowy oligarchy of World Controllers.

The story takes place in the A.F. 632 (After Ford). London is a thriving centre of the World State. Human beings are not born but cloned, in the industrial hatcheries. The Director of the Central London Hatching and Conditioning Centre gives a tour to a group of young students and shows them how it works. He shows them how using the Bokanovsky method, citizens of the world state are cloned into thousands of twin embryos. Even before they are born, the citizens are classified into five castes- Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon. Their embryos are bottled and moved in long conveyor belts where workers condition them, engineering each embryo genetically, adding chemicals, controlling the oxygen supply and vaccinating to fit the features of their respective castes. The Alphas are the upper caste who are given a good physique and health and privileges, while those of the lower castes are often deformed, stunted and

unattractive and are assigned to serve the upper castes, to do lowly jobs and sent to do risky and toilsome jobs in the tropical regions and the outskirts of the World State.

Despite this caste system, no one complains about this discrimination. The director explains why. The students are shown how young children are given hypnopaedia (sleep teaching) to condition their mind to the norms and values of the world state. In their sleep, audio lessons are played and they learn to be class conscious, promiscuous yet repulsive to the idea of love, family and reproduction. They are taught to believe in collectivism and being obedient to the state, be active consumers of entertainment and soma (a kind of drug) consumption and being accepting of death, and numbing critical thinking and connection with nature. The director demonstrates how children who are still attracted to books and flowers are given painful stimuli (electrocution) until they are fearful of going near them.

As the students watch hundreds of naked children engaged in erotic play, one of the world controllers, Mustapha Mond joins them and narrates the history of how the World State came into being. Meanwhile hatchery workers Lenina Crowne and Fanny Crowne have a chat about Bernard Marx in the bathroom, while Henry Foster, Assistant Predestinator and Bernard have their own conversation about Lenina.

When the shift is over, at the exit, Lenina accepts Bernard's invitation to go with him to the Savage Reservation in New Mexico. Bernard visits his friend Helmholtz Watson, a lecturer, who tells him that his intellectual potentialities at the College of Emotional Engineering are not appreciated.

Later, Bernard asks the director for permission to visit the reservation. The director who had also been to the reservation twenty years ago, blurts out to Bernard that the woman who

went with him was lost in the reservation and immediately regrets sharing the information. On the way to the reservation, Bernard learns that the director is planning to exile him to Iceland once he returns. Bernard feels angry and anxious.

At the reservation, Lenina and Bernard sees the lives of the indians, and are repulsed by its every detail. They run into a young man John, fair skinned and always quoting Shakespeare, and his mother Linda. As John narrates his tragic life, how Linda is hated among the Indians for willing to sleep with every man, how he had learned to read using *The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, and had grown up in isolation. Bernard realizes he is the son of the Director and Linda is the woman who got lost twenty years ago. Planning to counter the director, he contacts Mustapha Mond and arranges to bring John and Linda back. He offers John to visit London, who accepts the invitation with much excitement to see the “Brave New World.”

When Bernard returns, Director attempts to humiliate him but Linda and John are brought in, who creates such a scene that the director runs away in humiliation and resigns. Learning about the event people show curiosity about John 'the savage' and Bernard and Lenina become popular overnight. Bernard exploits his newly found popularity to sleep with more women and enjoy the company of high profile citizens, while he shows John the technotopian London. John is disappointed and grows weary with each passing day. Lenina on the other hand has fallen in love with John, wants to be with him but cannot understand why he acts strangely when she is with him. People are annoyed with Bernard's increasing arrogance and when one evening John refuses to show up, Bernard's importance is gone. Meanwhile, Lenina decides to confess her love to John, who excitedly responds. Yet, Lenina, who had been conditioned to be promiscuous

repulses John with her sudden sexual advances. This is when, John learns that his mother is dying and rushes to the hospital. In the meantime, Linda dies from the constant consumption of soma and realizing it, John violently tries to destroy the soma ration in the hospital. Helmholtz who had been discussing Shakespeare with John and had begun to like him, rushes to join the sudden act of revolt and is arrested along with John and Bernard.

The three are taken to Mond's Residence, where John is astonished to see that Mond has read Shakespeare too. Mond explains that he understands John's sentiments but everything is being done for the sake of stability. Happiness can only be achieved at the cost of art, science and religion and so the world has to embrace ignorance instead of truth. Helmholtz happily chooses to be exiled to the Falkland islands and pursue intellectualism. Bernard receives the same sentence. John argues with Mond about soma induced escapism and the philosophy of social harmony but unable to accept his views chooses to live away from civilization.

In an island, by a lighthouse, John seeks purification through self-infliction but the curious media and World State citizens continue to tail him. As they insist him on spectacular whipping, Lenina appears and approaches him. John attempts to attack her but the frenzy ends in an orgy. Later John wakes up and realizes what had happened. The curious spectators return the next day and find him hanging.

### **Marxist Theory: The Bourgeois and the Proletariat**

*Brave New World* gives us a perspective of the new world economy, industrialization, urbanization, science, consumerism, and class hierarchy in a futuristic world yet much of it reflects the economic, social and political theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxist

theories, in general, explore the class conflicts between the Bourgeoisie and the proletariat centered around the context of industrialization and economic system. In the communist manifesto, Marx and Engels write “The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles” (Marx and Engels I).<sup>11</sup> They describe how the “The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society” has not escaped class antagonism but has established “new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones” (ibid). The feudal system could not compete with the ‘new markets’ because manufacturing systems had replaced earlier modes of production. The division of labour has replaced single person workmanship because industries could produce much more under a single unit of factory. However as the “steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production[,] ... [the] place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois” (Marx and Engels I).

The bourgeoisie constantly need to revolutionize instruments of production for the sake of their existence and hence the relations of production need to be kept in place. To do this they needed “uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation” and constantly expand markets or the demand for products. In seeking expansion the bourgeoisie attempts to exploit the world-market and consequently give rise to a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption. In doing so, Marx and Engels suggest, “even the most barbarian” are drawn into civilization.

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<sup>11</sup> Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. The communist manifesto. Penguin, 2002.

Thus “Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers” happens and the bourgeoisie becomes even more powerful. To perpetuate the scenario “social and political constitution adapted to it, ... by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class” (ibid). Marx and Engels imply that “Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property” conjure a society that has “gigantic means of production and of exchange.” This leads to an “epidemic of over-production.” In a world where there is —

too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property.

(Marx and Engels I.)

The question then the philosophers ask is — “how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises?” (ibid)

Huxley's novel give a curious answer to this question. The solution sounds utopian, a nearly perfect scenario. In the novel, the World Controllers are the bourgeoisie, and everyone else is the proletariat. The system gives the proletariat what they want: money, products and happiness, and so apparently most of them have nothing to complain about. Yet, class control is

maintained due to their lack of awareness. Only a few characters in the novel realize this and try to resist, but since the bourgeois is so powerful, the attempts go in vain.

*Brave New World* is a story of progress on the surface but it is also a story of the sterilization of those factors that make a human 'human.' In this chapter, I will explore how the major mechanisms of the World State society correspond to theories which forcibly sterilize the spirit and essence of humanity for the sake of stability — an excuse of corporate totalitarianism, making the novel a quintessential dystopian work.

### **Caste, Conditioning and Hegemony**

In 1859, Charles Darwin published his influential book *On the Origin of Species* in which he suggested that based on his observations all species of living organisms develop through the process of natural selection; in the struggle for survival weak species get obliterated while the strongest survive; thus through competition, reproduction and survival of the fittest, a species evolves into a better, stronger one. This ground breaking controversial theory came to be known as Darwinism. Huxley's family heritage was filled with supporters of Darwinism and Huxley seems to be influenced by the idea. His grandfather and Wells' mentor T.H. Huxley was known as "Darwin's Bulldog" for being an avid supporter of Darwin's theories. Darwinism paved the way for another term called Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism takes the idea of Darwinism — the survival of the fittest and philosophizes it in the context of human society. Social darwinism is said to have motivated or enhanced many subsequent political ideologies including eugenics, racism, imperialism, fascism, Nazism and unfettered capitalism.<sup>12</sup> Social Darwinists like Herbert

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<sup>12</sup> The dystopian effects of Fascism and Nazism are discussed in Chapter 2.

Spencer believed that the worthy and competent citizens have the right to wealth and power and the weak and incompetent should be deprived of such privileges, leading to a better and stronger society. Francis Galton took this a bit farther by proposing the concept of Eugenics. Eugenics or selective breeding is the ideology that seeks to increase sexual reproduction between people with desirable traits and produce offsprings with better genes. The idea was accompanied by Negative Eugenics that proposed reducing the biological reproduction among 'weak and unimpressive' population, and even to 'sterilize' them for the extinction of unwanted genes in humans. A more extreme version of Eugenics is Dysgenics which advocates collecting and cultivating defective genes to intentionally produce a particularly less capable or deformed species of human beings.

The economy of Huxley's dystopian world is based on the industrial production of human beings which uses eugenics and dysgenics simultaneously. The novel begins in the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre where the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning introduces a group of young students to its mechanisms. He describes how the process begins in the fertilizing room, where excised ovaries are kept alive, "passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity" then transferred to porous receptacle which is "immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa" and then lifted out after ten minutes for reexamination and continued till all the ova were fertilized and sent into the incubators (Huxley ch.1). The Alphas and Betas remain bottled for better treatment because they will later enjoy privileged positions in society and their numbers are kept less. However the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons who will perform risky and peripheral jobs need to be mass produced. So they go through Bokanovky's Process, an advanced cloning method which the director excitedly refers to as the "the major instruments of social stability!" (Huxley ch.1).

Henry Foster, an employee at the hatchery, who is invited by the director to join and explain the process boasts that the hatchery holds the record of producing sixteen thousand and twelve identical eggs from a single ovary. The director and Foster's attitude and comments about a large portion of future citizens create the first dystopian impression that unsettles the readers. Foster continues to explain that once the quantity of fertilized eggs required for each caste's population is ready, they are sent to the Social Predestination Room for decanting. Foster demonstrates how some hormones are injected in doses to create freemartins who are 'Guaranteed sterile,' how the blood surrogate pumps oxygen sufficient for the upper castes, but below par to artificially stunt lower cast embryos. He explains that many of the lower caste embryos are conditioned by using hard X-rays and heat endurance because they will be sent to work in the tropics to be miners, acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Lenina, whom the group comes across, also explains how she conditions the worker embryos to be immune to typhoid and sleeping sickness. The students see how future chemical workers are trained to tolerate "lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine" and predestined rocket engineers are conditioned to endure constant rotation to perform maintenance tasks in mid-air. Their social predestination is a manifestation of eugenics and dysgenics in action, used purposely for supplying labor for different types of work.

The aim of all conditioning, as the director sums up is to make people "like their un-escapable social destiny" (Huxley ch.1). As outrageous as it might seem, strangely, no one reacts to the idea; even those who are in the lower castes do not complain about the harsh discrimination they have been subjected to. This is because their thinking patterns have been shaped to see it as something commonplace. Half the task had already been done by creating biological, physical inequality before the citizens are even born. The rest is done when they are

born. From birth onwards the babies are psychologically conditioned, educated and reared till a certain age, all through a scientific method and in lesser but nonetheless industrial environment. In chapter 2, in the Infant Nurseries and Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Room, the director makes yet another demonstration to the students that shocks the readers. He orders to unloading of a group of infants and shows them flowers and books. The items immediately attract the infants who begin to approach with “little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure” (Huxley ch.2) and start to play. Upon the director’s signal, a violent exploding sound is made and an alarm starts shrilling at high pitch, all of which is so sudden and terrifying that the babies start screaming in terror. Moreover, with a second gesture from the director, the head nurse presses a second lever, and the babies are electrocuted. The Novel provides a very graphic description of the scene—

The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires. (Huxley ch.2)

Once this inhuman torturous act is over, the babies are relieved a little, still sobbing and yelping. When they are offered books and flowers again they no longer approach them but are now fearful and shrinking. This technique of social conditioning is based on the Motivational Hedonism/Psychological Hedonism as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud, who is also known as the founder of psychoanalytic theory, proposed that the human psyche is made up of three segments— the id, superego and ego. The id is driven by instinct and desire, the ego is the rational part of the mind that responds to id’s desires but acts according to reality and

the moral part that forms one's conscience is the superego. Freud coined the term 'pleasure principle' (an equivalent of psychological hedonism) arguing that the id's instinct that motivates conscious action is based on pleasurable and painful external stimuli; he writes in *The Ego and the Id* — "Sensations of a pleasurable kind generate no pressures at all; unpleasurable sensations, on the other hand, exert pressure to an extreme degree. They press for change..." (Freud ch II).<sup>13</sup> In simple what this implies is that a child instinctually seeks pleasurable stimuli, but when confronted with painful stimuli it learns from it and tries to avoid any future occurrences of similar painful stimuli. Freud argues that "all knowledge derives from external perception. When thinking becomes highly cathected, individual thoughts really are perceived – just as if they came from outside – and are therefore regarded as true" (Freud ch. II).<sup>14</sup> The Director explains to the visiting students that after "two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson" the babies will "grow up with an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers... [and] be safe from books and botany all their lives" (Huxley ch.2).

The second method of psychological conditioning is the hypnopaedia or sleep teaching. The principle of sleep teaching is inspired by Ivan Pavlov's experiments on dogs, where he discovered that the subjects exhibit conditioned responses to conditioned stimuli when the conditioned stimuli are applied without any external interference. In the novel, the director shares the historical background of how a little boy accidentally memorized one of G.B. Shaw's lectures while sleeping with a radio turned on the previous night. Imitating the discovery of sleep-teaching principle with improvisation, the hatchery and conditioning centers place babies

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<sup>13</sup> Freud, Sigmund, John Reddick, and Mark Edmundson. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

<sup>14</sup> cathexis is the concentration of mental energy on one particular person, idea, or object (especially to an unhealthy degree), source: google

in long rows of cots in a huge silent rooms and recorded ‘hypnopaedic wisdoms’ are played in subject wise sessions under their pillows. The hypnopaedic wisdoms, often referred to by the characters in numerous places of the novel, are injected as prescriptive values that condition the mind of the listener to hate nature, love civilization, accept the caste system, be an active consumer of soma (drug), hate family and parenthood, be collectively promiscuous but avoid passionate romantic attachments and accept death as natural phenomenon. Here is a description of elementary class consciousness session which is assimilated into the minds of unconscious babies. The children learn that—

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they’re so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m a Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. (Huxley ch.2)

This excerpt implies that the beta child is being taught to like his caste while forming an aversion and hence lack of motivation to envy and desire to belong to other castes. The same is for all the members of each casts. Continuous repetition of this process leads to the internalization of the hypnopaedic wisdoms, enabling the world state authority— the totalitarian world controllers form effective hegemony over the masses of all five castes and their authority remains unquestioned and unchallenged. Thus the class envy among the five castes, and the class conflict between all the castes as proletariat and the world controllers as the bourgeois is pacified to minimum. We will see shortly how this pacification effect helps spin the other cogs of World State’s economic and social system.

## Family and Promiscuity

“Civilization is sterilization” — goes one of the most prominent hypnopaedic sayings in the World State. This simple one line phrase represents what its civilization is about. In the World State the ideas and actions associated family, love, attachment, parenthood, pregnancy and home are considered taboo. The hypnopaedia sessions teach the citizens that parenthood is a shameful thing. In explaining the pessimism towards family Mond refers to Freud, as ‘Our Freud’ who “had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life.”(Huxley ch.3) “The world was full of fathers—was therefore full of misery; full of mothers—therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity” (Huxley ch.3) he comments. Pointing a finger at motherhood, monogamy and romance as the root of the problems he argues that because of these, the “pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable [and]... didn’t allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy” (Huxley ch. 3). Motherhood, according to Mond, was an obstacle to tending wheels which could cause starvation of many those who depended on it. In chapter 3, when Mustapha Mond describes Home and family systems before Ford, it seems almost nightmarish experience to live in a home and with family members. Mond tells the students, that home was a space with—

a few small rooms, stiflingly over-inhabited by a man, by a periodically teeming woman, by a rabble of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space; an understerilized prison; darkness, disease, and smells. ... a rabbit hole, a midden, hot with the frictions of tightly packed life, reeking with emotion. ... suffocating intimacies ... dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of

the family group! [where] Maniacally, the mother ...brooded over her children like a cat over its kittens; (Huxley ch. 3)

The atmosphere of home and the act of breastfeeding is made to seem so pornographic that the students shudder when Mond describes it. People of the World State consider the words “viviparous mother” so obscene that they flinch every time someone mentions it. At Santa Fe, the warden tries to make Lenina uncomfortable by informing her— “revolting as that may seem...remember that, in the Reservation, children still are born” (Huxley ch. 6). Although Lenina, who had “inconspicuously swallowed half a gramme of soma” does not feel the attempted gravity of the comment at the time, she does get to see it herself when she arrives at the reservation but forgetfully leaves the pesthouse without the supply of soma. “The spectacle of two young women giving breast to their babies made her blush and turn away her face” because she had “never seen anything so indecent in her life” (Huxley ch. 6). When John tells Bernard and Lenina says that “Linda was his mother ... the word ...[make] Lenina look uncomfortable” (Huxley ch. 6). Even Bernard, who had been aware that the Director is planning to exile him to Iceland, finds a solution when he realizes that John is the Director’s son, and Linda had been the woman whom he had lost twenty years ago. By capitalizing on the taboo associated with parenthood, Bernard counters the directors plan to send him off to Iceland. He returns with John and Linda, and dramatically summons them in front of everyone at the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. John makes a scene by calling the director his father and the spectators laugh hysterically at the director who himself is horrified at the knowledge of his fatherhood. The director feels so humiliated that he resigns immediately afterwards and never returns to the Centre again (Huxley ch.11).

The citizens of the World State, particularly the Alphas and Betas, are trained to be open about their sexuality and promiscuous behavior. At the hatchery and conditioning centre, younglings are taught to engage in erotic play from a very early age. In chapter 5, at the solidarity service, everyone sings the community song which includes the verse—

“Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun,  
Kiss the girls and make them One.  
Boys at one with girls at peace;  
Orgy-porgy gives release.” (Huxley ch.5)

The word Orgy-porgy is repeated multiple times by the main characters in the novel. The quoted verse is the representative of the extent of hedonistic behavior encouraged by the society of the world state. Fanny and Lenina discuss about ‘having’ men and Lenina tells her about having been with Henry Foster, Benito Hoover. Linda cannot stop being with Malpais men even though their women attack her and keep her isolated. Bernard, himself, is initially frustrated with his lower caste-like physique and has difficulty ‘having’ other women, but later becomes arrogantly sexual when he rises to fame as the guardian and guide of John. Afterwards Lenina too sleeps with high profile celebrities, including the Arch-Community-Songster who presents her with a Golden T locket.

It seems rather conflicting that although pregnancy, parenthood and family is subjected to so much stigmatization, promiscuity is promoted with surprising importance. People of the world state are allowed to be with as many sexual partners they want to be with, yet no one seems to be interested in remaining together for long. Everyone is discouraged about forming emotional

attachment with the people they 'have' and the although the concept of love is discussed and researched on, citizens of World State do not fall in love with each other.

However, considering the supply-demand principle it becomes clear why this paradox is so perfect for maintaining the economical stability of World State. The World State is an industrial state that produces thousands of cloned Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons to operate industrial production. What do they produce? Contraceptives, Sex-hormone chewing-gums, Violent Passion Surrogates, Medicines, Pregnancy Surrogates and the most essential daily rations of Soma. The economical base of the World State is dependent on the production of these commodities and without enough consumers the system will fall apart. Thus while inferior castes produce commodities, the demand for such commodities is created among the Alpha and Beta citizens. For example, pregnancy is banned and stigmatized, but people are still encouraged to engage in regular sexual activities. The more sex they have the more they will need contraceptives and be a regular customer of such products. However, if they form romantic attachment, and form a family, they may still engage in sexual activities, but the commitment will stop promiscuous behavior and the need to have children will lead to less consumption of contraceptives. The World State authority see individualism as a threat to stability and thus promotes collectivism. Promiscuity plays its part in creating collective consciousness. It destabilizes romantic bonding and reduces the chances of individuals remaining attached as couple and form family bonding. By banning families the individuals are compartmentalized, and this makes them dependent on collectivism and collectivist system. Also, if love and family is established one will be affectionate towards their children and might not allow them to be cloned for inhuman purposes. If one feels their family is sufficient enough to produce offsprings,

the artificial industrial production of human beings will not be needed. Thus, institutions like marriage, family are deemed threats to the process of production and consequently the so called 'civilization' of the World State. To prevent this the totalitarian authority ensures that all unwanted emotions and bonding are sterilized.

### **Consumerism and Anti-intellectualism**

The last and most effective strategy that the bourgeoisie use against the proletariat to keep them subordinated to their commands is to systemically limit the latter's thinking capabilities. Marxist theory suggests that the bourgeoisie often does this by keeping the proletariat busy earning wages in lieu of maximum work hours. They receive their wages at the end of the day but spend it by the following morning and thus have to return to work again and the process is repeated. This same method is used by the world controllers. In chapter 16, John questions Mond about the work hours of the lower castes; in reply Mond says — ““Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours” but it will only lead to “Unrest and a large increase in the consumption of soma” (Huxley ch.16). Mond sounds almost convincing when he says “For the sake of the labourers; it would be sheer cruelty to afflict them with excessive leisure” (ibid). Marxist theories also speculate that being trapped in the fixed routine, the proletariat lose the scope and energy to pursue intellectual interest. Huxley's vision of dystopian World State takes this idea a bit further. The conditioning effectively instills a dislike for books among the children and the lower castes are already too busy performing menial tasks so they do not get the opportunity to practice intellectuality. However, the Alphas and Betas who are assigned to some form of intellectual tasks with limited freedom to practice

intellectuality is where the risk lies. While performing their duties some members of these upper castes get too curious and motivated to cross the given limit and seek knowledge beyond it. The controllers look out for —

idea[s] that might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make them lose their faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good and take to believing, instead, that the goal was somewhere beyond, somewhere outside the present human sphere; that the purpose of life was not the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge. (Huxley ch.12)

Although, the World State is a technotopia, it is not progressive. All pursuit of intellectuality is halted at a certain level, but is allowed nonetheless so the citizens are under the illusion of scientific progress. Mond explains to John that the “science [of the World State] is just a cookery book, with an orthodox theory of cooking that nobody’s allowed to question, and a list of recipes that mustn’t be added to except by special permission from the head cook” (Huxley ch.16). He refers to himself as the head cook, implying that the controllers are the supreme class and hold all the power and knowledge. They control the progress of science and any pursuit of knowledge that threatens their power and authority is erased with precision and those who pursue such a path are isolated. While reviewing a report called “A New Theory of Biology” Mond finds that “the author’s mathematical treatment of the conception of purpose is novel and highly ingenious, but heretical and, so far as the present social order is concerned, dangerous and potentially subversive” (ibid). Despite knowing that it was a brilliant piece of work he denies permission to

publish it. Instead he decides to exile the author. Helmholtz Watson, who also shows interest in pursuing intellectuality beyond the restrictions at his job receives the same sentence.

In his poem “Dover Beach” (1867) Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) expresses a sense of frustration with the growing decline of the previously existing influence of religion. It mirrors his anxiety with the disappearance of religious values that once held the society together. Rapid industrialization led to a new trend of anti-intellectualism which Arnold termed philistinism. The Philistines of postindustrial-revolution urban generation were disconnected from intellectuality, art, aesthetics and spirituality. The World State thrives because of Philistinism. It is the mechanism that perpetuates the influence of industrial production, capitalist economy and urban consumerism. Soma the most important consumer product in the world state enhances the sensualities but clouds people’s thinking capabilities by creating “a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds” (Huxley ch.5). Citizen’s are conditioned to consume Soma, and seek refuge in Soma holidays whenever there is an unwanted situation or any troubling thought. In doing so, they become so dependent on the consumption of soma that as long as the supply is there they do not feel the need to think of anything else. Besides soma there are other appliances available — “Liquid air, television, vibro-vacuum massage, radio, boiling caffeine solution, hot contraceptives, ... different kinds of scent ... synthetic music plant, Escalator-Squash Racket Courts, Obstacle and Electro-magnetic Golf” — things which are more than one needs. There are spaces offering entertainment services like Scent and Color Organ, Synthetic Music and Super-Singing, Synthetic-Talking, Colored, Stereoscopic Feelies. There is “no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think” (Huxley ch.3). As long as the philistine generation of World State is dependent on the culture of promiscuity, Soma and Feely

consumption, intellectuality remains unpracticed by the masses. Thus intellectual sterilization becomes the most effective way of maintaining stability and order in Huxley's dystopia.

### **Roots of Modern Dystopia**

To summarize, the above discussion, the new global capitalist ventures and hyper mechanized industrial revolution led to many changes in society. Urbanization, commercialization, new consumer culture driven lifestyles made great promises and seemed quite utopian. Yet, it was a shift from many other important things. Newer classes emerged but the bourgeois-proletariat tension remained. In the name of civilization, eugenics, dysgenics and sterilizing activities were carried out by scientists who were motivated by commercial interests. Families started to disintegrate, religious beliefs declined, natural habitats were destroyed and were replaced by settlements, philistinism replaced the old high cultures, intellectual practices were less valued and people found them busy with fancy consumer products and cheap, depthless entertainments. The roots of modern dystopia lie in these phenomena. To the newer generations the world seemed as perfect as it did to the masses of the World State— the epitome of civilization, a utopia. Yet those who could see the chaos and ignorance underneath the neat and clean surface of the so called 'new civilization' like John, felt as alienated as the noble savage did in the brave new world he so much anticipated to see. John is the voice of a romantic trapped in a lifeless sterilized concrete jungle. It is through the eyes of John, we realize that the seemingly perfect utopian civilization was actually a massive industrial entity, kept alive by the hegemonized minds acting as proletariats while the a handful of corporate bourgeois enjoy its

fruits. The realization of this truth and the inability to change it is what makes *Brave New World* a profoundly dystopic reflection of 20th century civilization.

## Chapter 2

### The Rise of Political Dystopia

“Two and Two Make Five”

— Winston Smith, *1984*

#### Europe in Political Crisis

In the first half of the 20th century, Europe went through severe political crises. Diplomatic tension among European countries led to the break out of the First World War that began in 1914 and lasted till 1918. During this time, Allied and Central Power fronts caused massive destructions and casualties for both sides. After the war, the European economy stumbled as it tried to recover from the financial crisis and damages to infrastructures. Moreover, due to casualties during the war, many families lost their male, earning members and demographic conditions were critical. Amidst social crises and political void, radical nationalism found itself in the spotlight and was deemed as a perfect solution for the restoration and progress of the nations involved.

From 1918 onwards, a number of European countries, which were seriously affected by the consequences of the war, saw the rise of key political leaders and parties capitalizing on ultranationalism. These included Germany, Italy, Spain. The NSDAP or the Nazi Party in Germany gained popularity under Adolph Hitler who opposed the Treaty of Versailles which the country was forced to sign under pressure from the Allied victors. Within a short time, Hitler would rise as a Dictator with total command of Nazi Germany. In Italy, Benito Mussolini

introduced Fascism; his National Fascist Party sought to expand its territories by promoting Italian Nationalism. Meanwhile, in 1917, the Bolsheviks, spearheaded by Vladimir Lenin, successfully managed to overthrow the Tsarist autocracy and established the Soviet Union. Following Lenin's death Joseph Stalin claimed power; in order to transform agrarian soviet societies into industrial power, he introduced "Socialism in One Country" in 1924 (Carr 23), suppressing Lenin and his opposer Leon Trotsky's views and establishing a totalitarian regime in the country.<sup>15</sup> Spain came under the command of General Francisco Franco who emerged victorious in the Spanish Civil War and started a semi-fascist rule. With the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy political tension between European powers started to become intense. Different diplomatic alliances between countries connected one another to different conflicts. Japan's 1930 invasion of China affected their respective allies in Europe. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Many political allies, particularly the United States and Soviet Union joined in and another massive war broke out all over the world. (Weinberg *A world at arms: A global history of World War II*).<sup>16</sup>

Like the industrial revolution, these political events had influences on the contemporary literary world. Intellectuals were concerned about the changes in the political scenario across Europe. A number of thinkers and writers published dystopian novels that were themed around political issues arising in the late 19th and early 20th century. One of the earliest in this genre, Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908) features Oligarchical rule, revolution and socialism. H.G. Wells' *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910) which was a major influence on later works also deals with

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<sup>15</sup> Carr, Edward Hallett. "Socialism in one country, 1924-1926." (1961).

<sup>16</sup> Weinberg, Gerhard L. *A world at arms: A global history of World War II*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

socialism, revolution, elitism and oppression of the masses. *We* (1924) by Yevgeny Zamyatin explores the idea of mass surveillance and secret police in a panopticon-like glass structured futuristic nation. Franz Kafka conceptualizes his 1925 novel *The Trial* around the notion of political authoritarianism that does not have to answer to anyone for its actions. Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (1937) presents the dangers of anti-intellectualism and elimination of individualism. Published in the same year, Katharine Burdekin *Swastika Night* (1937) imagines the dark possibilities if the Nazis emerged victorious. Similarly, George Orwell writes *1984* (1949) adopting almost a 'Swiftian satire' style (Rodden 147) to criticize Stalinism and Nazism.<sup>17</sup> All of these novels have common elements and imagine the possibilities of future societies and their political conditions by reflecting on the dark sides of contemporary political reality. In other words, these novels blend the theme of politics with with dystopian imagination, giving rise to the novels of 'political dystopia' genre. I intend to argue why political dystopias are so important as a literary genre and why should they should be studied to understand how modern oppressive political systems operate. For this purpose, I see Orwell's *1984* a perfect fit as it covers most of the scenarios in which political oppressions can take place.

### **A Political Writer**

*1984*, till this day, is considered as one of the most interesting descriptions of political dystopia. To understand a text and its context it is important to understand the author as well. Orwell, who claimed himself to be a political writer, wanted to "make political writing into an

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<sup>17</sup> Rodden, John. *The Cambridge companion to George Orwell*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

art” (Orwell “Why I Write” 5).<sup>18</sup> Orwell was born in, Motihari, Bengal— a part of 1903 British India, and his real name was Eric Arthur Blair. Although he was engaged with writing while he was a student at the Eton College, the maturing of his political beliefs began roughly during the five years (1922-27) when he served as an imperial policeman in Burma (Rodden 2). During his stay, he witnessed “the dirty work of Empire at close quarters” (Orwell “Shooting an Elephant” 53). Although he grew “disgusted ruling over people who despised him” (Rodden 2) in his words he was “all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British” (Orwell “Shooting an Elephant” 53).<sup>19</sup> *Burmese Days* (1934) is one of his earliest notable works and was inspired by his experiences in Burma. After leaving his job in Burma, Orwell pursued writing as a career and during the following four or five years developed sympathies for the poor working class people. Such experiences made him critical about capitalism and led him closer to embracing Socialist values (Rodden 3). In 1937, Orwell was in Spain fighting on the Republican side as a member of the POUM in Catalonia where his experiences led him to develop “a pervasive distrust of communism” (Rodden 5) and “an intense dislike of Marxist bickering” (Rodden 4). While the communal living there in a classless group increased his fascination for Socialism, the betrayal of the revolution by Stalin’s agents led him to take a solid stand against Stalin. Although Spain “embittered Orwell and made him pessimistic about the future ... his faith in socialism remained strong”; he was “disgusted by ... [the] blind hero worship of Stalin’s Soviet Union” and by the time he joined the Independent Labour Party Orwell realized what he was against — “Fascism in all its forms” (Rodden 5-6). The Second World War added more to Orwell’s pessimism about

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<sup>18</sup> Orwell, George. *Why I write*. Penguin UK, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Orwell, George. *Shooting an elephant*. Penguin UK, 2003.

European politics. His motivation for political writing had been building up over the years, enriching his potentials for blending political views with literary art. During his two years at the BBC Orwell started to pick up the final elements that he would later include in *1984*. In 1945, same year WWII ended, Orwell published *Animal Farm* (1945) and became famous within a very short time. After the novel's success, Orwell started working on *1984* where he poured all his experiences, pessimism, criticism and political views accumulated during his life.

### **Orwell's *1984***

The novel is written in the third person narrative voice describing its protagonist Winston Smith living in Airstrip One—a part of Oceania. Winston is a member of the Outer Party and works in the Ministry of Truth. The Party rules by the ideology— Ingsoc (English Socialism) and is led by Big Brother, a dictator who does not appear in public but whose face could be seen everywhere in the posters. In every corner, there are telescreens, a kind of one way surveillance device that observes everyone's activities. Children spy on their parents and a secret-police called the Thought Police operates to track down followers of Emmanuel Goldstein and the Brotherhood— a faction that wants to overthrow Big Brother. The party regularly arranges hate rituals and constantly broadcasts propaganda against Goldstein and people are told that Oceania is always at war with either Eastasia or Eurasia (the other two states of the Orwellian World). It also works at establishing a new language called Newspeak and intends to manipulate and alter historical records to fit the party's interest. Winston, being a party member and an employee at the Ministry, knows what happens behind the scenes and is disgusted and frustrated by the party's oppression. He hates the party and wants to see the downfall of Big Brother. However,

the fear of being reported and being taken away by the Thought Police prevents him from talking about it with anyone.

One day, Winston is approached by a girl named Julia at the ministry (whom he had earlier thought to be a member of the Thought police) and the two secretly start an affair. Since any romantic relationship which is not in the interest of party is prohibited, they continue to meet in a room above a store owned by an elderly Mr. Charrington in a proles (Proletariat) district. As the affair continues, Winston is invited, one day, by O'Brien, an inner party member, to his apartment. Earlier Winston had a feeling that O'Brien felt the same as he did, and in his chamber, O'Brien confirms that he works for the Brotherhood. He asks how far Winston is willing to go and then gives him Emmanuel Goldstein's book. Back in their secret room, as Winston reads the book to a sleepy Julia, soldiers suddenly barge in. It is revealed that Mr. Charrington was a member of the Thought Police who'd been observing them from the beginning. The two are separated and taken to the Ministry of Love. There Winston learns that O'Brien was never a member of the Brotherhood and that he only pretended to be one in order to catch them red-handed. Winston is tortured and told that Big Brother does not exist and it is only the party that rules absolutely. Winston breaks down, but he still holds onto his love for Julia. He is taken to Room 101, and is threatened to be fed to rats, his worst fear. In the end, Winston is fully brainwashed and no longer loves Julia but only Big Brother.

### **Ideology and Repressive State Apparatuses**

Even a brief look at the novel suggests that it is about suppression of the freedom of ordinary people by power hungry elites who seek to perpetuate their political power by

eliminating possible sources of threats. The dystopian conditions in the novel, the relationship of power between classes, state and subjects is better understood if we analyze them in the light of Louis Althusser's theories of Ideology and State. In his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" Althusser provides his theory of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and interpellation.<sup>20</sup> Althusser proposes that "in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces" (Althusser 128) and in order to be able to produce it must produce 1. the forces of production and 2. the relations of production. Karl Marx saw the structure of a society being made up of 'levels'; the forces and relations of production constitute the base (infrastructure) and the superstructure is made up of politico-legal (law and state) and ideological (different ideologies such as religious/ethical/legal) elements (Althusser 134). In the Communist Manifesto, State is described as a repressive apparatus which operates via police, army, prison and other means in line with the interest of the elite ruling class. As Althusser clarifies —"the objective of class struggle concerns State power" (141) and "the State (and its existence in its apparatus) has no meaning except as a function of State power" (140). He then offers his theory about the categorization of apparatuses used by State power. Firstly, he calls Government, Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts and the Prisons etc. Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which function primarily 'by violence.' However, only violence is not enough since the subjects may bend in the face of it but still harbor grudges against the state. To prevent this, the state must control the thoughts that may go against state interests and so it employs different ideologies or rather as Althusser calls them— Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) which

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<sup>20</sup> Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation)." *The anthropology of the state: A reader* 9 (2006): 86.

function primarily by reproducing the ideology that keeps power positions intact. In Althusser's definition "Ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (158). When ideology takes control of a subject, he/she submits to the State power without any resistance, physically or intellectually. Althusser calls this 'Interpellation' which make the subjects behave as the state asks. When this is achieved the conditions of production are secured, and no surveillance is needed since the subject govern themselves and state power is perpetuated automatically. This is the ultimate point of Orwell's dystopia; that if a totalitarian system gains enough power to control the mind of its subjects, the power elite could rule perpetually without any tangible or intangible threats. In this chapter, I will use *1984* to show how the elements corresponding to ISAs and RSAs make the novel not just political but also quintessentially dystopian.

## **Symbols**

From the beginning of the novel we learn that Airstrip One is full of posters depicting the image of Big Brother — "an enormous face, ... of a handsome man of about forty-five, with a large, black moustache" (Orwell *1984* ch1). It is obvious that the description of age and facial features resemble all three dictators Orwell despised— Stalin, Hitler, and Franco. The face accompanied with the words "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" seems to have an uncomfortable effect on everyone, which we know through Winston's thoughts. The face of Big Brother is a symbol that serves several purposes on different levels. At the surface level, it manipulates the masses into believing that they have a leader. It serves as a symbol of authority and has a general convincing effect that the nation has a guardian and regardless of hardships

there is a someone to look up to. However, we know that there is no Big Brother, it is merely a creation of the Party to rule from the shadows. Big Brother is not the only symbol in the novel. There is Emmanuel Goldstein and 'The Brotherhood' who symbolize the counter-authoritarian force that threaten to cause the downfall of Big Brother and the party. We know that it is yet another creation of the Party to spread a false loop of information to trick everyone into believing that the state is under threat and reaffirms the need for Big Brother's existence and in the process delegates power to the party in an alternate way. Goldstein is of course another satirical picture by Orwell to mirror Leon Trotsky and The Party can be considered a real life reference to the 'Communist Party of the Soviet Union' under Stalin if not Hitler's NSDAP (Nazi Party). Like Big Brother's Party, these political parties drew their power from their leaders while antagonizing opposing political figures.

Political symbolism, fictional or real, works at deep levels as ISAs. A symbol is made up of 'Denotations' or literal meaning and 'Connotations' or implied meaning. Roland Barthes, in introducing the concept of 'Myth' theorizes that it is 'a peculiar system' that continuously combines a sign (made up of a signifier (i.e. an image) and signified (i.e. its interpretation)) and another signified into another sign (113).<sup>21</sup> The process of signification combines denotation and connotation to produce ideology and by learning first the denotations and then the connotations we become interpellated by ideology (Silverman 218).<sup>22</sup> Symbols then become representative of a political ideology and by recognizing the symbol we recognize the ideology. Big Brother's face is the representative of Ingsoc and similarly the Swastika became from a Sanskrit symbol of

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<sup>21</sup> Barthes, Roland. "Myth today." *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* 3 (2006).

<sup>22</sup> Silverman, Kaja. *The subject of semiotics*. Oxford University Press, 1984.

good and wellbeing to a representative of German Nationalism and Nazi power during World War II. Althusser's theory states that "the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but ... also function secondarily by repression" (Althusser 145). The Nazi Swastika induced fear into those who were targeted by the party, making it partly a Repressive Apparatus for many but was predominantly ideological. Till this day, it is a signifier of ruthless holocausts, war atrocities and blind chauvinism and is stigmatized in many cultures.

### **Media and Slogans**

The media works as an important Ideological State Apparatus when controlled by state authority. In *1984* the Party's propaganda is the only thing that is shown on the telescreens. The contents of the oneway broadcasts are determined by the party, which include the achievements of Big Brother/Party, the volatile status of war with Eastasia/Eurasia, anti-Goldstein publicity and Big Brothers face accompanied by the slogan — "WAR IS PEACE / FREEDOM IS SLAVERY/ IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell *1984* ch1). This tripartite slogan itself is a powerful ISA. The crafty 'doublethink' slogan has a confusing effect, yet in a satirical way it shows how the state can rule over the masses. War is peace because war invokes the sense of nationalism and nationalism invokes the implications that anyone against the interest of the nation is an enemy. War must be waged to keep the nation safe and peaceful and thus it acts as a unifying cause of nationalism. The slogan, 'War is Peace' is an ISA because by recognizing the slogan people identify themselves as brothers or 'comrades' and fall under the spell of nationalist ideology. 'Freedom is Slavery' works similarly. In O'Brien's words —

“... power belongs to the group, not to one person. An individual has power only when he belongs to a group so completely that he is not an individual any more. The Party says that "Freedom is Slavery" but the opposite is also true. Slavery is Freedom. Alone - free - a human being will die in the end. But if he can be completely part of the Party, not an individual, then he can do anything and he lives for all time. ... power means power over the human body but, above all, power over the human mind.” (Orwell 1984 ch. 11)

This is self-explanatory— the source of freedom, according to the Party, does not lie in individualism but in collectivism. Althusser’s proposition states that ideology “interpellates individuals as subjects” (175) and by the subjects’ mutual recognition of each other ideological state apparatuses become successful in recruiting individuals into a particular ideology (176). Thus by losing individualism, and accepting slavery as freedom, one becomes a part of the state ideology.

The third part of the slogan— “Ignorance is Strength” is the most powerful. Ignorance implies regulation and censoring of free flow of information. It also implies anti-intellectualism. When these are promoted the masses only know what the state wants them to know. Lack of education and knowledge means they have limited understanding of political matters. Ignorance is Strength, but ironically not for the people but for the Party. If the masses are ignorant, they will lack the ability to question the Party’s actions. The Party which “is only interested in power - not in the happiness of others, or money, or long life” will then have “power, only power, pure power. And ... will never, never let it go.” (Orwell 1984 ch.11).

These fictional depictions by Orwell have lots of real life parallels. During both the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, the media was controlled by state authority and broadcasted party propaganda mainly. The slogan “Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer” (meaning "One People, One Empire, One Leader") was used repeatedly by the Nazi Party in political posters, publications, radio broadcasts and speeches. There are depictions in the novel of anti-Goldstein demonstrations such as ‘The Two Minutes Hate’ and the ‘Hate Week.’ Goldstein and the Brotherhood were branded as “Enemy of the people.” In real life, the phrase “Enemy of the People” was used both in the Soviet Union and Germany. In Germany, Hitler and the Nazi Party based their political existence by using racism to promote ultranationalism; to do so, they branded the Jews and other political opponents as enemies of the people. Moreover, the phrase “enemy of the people” is a direct reference to Stalinism. During Stalin’s regime the phrase “enemy of the people” was widely used to execute individuals suspected of spying or being part of the anti-totalitarian movement. The sting operation conducted by O’Brien to catch the likes of Winston redhanded is analogous to the great purges during Stalin’s regime where many members within the Red Army (including high ranking officials) were executed under allegations of treason. This is how the media as an ISA functions through deploying ideology but also indirectly by inciting violence.

### **Language and Historical Revisionism**

Language and History are important components of any culture or nation. Language serves more than the means of communication. It is the carrier of culture and medium of individual and collective expressions. History, on the other hand, is recorded using different

forms of language i.e. oral or scripted. Any discourse of nationalist ideology is dependent on these two elements with language acting as base and history often legitimizing its need and purpose. Orwell understood this well and saw that languages also served certain political purposes. In his essay, “Politics and the English Language” (1945) Orwell writes how contemporary language was manipulated to serve political interests during World War II.<sup>23</sup> He claims — “In ... [his] time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing” (Orwell 5) because its language— the political language “is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable” (8). He then provides a brief context —

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties... Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness.... People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. (Orwell 6)

What Orwell wanted to emphasize is that, politics corrupts language and in the process, a corrupted language corrupts people’s ability to separate bad things from good. He was concerned about the spectacle of ignorance spreading among the masses brought about by the use of

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<sup>23</sup> Orwell, George. Politics and the English language. Vol. 284. Penguin UK, 2013.

corrupted language and paving the way for corrupted politics; “Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism?”(Orwell 8) — he asks. Such concerns were reflected in a more mature form, later, when he wrote *1984* where he introduced ‘Newspeak’ — a fictional and to be official language of Oceania developed by the Party.

According to the appendix of the novel— “Newspeak ... [is] the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism” (Orwell 143). During the events in the novel, ‘Newspeak’ is being designed at the ministry and is scheduled to replace ‘Oldspeak’ (Standard English) upon its completion by 2050. From the conversation between Winston and Syme we learn that —“The aim of Newspeak is to narrow thought ... which will make thought crime impossible” (Orwell *1984* ch.3). This would be done by not only inventing new words but mainly eliminating words that do not promote the of interest of the Party. Newspeak words are categorized into three categories. While A vocabulary consists of words that do not have any political expression and C vocabulary have only scientific and technical words, it is mainly the B vocabulary that Orwell puts more focus on. B vocabulary consists of words which are “deliberately constructed for political purposes ... which not only ...[have] political implication[s], but [also will] impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them” (Orwell *1984* 145). For instance: to establish the word crimethink, words like honour, justice, morality, internationalism, democracy, and science are obliterated and their implications are categorized under the single banner of crimethink. By making it a crime to think about words like democracy, Newspeak, on one hand, functions repressively. On the other hand, by discouraging the use of such words as socially undesirable, Newspeak functions through ideology. Combined, Newspeak then becomes an active Ideological

State Apparatus which creates an ideology of the use of words, and in the process censors any word that questions the Party's power and promotes its interest. The syllabic abbreviation used in Newspeak such as Minitrue (Ministry of Truth) or Miniluv (Ministry of Love) are satires of real life examples such as Comintern (The Communist International) and Nazi (Nationalsozialismus) used by the Soviets and Germans during WWII.

However, Newspeak's purpose of serving the interest of the Party is not just limited to censoring words. When a large body of words is eliminated, literary works that consist of such words become invalid. In the appendix, Orwell writes—

Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were ... in process of translation: when the task (application of Newspeak) had been completed, their original writings, with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed. (149)

Like language, literature is also a carrier of culture, and more so it is the bearer of conscience and truth. Obliterating literature means destroying testaments of history. Thus, Newspeak is not just censoring words, it is involved with Historical Revisionism. Orwell's protagonist Winston himself is one of those who deal with this at the Ministry of Truth. Quite ironically, instead of establishing truth, it is altered and destroyed. Here is how it is done—

Every day newspapers, magazines, photographs, films, posters and books were all changed. The past was changed. The Party was always right. The Party had always been right. The Records Department, where they destroyed all the old copies of everything, was the largest department in the Ministry of Truth, but

there was no truth. The new copies were not true and the old copies had not been true either. (Orwell *1984* ch.3)

It does not need saying that such acts are solely in the interest of party to establish what the slogan says. The altered records tell the masses that War is happening sometimes with Eastasia and sometimes with Eurasia, but they are not told the truth, only what the party wants them to hear. In a way it spreads misinformation and ignorance. Those who are subject to such misinformation may feel that Big Brother is looking over Oceania or Airstrip One needs the Party's decisions. This may add to the interpellation effect of subjects internalizing the ideology and accepting it without questioning. The combined result of Newspeak and Historical Revisionism is foolproof domination. Altered records perform half the work of distorting the view of reality, and elimination of words with political expression takes away the individuals' power to vocalize their political thoughts, and comprehend the political reality around them. Thus the masses are left intellectually incapacitated and the authority of the power elites is sealed by quashing any possibilities of rebellion.

### **Youth Fronts**

The process of children becoming an instrument of political control is another disturbing phenomenon that can be considered as a dystopian element. During the course of World War II, many political parties sought to extend their political reach by recruiting young civilians for the purpose of political activism and assisting in party propaganda. Orwell's novel has a political youth front called 'The Young People's League' which he probably created to satirize the 'Hitler Youth' a youth organization sanctioned by the Hitler. Hitler Youth or 'Hitler-Junge' was a youth

front for Nazi activities during the party's rise before World War II. According to Kater "Many youth [who] were inducted into the HJ as children [by their parents] ... had little choice in the matter" (3) and as they got older "would swap air guns for machine guns and willingly be drafted to use them against Hitler's foes" (5) because they had already been "preconditioned [and] brainwashed" (5).<sup>24</sup> This analogy is explicitly visible in *1984* and the Parsons family in the novel is a fitting example. In chapter 2 of *1984*, Winston visits the Parsons' apartment and we see how their children's behave as if they were the members of the thought police hunting for Goldstein's spies. The idea of children becoming state-instruments by their own parents seemed to have disturbed Orwell substantially, who criticizes this trend by turning children against their own parents in the novel. Moreover he uses the 'Child-Spy' concept as a forecasting commentary on what would happen if political ideology could penetrate into family spaces. In chapter 6, Winston reflects on having children "who would one day spy on their parents and tell the Party if they said or did anything wrong. In this way the family had become part of the Thought Police" (Orwell ch 6). The idea of children tracking their own parents is very unsettling since such circumstances extend surveillance to a very intimate space; it threatens to diminish the existence of privacy and destabilize family bonding; and indeed this is what happens near the end of the novel. In chapter 9, Tom Parsons is accused of thought crime which was reported by his own daughter— a child only about the age of 7.

If we try to analyze youth fronts in the light of Althusser's theories, it stands out from other forms of State Apparatuses. Due to their lack of experience, young children are usually more susceptible to the sway of ISAs than adults. Like Kater's example, adult individuals, as a

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<sup>24</sup> Kater, Michael H., *Hitler Youth*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

parent, elder sibling, guardian, mentor or simply any charismatic persona can influence and introduce children to the ideologies they themselves believe or follow. As they grow up to be adults, their subscription to such ideologies becomes firmer and they may become active political members. They then act as agents of the Ideological Apparatuses themselves and draw more members under the sway of the ruling group. This is how Youth Fronts created by Ideological State Apparatuses act in a self-expanding chain action and perpetuate State Ideology by becoming an ISA itself.

### **Surveillance and Secret Police**

So far I have talked mainly about Ideological State Apparatuses which function through the development of ideology. However in the novel there are some Repressive State Apparatuses which are as dark as the ISAs. These are state controlled surveillance mechanisms and intelligence units. By dint of identifying 'Enemy of the people,' dictators often seek legitimacy to establish surveillance mechanisms on state subjects. In Orwell's novel, surveillance manifests itself in every possible aspect. The most striking concept of surveillance in the novel is the 'Telescreen.' Placed in every corner of the city, these devices are capable of recording sounds and images of anyone near or in front of them. We see them in Winston's apartment, the ministry, public spaces, the room rented above Charrington's shop, even in the interior of O'Brien's place. It is interesting to note that Orwell might have adopted the concept of 'surveillance through telescreens' from "the strategically placed large monitors in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*

(1936)” (Gehring 174).<sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> Unlike Chaplin’s version, these telescreens are only one-way, meaning the authority could survey everyone without revealing their presence through the screen. Although the telescreens do not announce it, the flashing face of Big Brother in the posters accompanied by the text “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” reminds everyone that they are under constant surveillance. However, using Telescreens is not the only surveillance method in *1984*. The party sanctioned intelligence unit called Thought Police keeps a lookout for potential threats to the party’s rule. As menacing as it sounds, the Thought police is a truly dystopian element— no one knows who is working for the Thought police and when and on whom they will crackdown. Mr. Charrington, for instance, seemed a very trustworthy person to Winston; even though he was aware that “The thought police found ... [Goldstein’s] spies every day” (Orwell ch 1) he never suspected the shopkeeper would be working for the Thought Police. The description of the Thought police’s secretive existence and its use as an instrument of terror by the party resembles NKVD’s activities under Stalin. Stalin’s insecurity with possible uprising against his regime led to increased freedom for NKVD which looked for “Enemy of the people”. They were responsible for torture, extra-judicial killings, assassinations, deportation or sending individuals to Gulag labor camps under any suspicion of political resistance. All of these are instances of repression and violence, and to repeat Althusser’s theory, all RSAs function by violence.

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<sup>25</sup> Gehring, Wes D. *Will Cuppy, American Satirist: A Biography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland &., 2013. Print.

<sup>26</sup> A contemporary of Orwell, Chaplin also showed concern for the conditions of labor class in the dystopian hyper-industrialized urban centers and criticized nazi dictatorship through his politically themed comedy films. Ackroyd, Peter. *Charlie Chaplin: A Brief Life*. Nan A. Talese, 2014.

Constant surveillance or to be more precise the awareness of being under constant surveillance causes social and psychological compartmentalization. Orwell, through his novel, points out that any oppressive political institution may seek to claim power and maintain it through compartmentalizing its individuals. In chapter 11 O'Brien claims, the Party is "destroying the love between child and parent, between man and man, and between man and woman. In the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers when they are born." By destroying family and social bonding, individuals are made vulnerable to the Party's control. Orwell also sketches how compartmentalization can have suffocating effects on a person and his/her relationship with others. In his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* Michel Foucault describes Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon- A ring shaped building with a tall tower in the middle from which one can observe the inhabitants of the cells but the inhabitants have no way of interacting with each other.<sup>27</sup> Foucault explains how —

By individualizing the subjects and placing them in a state of constant visibility, the efficiency of the institution is maximized. Furthermore, it guarantees the function of power, even when there is no one actually asserting it. It is in this respect that the Panopticon functions automatically. (Foucault 200)

It is nearly the same with the party and its subjects of surveillance. Everyone in Oceania knows they are being watched through telescreens. Even more, no one knows who is working as undercover thought police. Whereas Bentham's Panopticon functions through physical isolation, the Party's surveillance functions through psychological isolation. The psychological isolation induces the inability to trust others and speak freely and vice versa; by permeating suspicion

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<sup>27</sup> Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage, 1977.

within everyone, the party prevents individuals with similar intentions to interact, organize and attempts to overthrow the party and Big Brother. Through such strict compartmentalization the party protects itself from resistance.

We know that ISAs function primarily through ideology and ideology is based on psychological manipulation. However, in this case surveillance works not through psychological manipulation but through psychological violence. Once identified, the Thought Police completes the surveillance function by the abducting and torturing/eliminating its targets. Together these two mechanisms work as a very effective terror inducing Repressive State Apparatus.

### **Thought Reform**

*1984* makes an important point about the dangers of subscription to any radical political ideology, whatever the alignment is. Whether it is totalitarian or anti-authoritarian, Orwell shows that ideological systems expect its followers to be blindly obedient to them. Here, the will of the ideological conformity is much more important than morality. In another words, the definition of morality is not what the individual instinctively feels about other humans but whatever the ideological institution decides fit to its interests. It is curious that Orwell uses Winston, rather than O'Brien to show this. Winston, who believes Goldstein and the Brotherhood are working to oust Big Brother and the party, tells O'Brien that he is willing to give his life, commit murder, commit genocide and even mutilate children's faces for the sake of the cause (Orwell ch 7). Compare this to the 'Hitler Oaths', the Wehrmacht Oath of Loyalty to Adolf Hitler of 1934 in particular, where soldiers under the Nazi party swore to "render unconditional obedience and ...

be prepared to give ... life for this oath” (Butler 123-124).<sup>28</sup> By declaring unconditional obedience to Hitler, the subjects actually submitted to the party ethics. The power of such unconditional obedience could be abused by senior party members who also tended to exhibit fanatical allegiance to the causes of the Third Reich. Thus the many racist atrocities committed by the party during the war was morally justified. This applies to Stalinist USSR too. On ‘exterminating internal threats’ Stalin himself declared in 1937 that “Anyone who tries to destroy the unity of the socialist state ... is an enemy, a sworn enemy of the state and of the peoples of the USSR” and vowed that he will “exterminate each and every one of these enemies, whether they are old Bolsheviks or not. [as well as] their kin and entire family ... mercilessly ...” (Gellately 43).<sup>29</sup> Such statements provided justifying grounds for extrajudicial killings in the name of state security by his followers during the regime.

In the case of totalitarian regimes, the dominant State ideology crushes other ideologies in order to establish its power. Ideology, in Althusser’s definition is — “a 'Representation ' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence” (162). To translate, this imaginary relationship takes place at a psychological level. Thus, dominant State Ideology crushing an individual’s ideology means that it destroys the formation of the individual’s psyche and reforms it according to the dominant ideology. Thought reform is a very effective Repressive State Apparatus when used by totalitarian systems. Althusser’s theory of interpellation suggests that— Individuals are interpellated by the ideology as subjects, who act as subjects subject to the Subject, which in this case is the State. Once this takes place, the subjects and the Subject

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<sup>28</sup> Butler, Daniel Allen. *Field Marshal: The Life and Death of Erwin Rommel*. Casemate, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Gellately, Robert. *Stalins Curse: Battling for Communism in War and Cold War*. OUP Oxford, 2013.

mutually recognizes each other as do the subjects themselves and finally the subject recognizes himself/herself as a subject (181). In the novel, most characters, except Julia and Winston, seem to be believers of the Party's ideology and accept it without question. They are subjects who are subject to the Party, and recognize themselves as subjects obedient to the system the Party has created. However, Winston is a character who has a rebellious spirit and refuses to be a subject to the Party's ideology. At the Ministry of Love O'Brien tells him that he is the 'Last Man' and his like have been eliminated. As Winston tries to resist the torture, O'Brien explains the Party's intention. "The real power," he tells Winston, "is not power over things, but over men." He then adds that— "Power lies in taking human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of ... [one's] own choice" (Orwell *1984* ch.11). This a direct reference to thought reform. In the beginning of the novel, Winston writes — "Freedom is the freedom to say that two and two make four" (Orwell *1984* ch.1). To simplify, Freedom means the ability to express one's opinion about what is true and what is not. However, O'Brien and his fellow associates torture him until he breaks down and admits that two and two do not make four but five (or whatever number), as long as the party says so. Even so, Winston holds onto his love for Julia and is then taken to Room 101; by manipulating his fear of rats, the party members successfully accomplish total control over Winston's mind who rejects his love for Julia and embraces Big Brother instead. Room 101 employs psychological and physical violence to recruit Winston into the Party ideology and is an ultimate Repressive State Apparatus that seals *1984's* perfect dystopian scenario.

## Political Dystopia

Like politics, political dystopia is about power and the polarization of power. Althusser's last point about State Apparatus states that when everyone submits to state ideology, there is no possible threat that can arise against the power hierarchy. With Winston, the last of his kind, finished, the Party will gain absolute power over everyone and everything. The possibility of such a situation is a terrifying one, which makes *1984* such an important text of political dystopia. To sum up my arguments, political dystopia is about corrupted power and oppressive order. Both the masses and the power elite seek power for themselves. It is like the Marxist class conflict between the Bourgeoisie and the proletariat where the former always seeks to suppress the latter. The more this struggle is polarized the more it becomes dystopian. The power elites want to secure their authority by repression, but possibilities of mass uprising always poses a threat. To overcome this, they use ideology to purge the idea of oppression out of the minds of the masses. When the minds of the masses are manipulated completely by ideology they no longer question the authority. Upon achieving this, elites secure power forever. Novels like *1984* point out these possibilities, not out of sheer imagination but as a reaction to real life political developments. The political crises caused by Nazism, Stalinism and World War II had such a deep impact on the intelligentsia that they expressed their concerns through dystopian works. The political dystopia novels of the early 20th century were not just prognoses, by also earnest wake-up-calls to the world's sleeping conscience.

### Chapter 3

#### Dystopia Within

“Man is born to sin. Set him free, and he will be a sinner, not Rousseau’s “noble savage.”

—William Golding

#### **An Antithesis to Technotopia**

The first two chapters of this thesis focused on two cases of Technotopia<sup>30</sup> along with their real life historical parallels. In the first chapter, I looked at *Brave New World* which is Huxley’s comment on industrialization and the growing commercialization, urbanization and consumerism of the early 20th century. Huxley’s dystopia presents a suffocating picture of biological, social and intellectual sterilization in the name of stability and social order. In chapter 2, I analyzed Orwell’s *1984* as a representative work of political dystopia. There I discussed how Fascist and Totalitarian governments use violence to suppress state subjects and take control of media, language and history to enslave their minds. In both cases the patterns are similar— the systems discussed are set in the future, featuring highly advanced technology driven lifestyles, and could have been instances of utopia had they not been governed by a corrupt oligarchy driven by power interests and the maintenance of a suppressive social, economic and political order. The themes are also similar, both carry a melancholic longing for the lost connection to nature and claustrophobic frustration of urbanization. It is then very easy to draw a conclusion that dystopia is bound to happen as long as there will be civilization and the more technology

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<sup>30</sup> Technological Utopia/Dystopia

will advance the more likely we will find ourselves in a dystopic reality. However, I wish to propose an antithesis to this idea that civilization itself is the source of dystopia. To do so, I have chosen William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) a novel of the dystopian genre, but very different in setting from the first two.

### **A Teacher, A Soldier, A Writer**

William Golding was born in 1911, Cornwall, England. He was raised in Marlborough by his father Alec Golding, a science teacher at the Marlborough Grammar School and his mother, Mildred Curnoe, a female suffrage supporter and activist. Golding was interested in writing since his childhood. His father wished for him to pursue a career in science, but after studying Natural Sciences for two years at the Brasenose College in Oxford, Golding opted to study English literature instead. After graduation Golding spent some years in teaching, but when the Second World War broke out, Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. Golding served on board HMS Galatea, a destroyer that sunk Bismarck, a German battleship and participated in the invasion of Normandy. After the war, Golding went back to teaching. He wrote *Lord of the Flies* in 1954 almost a decade after the second world war and amidst the ongoing cold war.

Golding's experiences both in the Navy and his later career as a teacher influenced his most celebrated work *Lord of the Flies*. According to Adrian Poole, "The Second World War brought about a rupture in Golding's personal ethics" (Poole 440) who in his own words, had observed "The horror of the brewed up tank, the burning plane, the crushed and sinking

submarine” (Poole 439).<sup>31</sup> On explaining the motivation behind writing *Lord of the Flies* Golding says in his essay “Fable”—

Before the second world war I believed in the perfectibility of social man ... but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another...that man produces evil as a bee produces honey... It seemed to me that man’s capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness, was being hidden behind a kind of pair of political pants. (Golding 87)<sup>32</sup>

We will see later how this realization influenced Golding’s novel. Nevertheless, his reactions against the atrocities of war is far from direct in the novel. Poole refers to one of Iris Murdoch’s observations who categorized the 20th century novelists into ‘Existentialists’ and ‘Mystics.’ Murdoch observed that from 1920 onwards works of existentialists such as Albert Camus and Ernest Hemingway “specialized in strong-willed, self-interested, atheistic protagonists ... [who were] godless adventurers with an atrophied sense of duty. However —

the events of the Second World War had produced a new generation of mystically minded writers ... reacting both against the assumptions of the existential novel and against the atrocities of war... [who] were committed to exploring the non-rational, to describing the power of intuition over that of comprehension, and to approaching those subjects – God, the Good, Evil... [and] attempted to ‘express a religious consciousness without the trappings of religion’ (Poole 440)

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<sup>31</sup> Poole, Adrian. *The Cambridge companion to English novelists*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Golding, William. "Fable." *The Hot Gates* (1965): 76-99.

Golding, according to Murdoch, belonged to this generation of mystical minded writers. He writes *Lord of the Flies* as "an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable" (Spitz 1).

<sup>33</sup> To do so, he places a group of children out of the reach of civilization into a paradisiacal island, closest to mother nature, with beautiful lagoon, flora and fauna, abundance of food, water and resources to survive which presents no apparent reason to engage into battle for survival.

### **Lord of the Flies**

The novel is about a group of schoolboys who are stranded in an uninhabited tropical island following a plane accident amidst an ongoing war. The boys are initially scattered across the island. A boy named Ralph finds a conch shell and with assistance from his companion, Piggy, uses it to summon the others. As the boys start to gather, a group of choir boys led by a boy named Jack joins in. After assembling, the boys realize that there is no adult among them and no immediate means of rescue. They decide to govern themselves until they are rescued. The children elect Ralph as their leader. Ralph, Jack and another boy, Simon explore the island and find a mountain. To attract the attention of potential rescuers, they devise a signal fire and manage to ignite it using Piggy's glasses but accidentally start a forest fire. A little boy in their group disappears during the fire and the boys realize guiltily that he must have burnt to death.

With no adults around, the children enjoy their time on the island and indulge in fun and games. However, Ralph asks everyone that they should keep the signal fire going and build

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<sup>33</sup> Spitz, David. "Power and Authority: An Interpretation of Golding's" *Lord of the Flies*." *The Antioch Review* 30.1 (1970): 21-33.

shelters. Meanwhile, Jack starts to get obsessed with hunting pigs. One day, a ship passes by the island, but the boys fail to grab its attention because Jack and his boys had been busy with hunting and the fire had died with no one to attend it. Ralph gets angry but everyone's attention is diverted as Jack returns with his first kill and they perform a wild dance. Later in the assembly, the smaller children — the littluns — say they are afraid of 'the beast' but the older boys — the Biguns — dismiss its existence. While the children are asleep, an aerial battle takes place high above the island and a dead parachutist lands on the mountain. In the darkness, the children mistake its silhouette for the beast and soon panic spreads among everyone in the island.

Bitterness grows among Ralph and Jack and the latter challenges the former to hand over the leadership. Failing to gain enough supporters to be the chief, Jack runs away with the choirboys joining him as obedient hunters. They kill a sow and hang its head in a forest opening as an offering to the beast. Later, Simon spots it, has a terrible vision and faints. On waking, he goes to the mountain and finds that there is no beast but only a dead man with a parachute. Simon returns to let the others know about his discovery. However, the boys who had turned the wild dance into a ritual mistake Simon for the beast and kill him in a frenzy.

Soon, Jack and his hunters begin to paint their bodies like savages and the rest of the boys join his tribe in the hope of being allowed to eat meat. Jack, driven by his thirst for power and hatred for Ralph snatches Piggy's glasses. Ralph and Piggy confront Jack but Piggy is killed by a boulder sent rolling by a tribesman called Roger. With all the boys on Jack's side, the conch destroyed and with Piggy dead, Ralph runs away. The next day Jack launches a kill-hunt for Ralph and sets the island on fire in the process. Ralph runs for his life barely escaping into the beach only to find a British naval officer standing over him. The officer, who had come to

investigate the burning island, is dumbstruck by what he sees. Realizing that they will finally be rescued, the boys cry for their lost innocence.

### **Freudian Theory of the Psyche**

Golding's novel has been interpreted as an allegory of civilization, formation of society, the Cold War and even a Freudian psychological struggle experienced by every human subject. According to Crawford "Golding dismissed Freudian readings of his work, claiming in an interview with Jack Biles that he had not read Freud, and that basically he had the faculty, just as much as Freud did, of looking into his own mind" (Crawford 34).<sup>34</sup> However, there are instances where critics have found reflections of Freudian theories of the human mind and psyche. I will try to provide a brief summary of his theories that relate to Golding's novel.

Freud is celebrated for his psychoanalytical theories which try to decode the mechanisms of the human mind. The human mind, he initially argued, is made up of the Conscious (Cs), the Preconscious (Pcs) and the Unconscious (Ucs). From 1900-1905 he developed a topographical model of the tripartite mind resembling an iceberg. He proposed that the Conscious is like the surface of an iceberg, consisting of thoughts that are active and within the reach of our attention. The preconscious is the portion in-between the surface and the submerged part representing ordinary memory. Like the half submerged part the memories are not active, but it could be brought back to surface of our attention. However, just as the most of an iceberg remains deep under the surface water, the unconscious mind remains deeply hidden from the conscious. Freud focuses his initial theories on the unconscious mind which he assumed to be a repository of

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<sup>34</sup> Crawford, Paul. *Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down*. University of Missouri Press, 2002.

repressed impulses and memories that are unwanted or painful for the conscious mind. Freud believed that human behavior is influenced by the nature of the contents locked in the unconscious mind. He argued that our repressed desires indirectly affect our conscious behavior.<sup>35 36</sup>

In his later works, notably in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud developed a model of the psyche which he called 'The Psychic Apparatus.' Here, he described the mind comprised of the Id, the Ego and the Superego. According to this model, the Id entity operates at the unconscious level following the pleasure principle which I referred to in chapter 1. To repeat, the pleasure principle is the identifications of external stimuli on the basis of pleasurable and painful feelings. Such identifications are stored in the unconscious from infancy and shape the pattern of our behavior in adulthood.

Freud suggested that the Id is made up of two biological drives, Eros or the life instinct and Thanatos, the death instinct. While the Eros, running on life energy or libido, drives us to engage in life sustaining activities such as breathing, eating and reproduction, Thanatos, also running on its own destructive energy, leads us to behave in aggressive and violent ways. As long as the Eros is stronger than Thanatos, we survive.

The Ego is created from infancy to serve the Id's demands according to the reality principle. Whereas, the Id does not consider any external result of its actions while seeking pleasure, the reality principle enables the Ego to seek pleasure in socially acceptable and logical ways. The Superego which begins developing from childhood when one is oriented with social

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<sup>35</sup> Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Read Books Ltd, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Freud, Sigmund. *The Unconscious*. Vol. 8. Penguin UK, 2005.

norms and values controls the Id's pleasure principle driven impulsive behaviors that are socially unacceptable such as sex and violence. Superego consists of conscience and ideal self faculty. The conscience faculty, as the name implies, can punish the Ego with feelings of guilt for letting the Id act against social norms while the ideal self provides socially acceptable role models for the ego. The Ego and Superego are constantly in battle with each other over control and it is the Ego, or the 'I' that has to balance between both.<sup>37</sup>

Many reviews and critiques have focused on the allegories, metaphors and characters of *Lord of the Flies* as representative of the Id, Ego and Superego. Although it is a very plausible way to interpret the novel, to follow the same approach seems redundant. I have chosen Golding as part of my attempt to uncover the compulsions that lead to the creation of a dark dystopian work. While the first two chapters are about macrocosmic dystopia, this is an attempt to trace microcosmic and psychological factors that cause macrocosmic dystopia. Here, I bring forth Spitz's interpretations of Golding's novel which states that —

evil is innate in man; that even the most suitable environmental conditions, unmarred by all the customary factors that have distracted and corrupted men in the past, will not suffice to overcome man's capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness; and that those, therefore, who look to political and social systems detached from this real nature of man are the victims of a terrible, because self destructive, illusion. (Spitz 10)

I would like to pursue this line of argument, taking Freudian interpretation to explore the allegories Golding creates in his novel. However, rather than seeing the novel as a reflection of

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<sup>37</sup> Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the pleasure principle*. Vol. 840. Penguin UK, 2003.

the psychological tension within a man's tripartite psyche, which many have done, I want to analyze the novel as psychological journey to argue that dystopia can also happen if a human being, a social animal, distances itself from the order and civilizing conditions of society. Like the novel's line of progression, I will begin with the Superego, slowly losing its connection to civilization and leaving the Ego open to its domination by the Id and then finally the Id surpassing the Ego, taking full control, unleashing its evil potentials and turning humans into mindless savage entities.

### **The Superego Phase**

What Golding has created in his debut novel seems to follow a long tradition in English Literature that began in the eighteenth century with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). In Defoe's novel a mariner colonizes an uncharted island on which he is shipwrecked. While hoping to be rescued, the protagonist devises ways to survive and pass his time on the island. In doing so, Crusoe, a man outside society, creates a society of his own which resembles the very one he comes from. The novel was so popular and influential that it inspired a whole new genre called the Robinsonade which features tropical island living and adventure with a kind of romantic idealism. Johann David Wyss' *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812) and R.M Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1893) are two important predecessors of Golding's novel that belong to this group.

<sup>38</sup> In all cases, the protagonist or the group of protagonists, accommodate the uninhabited islands and recreate social institutions and conditions. <sup>39</sup>

In the introduction to *Grundrisse* Marx mentions Robinsonades as being idealized by bourgeois economists to aestheticize social norms as part of human nature. In refutation, Marx argues that man is “not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society” (Marx 151) hence he as “the isolated individual, is also precisely [reproductive]...of the ... most developed social ... relations” (Marx 153). In simple words, man being a social animal carries the institutions of his society wherever he goes, and even in an uninhabited island, he reproduces the social conditions he had previously been part of. This can be compared with the Superego phase of Golding’s novel, where the plane-wrecked school boys attempt to recreate their societal conditions and institutions.

The first three chapters of Golding’s novel can roughly be categorized as the superego phase where the children display the British social norms which are part of their social institutions as they attempt to organize themselves. Chapter one, “The Sound of the Shell” begins with Ralph and Piggy finding themselves in a deserted spot of the island. Piggy, a short and very fat boy who had been wearing glasses since the age of three, is hardly able to keep up with Ralph who has a “golden body and fair hair.” Spitz describes Piggy as a figure resembling Socrates—“ugly, fat, and-to men unappreciative of reason-a bore, with a disinclination for manual labour” (Spitz 26). From the beginning Piggy attempts to replicate British society. While Ralph

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<sup>38</sup> The prior is utopian in theme and features a family life in a typical Robinsonade island; but the latter brings in the idea of adventure faced by a group of children. Golding’s novel despite belonging to the Robinsonade tradition and heavily influenced by Ballantyne’s work, is a breakaway from typical fun and adventure theme and delves into darker narratives.

<sup>39</sup> The boys of the novel themselves mention Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) and Arthur Ransome’s *Swallows and Amazons* (1930)

seems to enjoy the newly found freedom, the view of the beach and shows no anxiety upon realizing that they are alone in the island with no grown ups, Piggy is the first to understand the gravity of the situation. He anticipates that there might be others scattered around the island so he mutters to Ralph (who does not take the hint) —“I expect we’ll want to know all their names, and make a list. We ought to have a meeting.” (Golding ch.1). The first thing he asks Ralph is “Where’s the man with the megaphone?” (Golding ch.1) hoping they could call others; but unable to find a man or the megaphone he creates a device that can be used like a megaphone—a conch shell. Although Ralph is the one to find the conch shell, without Piggy, he would not have known its use. By dint of Piggy’s knowledge, Ralph manages to summon everyone. When the boys gather, in contrast to Ralph, Piggy shows more civility than others by taking initiatives; he — “moved among the crowd, asking names and frowning to remember them. The children gave him the same simple obedience that they had given to the men with megaphones” (Golding ch.1). The superego phase is also the democracy phase. The children suggest voting to elect a chief to lead them. Although Jack wants to claim the leadership, Ralph wins and becomes a democratically elected leader. The conch becomes a symbol of authority that bestows power to the holder who can call an assembly and speak to it. The assembly, in which all the children gather near the platform and hear what Ralph has to say becomes a replication of parliament. In short, the conch, the assembly are imitative of the British democratic socio-political institutions.

The second chapter, “Fire on the Mountain” and the third chapter, “Huts on the Beach” feature the division of labor. Ralph distributes responsibilities among the biguns including Jack who shows interest in hunting pigs for food. Jack is put in charge of hunting, Simon and Ralph prepare shelters for the others and the twins Samneric are given the duty of keeping the signal

fire burning. The signal fire is an important metaphor in several aspects. The first is that it is a technological device much like nuclear science. Piggy's glasses are used to light the fire for the signal thus becoming a symbol of science and technological development. In the superego phase, the fire is a means to draw attention of the ships passing by so that the boys can be rescued. However, like nuclear accidents, the fire spreads without control and destroys parts of the island, possibly killing a littlun. Yet the boys are dependent on the fire, and the signal fire is like a measure of the superego's connection with civilization. As long as the signal fire is burning, there is hope that the boys will be rescued and brought back to the refuge of civilization. As mentioned before, the Superego is representative of social norms that create conscience and an ideal role model for the self. In the superego phase, the boys are conscientious followers of social norms and values, and also do not show any major deviation from this conscientious behavior. As the fire burns out in chapter 4, the superego phase, which represented Piggy's intellect and the boys' inclination to follow social order, retreats and the id starts to emerge.

### **The Ego Phase**

From Chapter 4, "Painted Faces and Long Hair" and onwards tension among the boys start to build and the Ego Phase begins. Freud describes Ego as "an entity located on the border between the world and the id... [which] seeks to mediate between them" (Freud "The Ego and its Forms of Dependence" 337). The id seeks pleasure, the superego functions to maintain its connection to civilization. The analogy of this conflict becomes obvious when the signal fire goes out while Jack is out hunting taking Samneric with him. Ralph and Piggy insist that they keep the signal fire burning, so that if a ship passes by, it will investigate and thus they would be

rescued. However, Jack is getting obsessed with hunting pigs. In Freudian terms, he is acting on the Pleasure Principle, concentrating on the desires of eating and forgetting that in the long run it is not going to help him and the others. Ralph, who takes the lead here, is acting on Reality Principle. According to Freud —

“the reality principle ... without abandoning the aim of ultimately achieving pleasure, none the less demands and procures the postponement of gratification, the rejection of sundry opportunities for such gratification, and the temporary toleration of unpleasure on the long and circuitous road to pleasure. (Freud *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* ch.1)

Ralph acknowledges Jack's hunting and even enjoys the pork later, but he knows if they do not listen to Piggy and keep the signal fire burning, no one will come to investigate and they will not have any chance of escaping the island. Sooner or later, the resources of the island, including the pigs, will run out and they will die from scarcity of food. On the one hand, Piggy makes Ralph restless with his asthmatic talk, constantly popping ideas like making sundials. On the other, Ralph keeps getting into heated arguments with Jack regarding hunting. The id and superego are in constant conflict, and similarly Piggy despises Jack just as much as Jack dislikes him. In chapter 4, when Jack returns from hunting and Piggy complains about the ship missing their presence in the island, they both get into a violent argument. At one point Jack hits Piggy and his glasses fly off and one of the glasses breaks. This is the first violent act between the boys. Ralph tries his best to mediate between Jack and Piggy, and keep a balance. He calls an assembly and tries to solve problems on both sides.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 can be seen as the gradual decline of the superego, and the beginning of the ego's struggle to maintain its existence. The boys slowly begin to let go of the civilizing customs and only "waste time, rolling rocks, and making little cooking fires" (Golding ch. 5). Ralph starts to feel tired, misses home and thinks—

He would like to have a pair of scissors and cut this hair—he flung the mass back—cut this filthy hair right back to half an inch. He would like to have a bath, a proper wallow with soap. He passed his tongue experimentally over his teeth and decided that a toothbrush would come in handy too. Then there were his nails ... [which] were bitten down to the quick though he could not remember when he had restarted this habit

(Golding ch. 7)

Even Piggy "when ... deprived of those spectacles, he loses his rationality too" (Spitz 7) and the schoolboys bred to be perfect British gentleman someday cannot even maintain a hygienic lavatory spot by the pool (Golding ch. 5). These signs show that their ties with civilization are getting weaker with each passing day.

Meanwhile, a new problem arises— the boys become aware of the presence of fear. At first it is only an irrational fear of the littluns — a beast— roaming in the shadows of the tall dark trees. The biguns initially dismiss the idea as mere imagination saying —“There aren't any beasts to be afraid of on this island” (Golding ch.5). However, after a while, even the hunters start to ““talk of a thing, a dark thing, a beast, some sort of animal” (Golding ch.5). Soon the boys start to speculate about the nature of the beast, some saying “the beast comes out of the sea”

and others suggesting “Perhaps ... the beast is—a ghost” (Golding ch.5). Things escalate quickly when a dead parachutist lands on the mountain, and the boys, already fear ridden, take it to be the beast. This is like Freud’s neurotic fear. Describing the manifestations and conditions of neurotic fear, he identifies it as a —

a general condition of anxiety, a condition of free-floating fear as it were, which is ready to attach itself to any appropriate idea, to influence judgment, to give rise to expectations, in fact to seize any opportunity to make itself felt. We call this condition "expectant fear" or "anxious expectation." Persons who suffer from this sort of fear always prophesy the most terrible of all possibilities, interpret every coincidence as an evil omen, and ascribe a dreadful meaning to all uncertainty. (Freud *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* 347)

The uncertainty in combination with the fear effect, further weakens the ego’s strength and rationality as well as the ability to control the impulses of the id. The beast, from an imaginative entity, becomes a part of a tribe-like ritual as a God-like figure, leading the boys away from rationality and causing their descent into ignorant ‘savage’ behavior.

The Ego phase ends with Simon’s death. As Freud sees the relation between Ego and Superego and Id, the Id is impulsive and violent. The Superego tells the ego to control the id’s impulses and when the Ego fails, the superego punishes the Ego with feelings of guilt. The frenzy of the pig-hunt ritual and the irrational fear of the beast give the id a window to come out. When Simon, not as a symbolic figure, but simply as a person at a wrong place in a wrong time becomes the victim of the id’s first freedom, the last remaining pint of the superego driven

conscience makes Ralph and Piggy feel guilty. As with the rest of the children, they give in to the temptations of meat and forget that they had once belonged to the civilized world.

### **The Id Emerges**

The Id phase, which begins with chapter 8, “Gift for the Darkness”, is the most important part of the novel. The Id had been present from the beginning of the novel and had been trying to take control. In chapter 1, Jack declares that he “ought to be chief” (Golding ch.1) but Ralph’s charisma wins him the position of leader. In the assemblies Jack tries to dominate the conversation but again is held back by the power of the conch. In several early occasions he has rough encounters with Ralph regarding decision-making. All of these are acts of the id’s suppression by the ego. Moreover, these are boys on the onset of puberty with no female figure around. Although Golding does not give any direct reference there are hints of the id’s sexual repression. We can imagine that the boys are at an age when one begins to explore sexuality, yet they are far from home and society, trapped in an island and fighting for survival. This struggle can be a possible source of suppression of the Eros by the death drive. Now consider Freud’s statement on repression; he says —

The dangerous death drives are dealt with in a variety of ways within each individual. Some of them are neutralized by being merged with erotic components, others are deflected into the outer world in the form of aggression, but in the main they undoubtedly continue their inner activities unchecked ... the

more a person curbs his aggression towards the external world, the more severe and hence more aggressive he becomes” (Freud “The Ego and its forms of dependence” ch.5)

If we look closely, we can see this is how the Id Phase plays out. We know from our reading of Freud that the Id is driven by the pleasure principle and reacts differently when met with unpleasurable stimuli. In such a case, Freud suggests that, energy builds up and presses for release (Freud “The Ego and the Id” ch.2). Jack’s unpleasant suppression in the superego and ego phase takes place under the surface and builds up as destructive energy until in chapter 8, he bursts out, refusing to be under Ralph’s leadership and splits. This marks the beginning of the Id taking control. Just as the energy is released in the external world through aggressive behavior the id drives the hunters into violent pig hunting. Here is a brief description—

Jack was on top of the sow, stabbing downward with his knife. Roger found a lodgment for his point and began to push till he was leaning with his whole weight. The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high-pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her. (Golding ch.8)

It is rather ironic that such an act of violence is committed by— first a group of children, second who also used to be choir singers and third are British. Moreover, the pig hunting is also symbolically merged with sexual aggression. The pig they hunt is the “largest sow of the lot ... and the great bladder of her belly was fringed with a row of piglets that slept or burrowed and squeaked” (Golding ch.8). The chase and violence inflicted on a female animal, by a group of

males symbolically corresponds to an act sexual violation. This becomes obvious when Roger withdraws his spear and Robert describes it as a stick “Right up her ass!” (the comment is accepted by the rest of the group without any feeling of guilt). Golding graphically describes how the bloody “reeking palms [of]... Jack grabbed Maurice and rubbed the stuff over his cheeks.” (Golding ch.8) which is also quite disturbing considering the fact that the act is being done by a child.

The regression into savagery grows more acute; now it is not just Jack but the whole tribe who wear masks of paint. Meanwhile, Ralph and Piggy struggle to keep the signal fire going. Due to lack of resources and manpower, the signal is weak and as is the boys’ connection to civilization. We see the Id overriding the Ego’s grip on the initially established social order as Jack draws more followers by inviting children to “join [his]... tribe and have fun” (Golding ch. 9). As Ralph tries to protest by invoking the power of the conch shell, Jack denies its power. The population on Ralph’s side declines, we find Piggy helplessly complaining —“Can’t they see? Can’t they understand? Without the smoke signal we’ll die here?” (Golding ch.8) but the Id-driven tribesmen are so madly into their savage living that they have already rejected the idea of going back. The tribe starts performing savage rituals and an unthinkable act occurs. In the beginning the pig-hunt acting was seemingly a harmless innocent children’s game where the boys sang “Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in.” (Golding ch.4). Look at how they behave when Simon is taken for the beast in the id-consumed state of frenzy (I have replaced the instances of Beast with Simon)—

[Simon] was on [his] knees in the center, [his] arms folded over [his] face. [He] was crying out against the abominable noise something about a body on the hill.

[Simon] struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after [him], poured down the rock, leapt on to [Simon], screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws. (Golding ch.9)

The id here is out of control, committing a murder and devoid of any sense of civility. The sheer violence with which Simon is murdered is even more disturbing than the pig hunt matching Freud's description of the id's nature— "the ego tries hard to be moral; the super-ego can become hypermoral" "[but] the id is wholly amoral ... and thereby shows a degree of cruelty that only the id can match" (Freud "The Ego and its Forms of Dependence ch.5). From Simon's death to rest of the novel, Id, driven by primal instincts, power hungriness and desire for revenge, wants not only to dominate the scenario, but obliterate the existence of superego and ego for good. In chapter 11, "Castle Rock", Ralph and Piggy goes to Castle Rock make peace with Jack who had earlier raided Ralph's settlement and stolen Piggy's glasses. When they confront Jack and his tribe, all "masked in black and green" (Golding ch.11) Roger sets a boulder rolling from up overhead, killing Piggy and destroying the conch instantly. With the destruction of the conch democracy ceases to exist in the island, and Piggy's death meant the obliteration of the last of Superego's presence. Finally, the last obstacle to Id's domination, Ralph, the last representative of civilization, morality, and the Ego is hunted down by recklessly setting the whole forest in fire. All these actions simply confirms Freud's theories that the Id is a truly dark factor of human psyche which can unleash violence and destruction on the world if it is not regulated by society's norms and values.

## A Synthesis to Dystopia

So far I have discussed all the major characters except two most important figures in the novel— The Beast and Simon. These two characters are, in my views, most exceptional and highly symbolic. The beast, first appears as a fearful imagination of the littluns. However, Golding had something larger in his mind. In chapter 5, Golding gives a hint as to what the beast can actually be. Consider this conversation in the assembly; when discussing the Beast, Piggy says —

“Course there isn’t a beast in the forest. How could there be? What would a beast eat?”

“Pig.”

“We eat pig.” (Golding ch.5)

This foreshadows and hints that the Beast does not exist in the jungle or water or anywhere outside but within those who are on the island. The beast is the id, suppressed, but lurking within to come out and wreak havoc. In the novel, the ghastly id manifests itself externally not in the form of the mountain parachutist but as the obscene and disgusting fly infested, blood and mud covered sow’s head— the Lord of the Flies. The Lord of the Flies has also been interpreted by most critics as a reference to Beelzebub meaning Lord of the Dung, thus a figure representing Satan or evil. It matches how the beast talks to Simon, who tries to resist its tauntings. The Lord of the Flies tells him—

I’m warning you. I’m going to get angry. D’you see? You’re not wanted.

Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going

to have fun on this island! So don’t try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else

—we shall do you (Golding ch.8)

Indeed the words come true; Simon who disobeys the Beasts and investigates the mountain is killed in a ritual frenzy. As evil or impulsive primitive id, the beast resides within the very hearts of men, as fear, as desire for pleasure and power, as rage and thirst for violence and revenge. Its depiction implies an image quite contrary to the much idealized eighteenth century view of the noble savage. Considering Golding's point, the idea that humans will live as innately good natured beings if freed from the institutions of civilization does not seem plausible anymore.

The beast, as the unshackled evil or unrestrained id, is then the source of all dystopic conditions. Human beings as collective entity, are powerful. Even so, at the individual level they are vulnerable to the id's impulses and evil temptations. If the evil consumes the conscience of each individual from within, the collective result is social and political dystopia.

What then is the way out of this?

Here I come to Simon, and I hold him as the answer, a synthesis to the question of dystopia. Although Simon dies in the savage lynching, he is a figure who represents is the true spirit of humanity. Simon is weak, epileptic; yet he has a kind heart, clear conscience and deeply contemplative mind. Simon is the one, who supports Ralph, shares food with Piggy, takes part in the construction of shelter, yet his silent presence is not felt as much as the arguing boys. He is the one who is not afraid of the beast, neither misguided by temptations, and looks beyond what anger and anxiety ridden minds do not attempt to see. Thus, he is the beholder of truth and knows the true nature of the beast. Golding's solution is to be like Simon, who shows us how we can deal with evil, id and the dystopia within us.

I think with the explosion of the atom bomb in the background, Golding has attempted to make a point about what could happen if the cold war turned into a nuclear apocalypse. With

men killing men, those who survive in the post apocalyptic world would be as helplessly stranded like the boys are on the island. All the accumulated knowledge and advancement of civilization would perish in vain, if in the crisis of food and livelihood, people would turn against each other like savages and the arrow of civilization would be reversed. This is a very dystopic and terrifying possibility.

*Lord of the Flies* ends in a tragic and melancholic note. Yet, I see it from a different angle. In the end, Ralph, Piggy, Simon or Jack are not enough. Everyone needs everyone else and keeping together is the way to preserving harmony of the society. Dystopia happens when there is extreme polarization of power and resources. When superego is dominant, matter wins over emotions. When id and its dominant impulses take over and reject rationalism. If civilization grows faster than human features, it is just concrete jungle where man is trapped by machines and rules. On the other hand, if we let ourselves distance away from civilizing norms and values, we will only return to savage conditions. It is then up to each of us, as individuals, to balance between extremes and not give in to dystopic possibilities.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the 20th Dystopian Novel through three representative novels—Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* to identify three major dystopic conditions that had emerged at the beginning of the century. In Huxley's work we saw how commercial corporations can take over the world order, while in Orwell's novel we found a picture of political elites ruling with terror and violence. These two technotopias can be summed up as economic dystopia and political dystopia. Golding's novel provides the other perspective of technotopia, which shows that even without technology human beings carry the seeds of evil which may lead to dystopian reality. In other words it is a spiritual dystopia.

The issues that came up are more or less similar and reflect the state of affairs at the time the novels were being written. In the background, we find industrialization, technological revolution, urbanization, beginning of modern cosmopolitanism, consumer culture, anti-intellectualism, Fascism, Totalitarianism, new methods of surveillance, information regulation through media and discourse manipulation, surveillance, terror through secret police, disintegration of family systems, loss of religious values, ethical degeneration, ideological fanaticism, collectivism and compartmentalization, and the psychological/spiritual crisis brought about wars.

In the first chapter, I used Karl Marx's discussion of the Bourgeois-Proletariat relationship to analyze how the Bourgeois may discourage intellectual pursuit, construct value systems that split kinship system and create rigid castes secured by hegemonic education system, promote hedonism and consumer culture among the proletariat to secure the continuation of

industrial production and a perception of economic well-being. To show that such realities are oppressive Huxley creates the image of human beings reduced to bottled products, superficial minds with no depth of knowledge living in the packed and suffocating atmosphere of cityscapes — a distorted picture of a future where people live with the illusion of freedom but are actually puppets of the elite.

In chapter two, I showed how the totalitarian state uses political propaganda, media regulation, historical revisionism, language manipulation, surveillance systems and intelligence gathering systems to keep the masses in constant fear, orientate youth into state ideology to perpetuate power, influence and control over its subjects. I have analyzed these in the light of Louis Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State apparatus. To show that totalitarian states such as Stalin's regime operate with both violence and terror but also various methods of psychological manipulation, Orwell creates a juvenilian satire-like dystopia.

I have used the last chapter, as an antithesis to the argument that civilization is oppressive and the romantic longing for nature should be pursued. Here I have used Sigmund Freud's theory of Superego, Ego and Id, to argue that civilization, although limiting and at times oppressive, is needed to control the inner evil or the human instinct for violence. Golding's dystopia points out that the war (and the use of weapons of mass destruction) can wipe out human civilization which has been built up over the centuries with much care, dedication and hard work of countless former generations of people. If such things happen, the dystopia that would emerge is not technotopia but a return to savage life.

The three novels I have analyzed hold all the essences of modernists' anxiety that was associated with the events emerging at the beginning of the 20th Century. Claeys believes that

Dystopia is essentially a strategy which imagines another reality in a virtual present or in a hypothetical future for the questioning of reality and of the present (Claeys 23).<sup>40</sup> This applies to the novels I have selected. *Brave New World*, *1984* and *Lord of the Flies*— each are set in a such a scenario that makes us question reality. We know that it is too fictional or distorted to be true, at least the time when the novel was written. Yet at the same time, we feel that there is a possibility that this could happen sometime in the future given the current situation is allowed to follow its course. I also agree with Claeys that there is always a moralistic intention behind the deliberate creation of a bleak future/reality which the novels present. I believe the purpose is to frighten and shock the readers, create an effect which will say that the present decides whether or not the possibilities presented in the novels can become a reality. If the corporate elite starts to accumulate the bulk of global wealth and own the reservoirs of knowledge, they will have access to technology and be free to use these to manipulate the socioeconomic system as they wish. If any dictator or political group grows powerful enough to set up a syndicate like Orwell's inner party, if they can restructure language the way they want to, if they own all the surveillance networks and manage to manipulate people into submission without resistance it will be one of the darkest dystopias. If a nuclear apocalypse does happen populations will be eliminated and cities will be annihilated overnight. Even if a handful survive, without any proper leadership, they might finish themselves as they fight for the control of scarce resources.

However, there is another perspective we might consider. Dystopia is not just about alerting the present using a very dark futuristic or fictional scenario. It is also a suggestion of a forecast— what could be done if something really happens as predicted in the novels by Huxley,

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<sup>40</sup> Claeys, Gregory, ed. *The Cambridge companion to utopian literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Orwell and Golding. All three novels end with a very grim atmosphere. John commits suicide, Winston gives in to torture and submits to the totalitarian ideology, and the innocent boys — Piggy and Simon die. Yet, I believe they have included, (although I am not sure if their purpose matches my interpretation), a similar kind of reaction to dystopic conditions. John is shocked by the ignorance and passionless life people live in the World State and he tries to wake them up. He attacks the ration of soma and tries to make them understand that they have been enslaved.

Winston is disgusted by the rule of Big Brother and the inner party. Despite being a petty officer at the ministry and knowing its consequences, he plans to thwart Big Brother's oppressive regime. The Lord of the Flies warns Simon that he will not tolerate any interference. Yet, Simon looks deeper into the irrationality of the mind far beyond explored boundaries in search for the truth. The common traits of these three characters is that they have a strong personal conscience, a subtle kind of unrecognized leadership and a very rebellious spirit. In a dystopia, when there is no hope, these characters know that they will not succeed. Yet, they do not give up like the other characters. Their conscience is so strong, that they choose to ignore what others may consider eccentric or dangerous. The price is loneliness and death. However, even through their death, they achieve something. This achievement does not affect the dystopia but the readers, who although saddened by their tragic fate, find a kind of inspiration in themselves. Dystopias are a literature of no hope, yet, the cathartic effect is intended for the readers and through John, Winston and Simon, we learn something about finding hope in hopelessness. The years 1900-1950 was a time of great sorrow and despair. The morbid atmosphere caused by Industrialization, moving away from nature, the political oppression, violence and Wars traumatized the masses. The Dystopian novels written at that time, indeed shocked the readers.

However, I believe that the shock was intended more for the arrogant and power hungry individuals who aspired to oppress others for selfish reasons. Yet, I think, the authors also subtly send a message to the average reader not to lose hope even in situations where there is no hope.

To sum up, I will mention the core features that causes dystopian effect. Two of the dystopian novels I have selected are imagined in the future. They were of course written about a century ago. While dissecting the novels, I realized that we are already living in the time that was imagined by Huxley and Orwell. The 21st century world has technology that the two imagined. Multinational corporations are running the world, industrialization has changed cityscapes, economic activities are capitalizing on sex, commercialization is at its height, surveillance is growing better and smarter, totalitarian governments still exist, dangerous ideologies are at play, and power is becoming polarized and war and violence are leaving more scars all around the world. Golding's novel shows us that children can engage in violence, and this is happening too. In many places in the world, child soldiers are fighting wars, killing people without remorse, at an age when they might have just been playing games.

So are we living in dystopia?

The answer is yes and no.

It is true that many of the dystopian predictions have come true. However, dystopia is such a state that is static. For example, *Brave New World* has a stable society. There is action, people are working, they die and more are born. Yet there is no change. There is no progress. It is stuck in an endless loop of a carefully maintained stability. In reality however, there is no stability. It is hard and to generalize and say whether we are living in utopia or dystopia. Whatever oppressive system emerges, there emerges other counter systems. There is always a change and despite all

the dystopian elements coming true, there is still progress and there is always a way to prevent falling down and finding ourselves in a dystopian reality.

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